



**A Study of the
Book of
Philippians**

**As Presented by:
D.E. Hill, Pastor**

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Introduction

To begin the study of the book of *Philippians*, please turn your Bibles to *Acts 16:6-34* where the church of Philippi had it's start and read the entire text.

This was the establishing of the assembly to whom the Apostle Paul writes this letter to the Philippians. As you make a study of this book of Philippians, there will be some striking things about it. First, you'll notice there are no doctrines to expound. That's a strange thing. Every other epistle of the Apostle Paul expounds certain doctrines, for example, the book of *Galatians*, which had the main doctrine of grace offsetting legality. The book of *Romans* contains every basic doctrine of the New Testament Church of the gospel as Paul knew it. So, it has no doctrines to expound, nor does it have any errors to correct. How marvelous! Here were a people that didn't need to be corrected, and there were no issues to refute. Oh, the strange issues that come up among God's people. It is tragic. However, in this particular sense, this church was not bothered with issues.

This leaves us with this thought and this fact; just the living Christ is introduced and commended to human need in this epistle. That's all you need, really. While doctrine is important (and we agree to that and will emphasize later that without proper doctrine you can never produce true Christianity), yet you must see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the heart of everything. By Him were all things made. Nothing exists without Him. (*John 1:3, Colossians 1:17*) If you have Him and yield to Him, all of these things will just simply fall in their place. When He truly lives in us, "trying" to live a Christian life is foolishness. You don't try to live a Christian life when He lives in you. The Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (*Galatians 2:20*) This is what we see in this epistle. He simply lives in us. If Christ truly lives in you and me, that's all God wants. It's just like a child in the natural. The parents don't try to put straps on him to make him grow. They look at him and think maybe he's growing too fast. He has the spirit and the nature of his daddy and mother, and he has a right to grow into the fullness that he will develop into. This is true in Christ. Now, here in the Apostle Paul, we have the example. This man has experienced Christ under every circumstance, and he's proven Christ more than sufficient in life's tests. You think of a test pilot. They get a new plane or they design something new, and test pilots go out and put that plane through every sort of a test that it may have to face in its future use. Now the Apostle Paul is like the test pilot for the gospel of the grace of God.

If there were a condition that could overthrow Christianity in the human heart, he would have encountered it; but you hear him say such things as this: "We're more than conquerors through him that loved us." (*Romans 8:37*) You'll hear him say, "Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think of Him according to the power that worketh in us." (*Ephesians 3:20*) You'll hear him say, "...be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil..., and having done all, to stand." (*Ephesians 6:10-14*) He mentions the armor.

You see, you have something, if you're a believer, that's triumphant over any and everything. In the doctrines of *Romans*, *Galatians*, *Colossians*, *Corinthians*, etc., the fruits of this man's life are seen. The doctrines are there, and they're seen in his life.

The difference of method and approach is like the study of a peach. We may go into a peach orchard at harvest time, and there we'll see the fragrant and beautiful fruit on the tree. We pick one and are impressed with its taste and its beauty. We wonder, what is this thing that I'm eating? And how does it come to be what it is? So we take it to the laboratory and examine its structure and its cellular secrets. And so, on the one hand we see it on the tree growing in its simple beauty, exhaling its own particular fragrance, free from the scientific concern; and there, it speaks to the heart rather than the head. That's what Christ does -- He speaks to your heart!

That is what we see in this book of *Philippians*. We see the peach. We can eat it, we can taste it, we can feel it, we can smell it, we can experience it. It's real! Something in the nature of that tree has produced that beautiful fruit. There was a seed there, and now we're seeing the result -- the fruit of that seed as it produced a tree and blossoms, etc., and the many stages of that fruit. However, if we would know the secret of the peach, we find them in the truths of other epistles.

You see, what is this life? You find it in the fruit of *Romans*, etc. Paul is like a ripe peach hanging on the tree in the book of *Philippians*. That's what can be produced in you. Isn't that a marvel? God started with the chief of sinners and ends up with this. He starts with the beggar in the dunghill, and He produces something fit to sit on the throne with His Son throughout eternity.

You must grasp to some extent the privilege that is yours. The vast majority of God's precious people don't hear these things.

The greatest need of Christianity generally, and the believer personally, is to know God. Present day teaching simply does not reveal God. You say, "That's a hard saying," but it's a truthful saying. They said to Jesus, "This is a hard saying, who can receive it?" Many went back and walked no more with him. He said to those that were left, "Will ye also go away?" Peter said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (*John 6:60-68*) You had better learn to love the word of God. It will take you through where nothing else will.

Now the difference is like that of Moses and Israel. "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." (*Psalms 103:7*) The vast majority of God's people never know more than the acts of God. They'll go where there is a so-called deliverance meeting and flock like flies to honey, but never learn a thing about the reality of God's ways. One knew the acts, the other knew his ways. Do we know Him? If we do, we'll respond to life just as he would.

With the levels of education and scientific advancement, man today has so much in a natural sense. However, do you realize all of this is of no value in the light of eternity? Even religious activity, generally, tested by the Bible proves itself to be profitless. Read again the thirteenth chapter of *First Corinthians*. If I am a brilliant student and understand all mysteries and don't have love it's profitless. If I have faith to move mountains, and have not love, it profits me nothing. I can speak with the tongue of men and angels. I can be so sacrificial that I'll even give my body to be burned.

Do you see the worthlessness of all this? When does the love of God quit? I was talking to some parties in my office yesterday. I said, "Well, when does the love of God stop?" They said, "There are certain things that the love of God doesn't cover." But what shall separate us from the love of God? (*Romans 8:35*) You better read it and see if you have that love in your heart, which the vast majority of God's people don't have. They are like Peter -- they "like" Jesus: they "like" one another. Do you realize that most of God's precious people will go

further for a blood brother than they will for a brother that they're going to have forever? That will test your love.

Well, someone says, "What if...? What if so and so? What if a certain thing comes to pass?" Well, Paul answers "what if" in *Romans* 8:35-38 if you want to read it. God is love, no matter what my credentials are otherwise, if I don't know love, I don't know God.

Read it yourself. In *John 1:26b*, the revised version says, "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not." Too few of us have seen the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ as Paul says in *II Corinthians* 4:6. The result is a tragic ignorance, darkness, blindness and poverty, spiritually speaking.

Here in *Philippians*, we have the Christ of God in the experience of those who trust Him. These saints are just like you and me. They're not something special. They were picked up from the junk heap just like we were, who trust in God and find in Christ one who lifts, strengthens, cheers, and proves himself abundantly beyond all of life's needs. Christ, the greatest need of every life for all time, is here. You can go through this life and live in the luxury of life, never having a financial need, never having great trouble; but if you miss this, you miss it all. I'd rather be a "doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." (*Psalms* 84:10)

So, first we need to realize the letter was written by Paul and take into consideration his circumstances. This man from the time he was born again was born with his feet to the fire. He had them there all the time. Through the years he has seen adversity of every kind. Now being tested to the supreme measure, his epistle proves the practical value of Christ to his own life. If there had been one occasion for disillusionment, you make sure he would have registered it. With Paul each new experience added to his clarity of conviction and enduring trust. Why? That Paul might prove the worth of Christianity. What is it worth? It's something that will stand every test. It's something that you can test to the limits.

If faith were mystical or mental, Paul was the proof of it. Oh, the conviction that is in his last epistles. He wasn't shaken. Timothy was shaken when he wrote to him. He said, "Timothy, don't be ashamed of me and my chain. I'm mindful of your tears. Timothy, if you deny him the right to lead you into the suffering, he'll have to deny you the right to rule and reign with him." (*II Timothy* 1:4,8; 2:12) You know, there's a lot of people that will follow Christ as long as the bread and fish are there, but they're not the Philippians.

I think of the desperately forsaken woman in that cold flat in London that Spurgeon told about. She had no fuel, was hovel in rags, and whatever. A little neighbor girl had gone out and searched the garbage cans and had found her a crust of bread. Brother Spurgeon said he went into this place, cold and dark and lonely; and when he stepped through the door and the lady recognized who he was, she held up that crust of bread and said, "What, Brother Spurgeon, all of this and Christ?" You see, Christ will make you satisfied with anything. He is real. You may not be satisfied, but it's because you're looking at things that are temporal. You may not think you have enough. Well, why don't you use that occasion to look up and see what you do have? You see, what we have is forever. I can point to you, and I can tell you that your natural companion, though you love them so much, is temporary. Look at your brother in Christ. He's yours forever. Forever. That's where your true relationship is. One of these days, we're going to be like Christ for we shall see Him as He is. Isn't that a marvelous thing? We can all be like Him.

There is no excuse for I can't...I can't...I can't. Well, that's a good thing if you really mean it; because when you can't! you'll find out you can through Christ. Moses couldn't part that

sea, but he did. To that fellow who had that shriveled up arm, Jesus said, "Stretch forth." Did the man say, "I can't"? No, he didn't. He did it. To that fellow sitting at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, begging for alms all those years, Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The man did a little better than that. He leaped around some. I think I would have, too. How in the world could you have expressed that enough to just walk?

What Paul found in Christ any child of grace can find today. Let me say it like this again. Do you have a car? Do you know where you got it? I hope you do, and I think you do. Do you have a home? Do you know where you got it? Do you have health? Do you know where you got it? I don't care what you have, God gave it to you. And on what basis did He give it to you? Now, here's a fellow that doesn't have a car. Is God a respecter of persons? No. God has a right to give his gifts like He wants to. Don't you realize that? It's a gift.

Now again, I'll say it like this. Here's dear Jeff a man in our congregation. I'll say this because I can't get away from it. I believe God is going to heal Jeff. It's so simple. Of course, he can't walk. He's been trying it for many years. Well, there you are. But Jesus can take care of that in a second. Do you see that? That's the difference. On what basis does God heal? "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (*Matthew 21:22*) In other words, "All I want you to do is believe Me."

God can give you a million dollars just as easy as He can give you a penny. He can grow a redwood tree just as easy as He can grow a blade of grass. "Wherefore does Sarah laugh...Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life." In other words, I'm going to make you young again, Sarah, and I'm going to make you young again, Abraham. (*Genesis 18:14*) That's exactly what the Hebrew means. I'm going to turn back the years. I'm going to make you youthful again. After Sarah had her children and died, Abraham got married and had many more children.

Christ just simply wants to prove Himself to you. You are a child of His grace, aren't you? If you aren't a child of His grace, you aren't His child. You're saved by grace through faith. (*Ephesians 2:8-9*) So if you didn't get saved by grace, you're not saved. Here we have a Christ beyond theories that won't alter His person or limit His power. Here we have the Christ of today. He's the same as yesterday, and He'll never change. He'll be the same forever for all the human need of human experience.

Again, I thought of Brother Bennington during the time of World War II, riding a train out of San Francisco on his way to camp meeting in Topeka. A man sat down by him, and they got to talking. As they talked, the man began to realize what a brilliant, knowledgeable man Brother Bennington was. (I think he had about a 7th or 8th grade education.) The man said, "Well, I am a graduate of three theological seminaries. I don't know anything like you know. What college did you go to?" Brother Bennington said, "To brush college." He said, "Where's that?" Brother Bennington said, "In the sticks." And that's the way it is. People need this book. "Faith comes by hearing..." (*Romans 10:17*) If you want faith, hear what the Word of God says. There's faith here that moves mountains. Within the Word of God is the power of the eternities. It is not just a book. It is the Word of God, and is what God wants to say to you. People can get all excited because of an interpretation. These can be precious, but God's word is the book. Here is the gospel. You can like it, or you can push it aside. You can play with it, but one day God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to Paul's gospel. Read it in *Romans 2:16* if you don't believe it.

The need today, then, is to meet Christ face to face on your knees and have Him meet you in every time of your need. And you will need Him if you go with God. You cannot go with God really without Christ.

Now note, we could say of this book, that the Philippian's contact with Paul is from prison to prison. They got acquainted with him there in Philippi because of that prison experience. Now he's writing to them from a prison. And do you know what the main theme of his message is? Rejoice, rejoice!

This assembly was born in prison. Now it hears from its founder from prison; and between those two imprisonments, we have approximately ten years. Let me read some of those ten years in *II Corinthians 11:23-30*:

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."

You may ask, "Why...? Why did God do this to this man? Why didn't he give him a lovely retirement cottage over by the Aegean Sea and make sure he had a lot of good servants and people to wait on him, etc.?" If He had, he might have settled down just like you and me and forgotten who he was. You see, God hasn't called us necessarily to a living, but to a life. Think about it -- a life. And that life will develop only by faith. You'll never know the meaning of faith unless you are put in the extreme pressure where life fails you and things fail you and you live by faith.

So why? These circumstances press us to take hold of the unsearchable riches of Christ. What is there in such experiences that brought Paul to joy? He later found out. Paul made it clear that if we suffer with Christ, we will reign with him. He said, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer together with Him, that we might also be glorified together." (*Romans 8:17*) So do you see why the sufferings? Do you understand how valuable they can be to your life? Do you realize that without them you will just drift along through a "lotus land" of ease? One day the little dream will be over, and you'll find you've missed what you could have had forever.

You can't support legality, and anything and everything, and try to straighten out politics and all that business and be deeply concerned about your soul. You better find out who these guys are that run around deceiving you.

In this epistle, the word "rejoice" is found eighteen times in various forms in four little, short chapters. You can read it anywhere -- rejoice, rejoice! Wouldn't you say *II Corinthians 11* quoted above is an example of something we can only read about? Can you put yourself in that *II Corinthians*, or can you just read about it? Do you want to put yourself in *II Corinthians*? Paul did. If you ever want God's best, you leave it with God. You'll say, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." (*Philippians 3:10*)

It's such truths and invincible faith that can be yours and mine. Like Jesus in the 14th

chapter of the gospel by *John*, verse 27. He tells about "my peace." This peace of Jesus is never synonymous with quietness of settled circumstances or a life of plenty. The peace of Jesus isn't dependent on any of this. It's a relationship with God. You know all things are working together for your good. You know that He's in charge. You know He hasn't lost command of anything, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen..." (*II Corinthians 4:18*) Then in *John 11:15*, He tells about "my joy". Calvary was just about a day away, and He speaks of his joy. You would think this would have been said in a festive day by the friendly fireside with His friends, not here, in the sadness of the filthy midnight. "My joy. My joy." There's a big difference in happiness and joy. You can have a joy in your heart when there's nothing to be happy about. In *Acts 5:41* you'll find that those disciples departed after a beating by the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ. We're living in an hour when God's people don't want to suffer. In fact, we're told by some of the leading so-called "preachers" to prosper, be in health. That's what catches our ear, not "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him." (*II Timothy 2:12*) Who's getting the crowds and the money and the popularity? The fellow that will tell you God would have you prosper and be in health with no trouble. If you're having any trouble, it shows you're doing something wrong. Actually if you're having trouble, it may show that you're doing something right!

The church was invincible in its martyr days. You couldn't stop it. One of our greatest mistakes is to think we know. A man can think he's something when he's nothing. Have you said in recent days, "I just couldn't believe what so and so did?" You see you don't even know man. Don't get the idea you're somebody. You can do anything that is in the human nature. Don't you understand that? And once you understand that, there will be a compassion in your heart that can never be there other than that.

"To know him." To know man is impossible, but how much more to know Him. And yet Paul said, "That I may know Him." So the letter is a personal letter setting forth the essential elements of the vital Christian life, Christian experience under any and all circumstances. That's so needed in our day and our time -- the Christian experience that doesn't quit in the middle of the stream, but one that says, "That I may win Him."

So we learn to rejoice. How? In the Lord. In Him. Everything is in Him. Everything is in Him. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (*Philippians 4:19*) All things were made by Him, for Him; without Him nothing consists or holds together. And God gave you Him. That day when you gave your heart to God, you don't know what He gave you. It will take eternity to try to find out what God gave you. The eternities, the plans of God, the everything is in his Son. Now, in this life, He has revealed the bridal truth. You that are here, I'm sure you've heard about it. I don't know if you've had a revelation or not. I question people's revelation of bridal truth when they act like they act. I can't believe that the bride of Christ is going to be what some Christians picture Christ to be. Look at Him. The bride is going to be like Him. She'll see Him as He is.

When you gave your heart to God, the thing God made especially available to you was to be in the bride of Christ. God didn't make that available to the twelve apostles. Remember when Jesus was asked by the mother of Zebedee's children, "Grant that these my sons may sit in thy kingdom one on your right hand, and the other your left. you come into your kingdom that we sit on your right hand and on your left." "Oh," he said, "That's not for me to give." (*Matthew 20:21 - 23*) That's for those people down there at Living Waters. He prepared it for them. You'd be just plain stupid if you didn't accept that. Tragic. Would I want to see a

man rob you of your living? I'd rather see him rob you of your living than this. That's been the stand of my life, and I make no apologies for it.

We learn to rejoice in the Lord, for in him we win or lose everything. Christian attainment is not of self-effort, but it's in entering His attainment for us. So Christianity is in no way a mere system of ethics -- a question of doing right or wrong -- but a life flowing from Him, finding it's everything in Him. He does satisfy.

In this epistle there's one word that's so vital. The little word "in" used 88 times. You can have a perfectly good bulb and a perfectly good circuit; but until you put that bulb in that circuit, you will not get any light. Only in Christ can your life be what God wants it to be. You can't make it by a set of rules. You can't make it by do's and don'ts. Put your life in Christ. Again, Jesus is referred to in these four little chapters some 70 times. Who is the big man? D.E. Hill or Christ? Who are you going to listen to? Christ? He's everything. In the book of Ephesians, we are in him, but here in Philippians he's in us.

There will be four divisions, and they're perfectly separated into the four chapters. In the first chapter, you will find that Christ is the essence of life. He's very God of very God. God in the flesh. Christ in the second chapter is the foundation of life. He fits it all -- everything of the Old Testament and everything from the eternity past -- He's the answer to it. In the third chapter, Christ becomes the goal or the reward of your life; And in the fourth chapter, He becomes the strength for you to attain to the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Philippians Study 1

I could never, never overstate the importance of the studies that we're now dealing with. In the book of *Philippians*, we have the life that will win the prize of the high calling of God that is in Christ Jesus. While there is a collective sense in which we love the Lord and walk with the Lord, yet in this epistle especially, we find the meaning of Christ to the individual life.

In *Philippians 1:1-2* we read, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

In the introduction, I pointed out what I believe to be the main thoughts -- the outline. Remember, as we outline this book, we're actually outlining the life that God wants you to embrace and to have. As we look into this lesson, I want to point out three questions that will give us further light as we study these four chapters. Since Christ is central to Christian experience, He has to be right here. He isn't someone way off yonder, in one sense of the word. He is central to Christian experience. If you're going to go with God and experience the kind of life that God would have you have, you're going to have to realize the immediate presence of the Lord, though we'll find that He is in other places. Our all develops out of our relationship with Him.

There is nothing that you will ever have as far as eternity is concerned other than that which develops out of Christ in you. So we need to ask ourselves, "What is this relationship?" Think of it like this: Where is Christ? Where do these chapters put Him? We need to realize His relationship to every believer. If He's no more than just your Savior, He is that much to you.

Then we read, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." You see, God has "made" him, and in those four words there is the everything that you'll ever have in time or eternity, all that you need..

We know from the Bible that Jesus is in heaven. In *Acts 1:11*, as those above five hundred stood gazing, the statement was made to them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? Know ye not that this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then, of course, in the book of *Hebrews*, we read of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In *Hebrews 9:24* we find that he has entered heaven, there, "to appear in the presence of God for us." So physically, just as you are sitting where you are now, He is sitting at the right hand of God. (*Acts 7:56; Hebrews 8:11*)

However, he is also in the heart of every believer. He's there, and he's here. He promises, in addition, that He will be with us always. So, He's physically there, but in presence He is with us; and He personally has His life in us. This is how near He is to us. Anyone can understand these two positions of Christ. That is, one of them is heavenly, the other one is earthly. They represent two different relationships for believers.

Now, I have Him in my heart. I have Him with me up yonder in the presence of God where He lives to ever make intercession for me. (*Hebrews 7:25*) There He is at the right hand of God. As we will find later in our study, God has Him there as the deposit of everything I can ever need. We'll find in the fourth chapter how it says, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (*Philippians 4:19*)

You see, He's there, the answer to everything. He's a man. He's accepted of God. He has met the every challenge of Satan and sin. He created us "in righteousness and true holiness." (*Ephesians 4:24*) So, two different possibilities and aspects of the Christian

experience are that He is there and He is in my heart. He is with me; He'll never leave me; He'll never forsake me; He'll never fail me. What a wonderful thing this is if your heart ever grips it. What Christ does for us because He's dwelling in us and what He means to our lives because he dwells in heaven at God's right hand should be our all and all.

Then, we have the historic Christ. That is, the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He was everything to Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. Who brought them out? Who conquered Pharaoh? Who took them through the Red Sea? Who provided their every need for 38 years? Who took them over the Jordan? Who tore down the walls of Jericho and defeated their enemies? Who established them as the greatest kingdom on earth? You see, it was Him. These things happened to them back there for our sakes. In other words, as demonstrated to you and me again and again and again, over the centuries, He is everything to the person that believes Him.

So He was Jehovah to the saints of the past and He is also the Christ of the New Testament and the early church. He was the Jehovah back there. This was the great captain who met Joshua when he came over into the land of Canaan. (*Joshua 5:13-15*) This is the Christ who existed and became everything to Abraham. He's the one that delivered Noah. He's the one that delivered Abel. He's the one that walked with the judges and enabled the judges. And so, He came in the flesh, and He lived among us some 33 years and demonstrated repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly that nothing could defeat Him. Who is this? What sort of man is this that the winds and the waves obey Him? Who is this that can take a little boy's lunch and can feed upward of 30,000? Who is this that can walk on the water? Who is this? You see, He's demonstrating and demonstrating his abilities. I tell you, you have to feel bad when you think you don't believe Him. Together, we have in Philippians a four-fold view of Him as He manifests himself today to you and me. That's what we've been coming up to. How He relates to your life and my life. Just as He was everything to the saints of the past, He wants to be everything to you. He does want to be everything to you. "Herein is my Father glorified." Why sure! God doesn't want you to be poor, if I may use that expression. "Better is a doorkeeper in the house of my God than he that dwells in the tent of the wicked." So if you just barely are saved, don't you realize how rich that is? How wonderful that is?

You see, dear ones, He wants to be our everything! He wants to be your life! He wants to be the sustenance of your life! He wants to be the strength of your life! He wants to be the holiness of your life! He wants to be the righteousness of your life! He wants to be it all! And one day he's going to be everything, so you may as well let Him be everything to you now.

Until then the purpose and the plan for us in this age can never really be fulfilled. God has a purpose. You didn't live accidentally at this time. God has a purpose for you just as He had a purpose for Abel, just as He had a purpose for Enoch, just as He had a purpose for Noah, just as He had a purpose for Abraham. He has a purpose and a plan for you that is beyond, beyond, beyond, anything that you could ever imagine.

As the four chapters unfold, we'll find Him to be the life of the believer, the seed of all possibilities within us. Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." (*1 Peter 1:23*) That seed has all the possibilities of a full-grown Christian, just like that little tiny seed that's almost microscopic has all the possibility of a giant redwood tree. You see, everything is in you when you're born again.

Then we have the foundation; that is, the base -- the prophetic statements of all before we lived. You see, our roots go back into the eternities past. "From before the foundation of the

world." This pictures Christ back of us -- back yonder in the roots of things. And then He is the answer to everything that's worthwhile. That is, He's the prize before us.

He doesn't want to just be your Savior. Paul talked about a prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus. He said, "That I may win Him." (*Philippians 3:8*) You see, that's the prize that's before us now. Finally, we might say that he's the bank. He's the deposit of the wealth -- the riches that are there to supply our every need.

In the first chapter He's in us. In the second, He backs us. In the third, He's before us. In the fourth, He's above us. So now, what is His position? It's a four-fold position as to your life. He's here in our hearts. He's all back yonder. You see, we're not putting our trust in a flimsy fairy tale. It's something that has been demonstrated over the ages and, especially, over the several thousands of years that man has been in this world. Then, He's before us. He's saying, "Come on. I want you to be my bride. Come on, come on. You can have my best. You can rule and reign with Me. He's encouraging us to, "press toward the prize of the high calling of God." Then he says, "Now, if you have any need, if you come up against a problem, if you are faced with a difficulty, if there are rivers to cross, mountains to scale, deserts to survive -- whatever the need, My Father will supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Me." So He's in us, back of us, before us, and above us.

As we read the book of *Philippians*, it will become clear that the four chapters present these four relationships -- the complete supply of our every need to become the overcomer He has planned for us to be. The four relationships will yield to us the four faces of Christian experience from its beginning to its end. It will be Jesus all the way, and it's going to be Jesus forever. So, you may as well get used to it now. This means He takes you from the babes that we are when we're born again to the mature saint that the Bible pictures.

Now then, the second question: What does He bring to our lives? Think about it. As we get into this study, we'll find out. We find in Chapter 1 that He is the life of life, and there simply isn't another. In Chapter 2 we go back into the roots of life, as I've said before; and He's there in eternity past, the foundation of life. He was "the lamb slain." When? "From before the foundation of the world" (*Revelations 13:8*) You see, this is no accident. This is not something that put God in a corner and he suddenly thought it out. This was His plan forever. Do you realize what he could create? Mankind oh's and awes and studies and whatever, and he tries to build bigger telescopes and better microscopes. He goes down into the minute and to the microscopic thing. He finds there the power that's in an atom. He broke an atom and discovered it'll destroy a city. Poof, and it's gone. He looks up to the Heavens, and he looks on and on, and he talks about the "black hole," etc.

You see, precious hearts, He was there in that dateless past doing things. But He was doing them all with one thing in mind - - you. Oh, let that grip your life! Most of God's children never hear that. They'll never know about it.

In Chapter 3 we find Him offering Himself in the sweetest and most intimate way He'll ever be offered to man. The bride will come out of this age, and there will never be another bride. Here He is before us, "the prize of the high calling of God." Then in Chapter 4, He sits at God's right hand, the guarantee of every need of life to reach the heights of the glory that God has for us.

This brings us to the very heart and purpose of the book of *Philippians*. While every epistle carries this theme (in fact, the entire Bible carries the theme of the Bride of Christ, if you'll look for it), still God ordained that this one letter in the New Testament is written to this end. Then, in the Old Testament, we have one book that's written to this end, and that is the *Song*

of Solomon. So, there is a book in the New Testament, and a book in the Old Testament that are dedicated to just one theme -- the Bride of Christ.

Our Christian experience progresses in terms of a transformed mind. You'll find the word "mind" for an example, in *Philippians* 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." That mind brought Christ into the plan of God, to a very humble place. I'll deal with this thought later. But here it develops in our relationship to Christ.

Now we come to question 3. What mind does the Holy Spirit beget in us in the successive steps of Chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4? Chapter 1: We find everything begins here. As far as you're concerned, your beginning is in Chapter 1, so study it. Find out what your beginning is. It'll thrill you to find out who you really are and why you are who you are.

We have a family book up at our home that has one line of the family, the roots of the family. I have a cousin who did nothing but search for the roots of our family. He's got it documented in detail, and he's so proud of it. Well, I read this first chapter of *Philippians* and it documents who I am. Here I am, and I have eternal life! That is, I have the Lord's very own life. He is the one that had eternal life. He had to give it to me, and my life becomes everlasting in that sense.

So, He alone is the life of life. Nothing and no one else can make us accepted with God. You can work your fingers to the bone. You can follow the Hindu religion. You can follow any religion you want. But there is only one thing that will make you accepted with God, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life the ransom for you. It all begins here.

Let me go again to this first and second verse: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to All the saints (note this) in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Here we have the salutation to you.

It was addressed to the *Philippians*, but this includes you. Note the salutation to Paul and Timothy. In the very beginning of this bridal epistle we find the beautiful conjunction of the aged apostle and young disciple. It's amazing how God can blend our lives. In this sacred league and covenant of life, one of these has almost finished his course here in this world, and the other has so much to experience and know of the Christ before he reaches that same maturity. We, doubtless, have that to an extent in our meeting here.

Some of you that have known the Lord for a good number of years, if you have yielded to what you've heard, are reaching a harvest time of your life. Not a harvest in this life, or in the natural, not the pleasures and blessings this world has to offer. Soon after Paul reached this time, all in Asia forsook him. No man stood with him. Soon after this he was captured. That eagle of the air was put in a cage. All of it we know now, worked together for his good and our good. We come to understand this fact as we go with God. I don't know what some of you will reach in these last days of your life, but I'll tell you one thing: If you go with God, you will embrace things that will press you "out of measure, above strength," inasmuch that you may even despair of your life. Why? That you may learn not to trust yourself but to trust him, who is able, if necessary, to raise you from the dead. (*II Corinthians* 1:8,9) This has been demonstrated again and again in the word of God.

And so I wonder how much of these owed the other in the ministry of the Spirit. What was the ministry of young Timothy to Paul, who calls himself, "I, Paul, the aged."? What could Timothy do for him? I don't know, but they're together. The marvel is that Paul is willing to use Timothy's name in addressing these overcoming saints. It's a most gracious remembrance. In our closing days of this age, I'm talking about us, we're marked by the limited manifestation

of the love of God and grace. We have there, however, the grace and love these two manifested one for the other -- Paul like a rich harvest field ready to be gathered into God's barns and Timothy in the sweet time of promise, blossoming, green fruit, needing the seasons of testing if his life is to be mature.

My trees were just loaded with blossoms this year. The peach trees, I have four of them, were just loaded with blooms. They made it over the first three or four cold nights, and I felt they were all going to survive; but when I went out this morning, several of them have been killed.

So, you will come to life, and you will come up against things that will defeat you or you will defeat them. If they defeat you, you failed to take hold of Christ. For, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." There is nothing that you can't do that God wants you to do.

One time He had a fellow part the Red Sea. Another time some of them parted a flooding river. Another time many of them went through a wilderness where there was no visible means of support. Another time a man stopped the sun, etc. Now, He isn't having you to do that, but He's simply demonstrating His power to reward which believe. Do you see that and understand that for your life?

So Timothy, the blossom was there and the sweet smell of promise was there. The young, green fruit was there, but who knows what frosty night will nip the bud? I don't know. So Paul's great revelation tempted him to self-sufficiency and exaltation, yet whose life was marked by the love of God and the grace of God. He sensed the perfumes of love's spring time in the soul of this young man Timothy, who God would fill with grace and love if Timothy would simply yield to it.

God will fill your life with his grace and his love if you let him do it. Recently a lot of precious saints found out they didn't know anything about the love of God. They took off after like and dislike. You see, your life has to be deeper than that. It'll take the love of God for you to go with God, because you'll come up against saints that you will want to despise, but God said love them. You'll come up against saints that you'll need to show grace to. Don't burn the bridge that you'll have to cross, because you will cross it if you go with God.

Paul and Timothy's companionship must have been a beautiful thing -- youth revering old age, and age without a need of suspicion for that youth. I read one time where the great, brilliant Einstein loved to get a little kid and play with him. Isn't that amazing? When a saint gets up "yonder" and they're so high and holy and so aloof they can't stoop to the lowest, there is something wrong.

Together, Paul and Timothy are like the union of spring and winter, of tender hope and the quiet and rich assurance that comes to a child of God who knows. I know. Do you know? I have no confidence in me. I know because I trust this! (The word of God).

Notice, "servants of Jesus Christ." The early church gloried in the cross and the brand marks of their Lord. Paul said, "God forbid that I glory, save in the cross." And he said another time that, "the cross was foolishness to the Greeks and a stumblingblock to the Jews, "But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (*I Corinthians 1:24*) Here we have the brand marks of the Lord; and before Paul goes further, he shows the brand mark of his owner.

Paul knew he was bought with a price. Do you have any idea the price you were bought with? No. I don't either. I can read it. I don't know what it was to be rich in the sense that He was rich, do you? You don't know what it is to be rich in this life, but you can be rich in the

Lord. You see, the things that were really wealth in Him He wants to develop in you -- patience, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith, love, joy, peace. That's what He wants to develop in you. That's the fruit of eternity. That's the fruit of the Spirit. And how will you ever have them if you're not challenged to have them? A challenge shows me whether I have it or not. When I face the challenge I'll go one way or I'll go the other way. I'll yield to self-will, to hate, to bitterness, to violence, to whatever; or I'll say, "Lord, give me more grace. Help me to be like you." How would Jesus do it?

Note: He liked to exhibit. I think of that emancipated life, how He longed and loved. Do you remember that time when He was out on that sea in the storm and the ship was driven and it looked like all would perish on their way to Rome. Paul stood in their midst and he said, "This night, the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, he just talked to me down there and he told me not a soul would be lost, just the ship." He said, "Sirs, I believe God." (*Acts 27:21-25*) It's wonderful to bear that brand isn't it? But the majority of God's precious people don't want to. Oh, they'd like to have a little something up around their lapel or a cross around their neck, something like that. A fish on the back of the car or something like that. But what about the cross? It'll crucify you to the world and the world to you. And so, Paul always counted Christ's ownership a thing to rejoice about.

Note: "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." I simply marvel where God grows his saints. Over in the Song of Solomon she was the lily among thorns. Out there in the midst of all that curse there was that beautiful lily. "Oh Brother Hill, I could live for God if I just didn't have that man. Didn't have that woman. If I just had a lovely home. If I could just have a so and so car. If I didn't have that neighbor, I could live for the Lord." No. No. I marvel where God raises his saints and here at Philippi you notice the people were hostile. In fact, they were violent. Here Paul had some of his many stripes. Here he was thrust, and that word thrust means to be thrown violently into that prison, and his feet put fast in the stocks, after they had beaten him until they had laid his back open.

I've seen so much less turn people aside. I've seen people turn aside and say, "Well, Brother Hill didn't speak to me" or, "I said something to him and he just went on." Well, maybe God didn't want me to hear. You see? Dear hearts, remember the devil is out to beat you, and he will beat you or you'll beat him. You can't compromise. He's not going to sign a peace treaty.

I got a letter from a very precious saint that I've known for almost 60 years and such a precious letter. She's a widow now and lives alone. She and her husband were in the ministry for a number of years. She said, "Brother Hill, if the devil weren't out to beat you, he wouldn't be a very good devil." But I'll tell you, he's a number one devil. He is the chief. You just make up your mind. There is no devil better than he is.

But how is it that such didn't defeat this little band of Christians? If you were living in their environment, what would you do? Well, I hope you'd overcome just like they did. You see again, just like tender buds nipped by the frost, it came; it fell. But they found out just like the Psalmist said, "He maketh the grass to grow on the mountains." You go up there at the hot springs at Thermopolis, Wyoming. Did you know there's life in that hot spring? That's right. There's an algae that grows in there. You go up in the North Pole and the South Pole. There's life there. There are things that grow there. I was in Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico. I imagine several of you have been there. You get down in there, and you find fish living down there in some of those pools. Amazing! If God can produce a natural life just about anywhere, what do you think he can do about eternal life, spiritual life? The more you put on it, the stronger

it will become, if it seeks Him. You see, He's the strength of everything. God help you to see that the power of His resurrection is at your disposal.

Note: "With the bishops and the deacons." You have to appreciate the courtesy that was here. There was no effort. Sometimes there are people who have to make an effort to show any courtesy, but it's a product of grace. When you go to the Mall, for an example, and you see fountains. If you get into the base of those fountains, you'll find out there's machinery working; and if the electricity gets turned off, the fountain quits. But, you go up to Old Faithful, and it's got something back of it to make it run. Well, that's the way it ought to be with us.

"Grace unto you, and peace." I don't know whether you know it or not, but you better make up your mind -- there can be no graciousness until and unless you grow in grace. You can't manifest what you don't have. If I fail to manifest grace, I don't have it. You see? Get grace, and you have all the gifts, because everything God has is by grace. A gift is the product of grace. When you have grace, as Paul told the Romans in that 8th chapter, "With Him He'll also freely give you all things." So grace is the bountiful mother of all graces.

Who can define grace? You say, "Grace is love;" and I'll say, "Yes that's correct, but it's more than love." Grace is love with a mysterious plus. It is love that never grows weary but goes on giving without the least sign of ever possibly becoming exhausted. It's like the sun. It just shines and burns and warms and goes on and on and on. I don't see it running out of whatever is there. I don't know what it's all about; but the sun, maybe, could burn out. I don't know. But grace will never burn out. You can reject it. You can refuse to manifest it. You can shut your heart and life to it, but it'll be there anyway; and the people that embrace it will go on.

Now, human love can become weary. I've seen it even turn to hate. It's like honey. You couldn't offer honey on the altar of the burnt sacrifice. God took Israel into a land of milk and honey so there was nothing wrong particularly with honey. You remember old Jacob, when they were going back up to the big man in Egypt (and he didn't know that was Joseph). He said to carry a little honey. You need to carry a little honey along with you when you go up to meet the big man. And yet honey speaks of a natural sweetness. There can nothing be offered with the altar or the sacrificial altar of Christ that's naturally sweet. He is the everything that's there.

So, grace loves on and on and on and on. How could I say it? It simply never fails. "But whether there be prophecies," Paul tells us, "they'll fail. "Whither there are tongues, they shall cease; "Whither there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." (*I Corinthians 13:8*) What will God need with Einstein? What will God need with someone who can shoot a rocket to the moon? I imagine he really scratched his head and wondered how they did it when those fellows walked on the moon, don't you imagine?

Grace is the energy of divine affection, and it ministers to the unlovely and the undeserving with its own loveliness. You see, you can't exhaust God's loveliness. He's going to be lovely right on down through it, and grace enables Him. I don't care how unlovely you are, His grace can bestow His loveliness on you. He'll keep doing it and keep doing it as long as you'll permit it.

Note: "Grace be unto you, and peace." Now here grace abides. Peace will exist where grace abides. Do you realize that? If you have grace in your life there will be peace there, and you won't get upset. You won't get hot under the collar. You won't go around trying to disturb people. You won't try to vent your confusion and your upset life on someone else. You see, if I minister to you, I must minister the peace and the grace of God. If you embrace God's

grace, you'll have peace. You see these are inseparable companions. Grace is the native element in which all of our powers awake and work in a glorious service that will end in God's best. Peace is not the absence of motion, but it's motion without friction. You think of the white-hot effort to destroy. We've seen it all about us. Who could be back of such a thing? Who would disturb your peace? Grace....now this is from God "Grace be to you, and peace." See? So if I minister something else, that's not from God, is it? God said, "If you'd have listened to me, then had thy peace been like a river." (*Isaiah 48:18*) He didn't say like a real quiet mountain lake because there is no motion to the lake. Did you ever watch a river? Put a dam across it, and it will climb the dam and run over it, the same with rocks and everything in its way. It just keeps going. Curves and crooks and whatever don't stop it. It just goes on. When grace reigns, man moves in God in perfect unison and man cooperates with man in fellowship without strain. All that is within us praises and blesses his holy name. When grace reigns, life loses its strain and stress, and in the absence of friction, all things are found to work together for good in that life for that man or that woman.

In closing, "From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be unto you." I thought as I was studying about Livingston. How many of you know who he was? He was the man that discovered the head waters of the Nile. They were so fascinating to him. Many lost their lives as he searched for the head waters of that great Nile River, and he finally found it in his very late age after so much sacrifice, heartache, death, and whatever. But here the dancing river of grace and peace reveals its head waters at the very beginning of the book. You don't have to search for the head waters. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are in the second verse -- the very beginning. This is where all the head waters are. This is where all the wealth is. This is where the everything for time and eternity finds its deposit -- in Him.

Salvation and its benefits are vast and unsearchable riches that point to the Godhead as the one and the only source of your everything. Paul here, as always, traces our blessings to their primary home. He doesn't pause at intermediate presences nor offer praise and sacrifice on other altars. He simply goes beyond all of the ministry, all of the churches, all of human effort; and he says, "There it is. God the Father and your Lord Jesus Christ. That's where it all is. That's where it all has to come from. Now, of course, he presses to the highest of sovereign holiness as he does this, and there he prostrates himself in humble thanks and worship. Thus Paul distinguishes between the channel and the spring.

You see, instruments can be so valuable. I read where they have the violin that Paganini in Venice, Italy -- that great Stradivari violin. It's enclosed in a glass case. They found it was decaying and brought experts in to try to find out why. They concluded that it could not survive long unless periodically it was taken out and played. It wasn't the instrument itself that produced the music; it was Paganini. Can you imagine him playing that violin? They said one time he was giving a concert and he deliberately broke a string and then broke another string and broke another string. And then he played masterfully one of the great compositions on one string. You see, it was the master that did the work, though he used an instrument that is also famous.

So you are the channel. You are the instrument. He'll make His choice how to use you, how to play on you, how to manifest what's in you. But above and beyond everything, you must realize that your life has an objective to have Christ at the end of it as a Bridegroom. God wants that to be above everything.

And so Paul would have us know, "Every good and precious gift cometh from above." And

he honors the giver of all things and shows all our benefits are because of the redeeming love and grace of God.

Philippians Study 2

As we continue studying the book of *Philippians*, you must realize that it is like feeding on Christ himself. Though I've preached it for years, it gets bigger and bigger. That's the way it is with the word of God. I don't care who you are. I don't care about your station in life. I don't care what your educational advantages or disadvantages may be. Christ has made Himself available to your life. If you'll think of it, it's simply like this: Man is just like a desert country and everything about it is cursed. There is nothing good in it, not a thing.

Here in the second verse of the first chapter we read about God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and, "Grace be unto you and peace." Again, this is like the great head waters from which flows all the possibilities of your eternity. It's all in here. You see, it isn't in you. You may have a comfortable home. You may have money in the bank. You may not have a financial worry. Everything may be going wonderful for you. Yet you are absolutely a pauper in the light of eternity unless this is coming into your life.

You go down into some of the verdant valleys of the world, where the great rivers flow. Think of the Nile River for an example, it's a fruitful valley. The rest of it is nothing but desert and worthless sand as you fly over Egypt. Much of it, I'm sure, is like it looks from the air. Yet where that water gets to the land, it's rich in growth and development. It feeds the countryside. You can liken yourself to some of that land. The thing that will make you fruitful is to let this get into your life. Everything that we'll be reading about these Philippian saints can be true concerning you, and everything that you used to be apart from Christ. These Philippians were heathen people. They had nothing. Oh, they may have had money. They may have had education. They may have had a number of things. We know that according to the book of *Acts* that quite a bit of activity went on in that place.

So remember, we're reading about you. We don't want to think it's just the *Philippians*; this is you. Everything that is here can be yours. It's up to you. Will you open the sluice gates, and will you let the water in? You have the possibilities.

Let's read the first 11 verses. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi..." We noted that the vital thing was "in Christ." Where they were was incidental. It's amazing where God produces his saints. As I mentioned before, Solomon likened the Shulamite to a lily among thorns. Isn't that a contrast? That's how we see an overcoming saint in this world today. Think of what we lose when we don't go with God. These saints were at Philippi. You're at Denver. Circumstances may be pretty tough for you, but so what! Is He sufficient? You're trusting Someone that every power that the devil had was unleashed on. All the guns the devil had were turned on Him. They thought they had Him when He said, "It is finished." Paul prays in the book of *Ephesians*, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling. . . And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward which believe . . .," which He said was, "according to His mighty power which He exercised when He raised Christ from the dead." So now, here you are. I don't care what your circumstances are. I don't care what kind of home you live in. I don't care if the wolf is at the door or what. You must realize that He can produce victorious saints no matter what the circumstances are.

So, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." If you want to know what God's intention is toward you, this is it. Oh, you say, "But what if . . .?" That isn't it. It isn't about what if. It's what about the truth! A lot of God's precious

people, especially if they've got their feet a little bit tangled up in a legal fence, want to make it: Unless it's this, unless it's that, unless it's the other, why God is liable to turn his face from you. He turned His face from you and me the last time when he looked away from Christ. He'll never turn from you again. Don't you know that?

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." I often am amused about that "you all." That's a southern expression, and it's a Bible expression. "For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident (Oh, can't God make you confident!) of this very thing . . ." And that's the most unusual thing. You look at that a moment. What's he confident about? This very thing: ". . .that He which hath begun a good work in you . . ." (Not, I know I'm going to do it, but I don't know about you!) You see, that's the legalists' way. Isn't that amazing? ". . .Will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Even as it is meet (or fit) for me to think this of you all." That's right! That's the way we ought to think about one another! ". . .Because I have you in my heart; in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

Let's examine these verses in outline form, like we're taking a peach into a laboratory: In verses 3-5 we have Paul's prayerful remembrance for them. If you'll notice, this is past tense. In verse 6 we have his confident expectation for them. That's future. You see, he's saying, "I'm looking down the road now to the future." In verses 7 and 8, we have his loving devotion for them, and that's right now. That's the present.

In verses 9-11, we have his prayer for their spiritual progress, and this embraces a four-fold petition. (Our next lesson will touch on it a little more.)

For an example, verse 9: a love so discerning. Verse 10a: that they choose only the excellent in character, and 10b: be without offence in their conduct. And thus, made complete in the fruitage of righteousness.

Remember, this is as we view the verses in the laboratory, so to speak. Now, I just gave you an outline. However, we must not become entangled with just the "letter" of the word. Paul said, "I came not to you in word only." There is something in the word. There are people that know the word. But, the love of God isn't there (in the words). Faith isn't there -- the things that move the things of God. You'll be able to know. Can anyone be unloving and represent Christ? Think of it. It isn't possible. If Jesus were here tonight, would you know He loved you? Yes, you would. Suppose some Pharisees dragged that woman caught in the act of adultery into him. What do you think he'd do tonight? He'd do exactly what he did back there. Can't you see that? Bless your heart, that gives people heart.

Now, may we view it verse by verse and ask God to let us eat and assimilate the sweetness that is here, the incomparable fruits that are here. You'll notice, this is kind of like the *Song of Solomon*. If you go back to the fourth chapter of the *Song of Solomon*, verses 12-15, the Shulamite was likened to His garden. Before this she was barren, just like you and I. She was just a little shepherd girl out there. But implanted in her life were the sweet things, and the sweet spices, the perfumes, and such. They are the kind of thing that God wants to put in your life. How do you register around people? Do people kind of feel a fragrance of something that's heaven-like when you get around them? That's what you want to be. And if you yield

to Him, if you let Him mature in your life, you will have these fruits and fragrances. That's what the Philippians have, and that's what you can have.

Verse 3: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." I can't help but point out that some who come to our memory leave an unpleasant taste there. This was true with the Apostle Paul, not just us. Oh, that it weren't this way. Yet, there must be heresies among us. (*1 Corinthians 11:19*) We don't just confront the world out there, we confront one another. It takes diamonds to cut diamonds, and diamond dust polishes diamonds. There is no one that can be so cruel to you as another saint. You'll find that out. You expect it from the world, but you don't expect it from God's people.

However, here Paul is thankful for those Philippians. Isn't it wonderful that there are Philippian saints here in the world tonight? While he couldn't thank God for Demas and for Alexander the copper smith and for the Galatians and for Corinthians and some at Colosse, etc.; yet there isn't one registered fault in this book of *Philippians*. Isn't that an amazing thing? They must have had some inconsistencies there, but it's never registered. Still, even though he ran into saints that he couldn't be thankful for, the Apostle Paul accepted the fact of *Romans 8:28* that it was all working together for the good of them that love the Lord. Your enemies and the people that can do you the worst, if you could just realize it, they're for you. They wouldn't do what they're doing for anything in the world if they knew that they were helping brighten your crown.

So Paul is an example to you and I in that he was far more sensitive to the mercies of God than he ever was to the antagonisms that came his way. You think you have troubles. I read *II Corinthians 11* sometimes and feel like I ought to crawl under a rug somewhere. I think, "O Lord, here I am. I complain and I murmur, and if the food is ruined, or whatever, I can complain about such foolish things." The Apostle Paul had something to really complain about, and yet he said, "You forced me to glory. Now I'm going to glory. You let others glory. Now I'll tell you what I'm glorying in -- prisons, shipwrecks, beatings, whippings, hungers." I won't go into that. You've read it, and you know it.

However, you think about how often saints become occupied with the wrongs, be they real or fancied. It's amazing. It's utterly amazing. Who is back of that kind of thing? You'd think every one of God's children would be smart enough to know who is back of that type of thing (Satan). But who allows it? God. God allows it. He can let something be just like a goad in you, until you begin to coat it with the love of God, and then it becomes your blessing.

So, do you feel wronged? If you don't, you haven't gone with God. If no one has crossed you and challenged you, there is something wrong with you. Someone met a brother here the other day and said, "How you doing?" "Oh, just wonderful, wonderful." He said, "Since I left Living Waters I'm not having any trouble at all." The party was smart enough and understanding enough and said, "No wonder! The devil's got you where he wants you." The devil isn't going to bother you when he's got you where he wants you, but one of these days the Lord will stir the nest.

Precious hearts, you see, if you live in the misery of somebody's fancied wrong, you shut out the riches of Christ's own nature. Is He sufficient for you? Of course He is. The fruit of the Spirit which you could have, you don't have. You wonder at some things. You remember the children of Israel. God three times mentions the hornets. I'll tell you a little story about that. They say back in that day when the children of Israel went into the land of Canaan, no one could stand against them. So these nations that were more and mightier than they, suddenly found themselves insufficient to meet the Israelites. So, they began to carry on a jungle,

hit-and-run warfare. They would hide in the caves. You've heard about those killer bees that are coming this way. I think this must have been that kind of a deal. God put hornets in those caves and places and drove them out into the open. Now, sometimes God has to put the hornet somewhere to drive some things into the open so you can know what it is and battle against it. Don't you know that? Sure, trust God! He wants you to have His best, and He'll give you his best if you'll learn to trust Him.

These Philippians lived close to the head waters. Thank God if you live close to the head waters. Others around, the dearth has them, and their crops are drying up and whatever, and there is no fruitfulness in their lives. Just let them know that the waters are there, but you personally make sure the waters get into your life when the drought strikes and leaves some that aren't fruitful. Many go into defeat in these times. Others found Him a, "very present help in the time of trouble," and you can too. Jesus is always there. The head waters are always running right along side of your path. We all had our beginning in this dry, unfruitful land of Adam.

Do you think there was any good in you before the Lord got you? You don't know you if you think there is. You need to again read what God says about you. There is not a thing in you that God could count was worth anything. (*Romans 3:10-23*) So, bless your heart, you learn to live with Him.

The enemy may use many things to defeat us. It is only as we are sensitive to the mercies of God and allow grace to abound in our lives that we'll know peace. Grace --is it sufficient for you? Paul said it was. God said it was. "My grace is sufficient for thee." He is, "able to make all grace abound toward you that ye always, having all sufficiency, in all things . . ." (*II Corinthians 12:9 - 9:8*) No wonder the devil hates the grace of God. You see, you'll never have any peace apart from grace. Did you have any bad thoughts today? Well, you're in trouble if the grace of God isn't on your side. Did you think anything that was not love-like toward your brother? Now, wait a minute. You need the grace of God. You see, you didn't have to go out there and beat someone over the head, rob a bank. Sure they need grace, but they may know they need it and get it. You may go along and think you're all right and not get it. "By the grace of God I am what I am. I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was present with me." (*I Corinthians 15:10*)

Where Grace is, praise will be gushing from the lips. Songs of praise and thankfulness flowed from the Apostle Paul. Note how he says, "In everything give thanks." What? Have you thanked God yet for what happened recently? Now, be honest with you, because only you and God know whether it's the truth or not. Then he said, "Giving thanks always in all things." What? You sure of that? Wonder if he knew what he was doing? Then he said, ". . . All long-suffering with joyfulness."

Sometimes these trials can really last. Why? Why do they have to last? Because God wants you to rise above it. He wants you to have the victory over it. See? Such kept Paul in a state of victory, for praise ever filled his heart. Thus it flowed from his lips before complaint could take over. What do you do in the morning when you get up? Start complaining or start praising? "Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful salvation I have this morning. It's new this morning. Oh, my cup is running over." Well now, your cup may be empty in the natural, but the spiritual cup, and that's all that counts, really is running over every day.

The saint who is eager to praise God is never swift to censure or prejudice his brother. We need to examine ourselves. Are we full of praise or bitterness? Paul was always great in his eulogies, and I think it was because he was always ready to praise the Lord. He had a keen eye

to the liniments of grace. He discerned the buds of holy desire in saints even when they seemed to be buried beneath the refuse of sin and long continued negligence. I went out and did a little planting this morning about 11 o'clock in my garden, and I examined my fruit trees. While about at least three-fourths of the peaches are gone, several are still there. Some of them are just about the size of a pea. You know, they looked good to me. I wouldn't want to eat one of them yet, but I have a lot of good feeling about them. They'll get a little bigger if the Lord tarries, and hail or something doesn't knock them off, or worms don't get in them, or something like that. You see, everything is beautiful in it's season. Everything is. When it was blossoming, no peach was yet there. (If you wanted a shade tree, you wouldn't set a peach tree out. See? You'd want to put an oak or something like that out if you're looking for shade.) But if you're looking for fruit, you'll put a fruit tree out, and you'll know there are many, many stages to that fruit. The trouble of it is that we give up on ourselves and one another too quick sometimes.

How do you feel about your brother? Oh, he's just like an old, green sour gooseberry. If there is any fruit in his life, I can't see it. Well, you ought to look a little closer, and maybe you'll find that little peach. You see? The possibilities are there, and you know that they are there. That's what Paul is doing right here when he said, "The good work that he's begun in you, he's going to perform it." Here the Philippians in grace manifest their kinship to Christ. Paul's remembrance of them, you note, stretches back over the troubled and the laborious years, and there were several years between the time he first saw them and now. Of course, Paul looks on that time like a sweet pathway of fellowship where though they were apart, they had walked together like true brethren. I'll tell you, when the truth is in the norm in my life or your life, if you're walking with the truth, though we may be miles apart, we're walking together. Do you see what that adds up to? So, the stream hadn't failed nor had they failed to seek it. Thus memories are sweet and fill Paul's soul with joy. There is a difference in joy and happiness. Joy is what you have in Christ. Happiness is in events. Your events can be happy, and I hope they are happy. However, a lot of times the events of your life can be tragic, but they'll add to your joy. Nothing can take away your joy but your unbelief.

Notice verse 4-5, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." We think of the things both good and bad that can be the basis for fellowship. But here, the basis for their fellowship was the gospel. When you share in the same gospel you have fellowship. When you share in the same hate, you have fellowship. When you share in the same baseball game, you have fellowship. But there is only one fellowship that is really lasting and valuable. That's in the gospel. What are you doing with the gospel? Does it have your support? Does it have your life? Does it have your efforts? Does it have your abilities? Does it have your testimony? One day you'll wish it did, if it doesn't. Again, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." Often prayer is a duty and a task. I received a letter from a saint in another state, and they said, "Oh Brother Hill, the Lord has made me a prayer warrior. I used to pray just as a duty, but now it's something that's a joyful, consuming pleasure." Is that the way it is with you, or do you think of it as just a duty? In *1 Samuel 12:23*, Samuel is praying for Israel when they wanted a king and he told them what a mistake they were making; but he said, "God forbid that I sin in failing to pray for you." We need to pray for one another.

Prayer is an exercise of joy if you do it like God wants you to do it. Apart from the true conception of prayer, you just don't know what prayer is all about. It's true conception is that it gives pleasure to God. Do you realize that it gives pleasure to God? My family tell me I'm too generous. But I don't know how you can be like Christ and not be generous. If you're a

stingy Christian, you're not a good Christian. You're not like Christ, not really. It's such a joy, such a joy to be able to give. Here's God. He has everything. He has up there in heaven tonight at His right hand an absolute guarantee that He can give you anything you need. You say, "How is He going to do it?" That's His business. He can use crows. He can use Balaam's old ass. It doesn't make any difference. He can use anything. He can get a bird to fly into your window, like that woman I told you about -- a poor immigrant coming across on a ship third class, way down in the heat and stifling poverty-- she got out on the deck. She's been seasick, and she has her eyes closed and she's praying, "Lord, if I just had an orange." A couple of little smartaleck boys overheard her and said, "That old fool. Let's go get an orange and give it to her, and she'll think God gave it to her." I wonder who gave it to her. He doesn't care who he uses. He had those two scamps around there just for that purpose.

Jesus said, "It's the good pleasure of my Father . . ." It's something he wants to do. He longs to give you the kingdom. He wants to show himself strong in the behalf of them who put their confidence in him. Can you understand that? God is for you. How do I know he is? He gave his Son for you. That's how I know. Nothing else is a greater guarantee that He is for you than that He gave his only begotten Son. Oh, the unspeakable privilege to enter the throne room of grace like dear children going home. I used to love to go home. We would get in the car, and I would take my little kids and Sister Hill; and we would drive back to my mom's in Missouri when we had hardly enough to get there, because we liked to go home for Christmas. That's the way we ought to go to our Father. He wants you to come. He urges you to come. He made it so clear in the book of Hebrews where he said, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help. (When?) in the time of need." (*Hebrews 4:16*) That's when the devil will say, "Now wait a minute. You don't have any right to go there."

But it is there that we mention our brethren with the happy assurance that He hears us. As we know Him, there is something we'll know -- that is, that his desire, and his feeling is for every one of His children. It is here where glory covers the mercy seat, where the joy of the Lord will become our strength. May you and I grasp the fact that infinite resources back such prayers in the good will of God. Then with joy we draw water from the well of salvation.

Now note: "For your fellowship in the gospel . . ." Oh, how he appreciated that. There's but one gospel for this age. This wasn't the gospel of Peter or the kingdom or the Galatians. This was the gospel of the grace of God, and fellowship was unbroken. What do you and I embrace tonight? Are we embracing the truth? Or are we helping support other than the truth? Our spiritual companions and fellow soldiers, do you realize, are among the choicest gifts of the love of God to us. We all are encouraged and heartened by the presence of those that like John Bunyan called "Valiant for the Truth." Our own convictions are enriched by others who dare to live in the same faith. However, mere numbers can be so deceiving. It isn't numbers that make it go. It's the truth that makes it go. God backs the truth. Everything else sooner or later will come to nothing.

Such is like a holy contagion. I wonder at Paul's statement in *II Timothy 4:16-17*: "At my first answer no man stood with me (obviously at Rome) but all men forsook me." Then he adds something that is so precious in my sight. ". . . I pray God it may not be laid to their charge." I've known something of this over the years. I remember when the Full Gospel Businessmen had one of their members to call on me and said they would build etc., etc., etc., and back me; and I could believe what I believed but just not emphasize it. They walked away from me. They wanted no part, but I didn't want any part of anything but the gospel. That's the only

thing that's going to go. I'm going to preach the gospel, because it's for Him and for me that I preach the gospel, mainly.

And so, dear hearts, we need to realize that there are those who had been fellow workers in the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now. They were well seasoned and much tried soldiers. They had learned like Paul to draw from the head waters. It is such like who have been through the battles who impart calmness and confidence to those who are not battle tried. I've been through some battles. They never whip you. You see, we always win. Why? Because, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He has to be for us when we tell the truth. That's His choice. I don't wonder the outcome of things. Oh, you may lose out. God forbid. The Bible or the word of God won't lose out. And those that stand with it won't.

Verse 6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." I'll tell you, that just makes me want to jump! That is, He who created and planted the seed is also the Lord of the harvest. That's what He's saying. He's saying he creates the initial impulse and brings to maturity the ripened grain. Isn't that the truth? Who is it? The quickening of the spring and the ripening ministries are all His from the tender shoot to the giant redwood. All of it receives the same sunshine and the same rain. One of them is just a little thing just barely coming up from a microscopic seed, and the other is a giant redwood. Both of them are getting the same rain and the same sunshine and the same breeze, because it's good for any stage of the game.

You see, Christ -- He's good for you! I don't care where you are in the journey. He's the same. The same that was for Paul is for the least of us. The maturity is His. He takes care of it. We may choose to remain and even refuse to be other than children tossed to and fro, and yet He'll not leave us in spiritual babyhood. He wants to perfect us. He'll keep at us. He'll add grace and strength as our day; and as He does, everything will be beautiful in its season. Just like I said, those little green peaches looked awful good to me. I also thought of all the plums. We've never been able to get plums. Every year they've been frozen; and lo and behold, those plum trees are loaded with plums. There are a few pears on the pear tree too. Isn't that wonderful? It's a long time between now and this fall. We may get one of those devastating hails that won't leave even leaves on the tree, But I enjoyed looking at that little fruit. It's like catching a little trout and throwing him back into the river. I say wait until he gets to be about 5 pounds and then give him a tussle. But he has to be little before he can get to weigh 5 pounds. Verse 7: "Even as it is fit for me to think this of you all." That is, that God is going to finish it for you. "Because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as in both in my bonds. And in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." Now, you know a normal person is always loving, gracious, helpful, and optimistic about the people in their heart. Are you optimistic about your children? What about that? Sure you are. If you aren't there is something wrong with you. You aren't a proper parent. Oh yes, they can give you troubles. Some of my kids gave me trouble, but I remained optimistic about them. I continued to pray for them. I continued to believe God for them, and this is the strength and durability of natural love.

However, such can and does fail. Do you realize that natural love can fail? Occasionally we see it fail. Why, I've seen couples come to me that just couldn't live without one another and then after a year or two or three, they couldn't live with one another. What happened? That natural love was just like honey; it soured and became no good. That's a natural sweetness. But David knew of the endless love of God that was greater than natural love. In

the *27th Psalm* he said, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." He knew that there was something greater than a mother and a father's love.

Paul in *Romans* 8:35 & 39, shows the love of God never quits. A true Pastor must know and minister in this love. He can't be a true Pastor unless he does. It's easy to say, "I love . . ." You can say that. Anybody can say that and several have. We love Brother Hill, but we would like to send him to the penitentiary. Let's talk about that a minute. A lot of people had an opportunity to find out they didn't have the love of God, and that's what it's going to take if you're going to be in the bride of Christ. You make up your mind. It isn't going to be this old wishy-washy stuff that can go today and quit tomorrow. It's going to be the love that's like his. "What shall separate us from the love of God?"

What is it? Paul, what's the answer to your going on and on and getting your brains all but beat out? What is it? Well, he said, "The love of Christ constraineth me." Do you think you could do that with a natural love? That's the reason Peter has to have that session on the shore of Galilee: "Lovest thou me more than these, Peter?" Wait a minute. That "like" isn't going to get it done. "Oh Lord, you know I like you (I have a human affection for you)." "Well, feed my sheep." "Peter, do you divinely love me?" "Well, I like you." "Feed my lambs." "Peter do you just like me?" "Lord, you know I divinely love you." And when they came to crucify Peter, he said he wasn't worthy to be crucified standing up. "Crucify me upside down." That's what God wants to put in your life. That's what you must have in your life. And I'll tell you, precious hearts, you've had an opportunity lately to know which is what.

When brethren are only in the outer regions of our minds, we have little regard or concern for them. Isn't it a wonder what we'll do for our natural relationships. What would you do for your children? You'd almost go the last mile of the last mile of the last mile. You know that; I know that. Now, we can have that kind of regard. I have a sister; she's in eternity now, and she was a Christian. But the only thing she ever really loved was her four children, and she ruined them. They'd do anything for those four children and nothing for the gospel. Nothing. The last time I talked to two of them they said, "Why, she taught us our relatives didn't love us and didn't want us around." What a shame. We loved them and still love them, but that's natural love, although I think I've got a spiritual love for them too. We can love our natural people like that and yet have no regard for our brethren. Someone that wanted to prosecute me is doing everything that they can in court to support their child. What? (Now I don't want to make things personal; that isn't why I'm doing that.) I'm trying to show you that it takes the love of God to get the job done. If you don't love your brother that you have seen, how can you say you love the God you haven't seen?

"And hereby do all men know that you are my disciples . . ." -- that you love your white brother? Or you love your black brother? You love your brother-- black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, down and out, or up and out. It doesn't matter. The love of God is something in your heart! And it's for what's there.

Here we have a complexity of gracious bands, a four-fold cord not easily broken. No wonder they were in his heart.

1. One with Him in his suffering and with Him in his bonds. Isn't that a wonderful thing? How could they become one with Him? I feel recently that I to a great extent became one with Christ in something that in a way I would never wish for anybody and yet wish all had it, if you know what I mean-- one in the conformity to His death, like a common passage. There's no welding like a common passage in grief and pain.

2. One with Him in defending the central citadel of Christian faith.

3. One with him in confirming the vision of their own rich and glad experience.

4. One in the common sustenance. That is, they all fellowshiped at the same table of a feast of fat things. I trust we're all feeding on Christ tonight. He wants you to feed on the fat things. What Paul was and did was by the grace of God, you'll notice here. When saints can say this, they'll know the irresistible and triumphant strength that will carry them through. Note what he said again, "Ye all are partakers of my grace." I don't have anything that you don't have. The same grace that is enabling me is enabling you. The same grace that is for me is for you. Do you realize that when you burn the bridge of grace or you try to burn it for the other fellow, you really burn it for you? And when you build the gallows for the other fellow, you're really building it for yourself? (Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him." (*Proverbs 26:27*))

Verse 8: "For God is my record . . ." Paul was never afraid to call God as his witness. Many times God confirms Paul's gospel; and if you and I proclaim it, he'll manifest his approval in His time. I want you to notice it's in His time. He manifested his approval on Joseph, didn't he? But he waited 13 years.

Well, praise the Lord. Isn't the Lord wonderful?

Philippians Study 3

As we begin this portion, please re-read the first thirteen verses of chapter 1. We pointed out previously as an example, that in examining a peach you will discover that it is beautiful. It's pleasing to the smell and pleasing to the taste and pleasing to the sight. It will have some wonderful things about it that will deeply attract you. But then, you can take it into a laboratory, and you can find out just what there is in the peach as to chemicals, etc. So, there are two approaches to the epistle, and one of them is that of the laboratory.

The first two verses are the salutation. While the Apostle Paul is being used, he points us directly to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ -- the head waters of everything -- from whom everything you'll ever have naturally or spiritually must come. The breath that you have tonight you really receive it from God. The air that is out there to breathe -- you really get it from God -- and the water that you drink, the food that you eat, the clothing you wear, your transportation. You may not realize it, but God is the everything.

I mentioned the fact that Livingston spent almost a lifetime searching for the head waters of the great Nile. Here in verse 2 are the head waters that are everything. You will never amount to anything in the light of eternity unless you get it from God, and God doesn't leave us wandering around confused unless we want to wander around and be confused.

Again, note that immediately in the beginning of this book we have the great head waters of the gospel of God's great salvation, and this was in the salutation. In verses 3-11, we noted that Paul, the Pastor, has a three-fold concern for these saints, as every true pastor ought to have. In the past he remembers the fellowship they'd have had. Then, he had a future expectation for them. We sang the song tonight "Run for the Prize." What's out there for you? I've known without any shadow of a doubt for almost 60 years where I would spend eternity. Not because I had confidence in myself, but I had confidence in Him. He is the one that gives us that assurance.

In the present, Paul had such a devotion for them. He loved them. In verses 12-30, we see Paul, the prisoner -- here at the outset of this book that has so much to do with the perfection of your life. If you're going to have the life that God wants you to have, you're going to encounter many things that will be in opposition to you and will do their best to turn you back; and, of course, God will permit it to be that way.

Paul is like the test pilot. Out in the White Sands and desert-like parts of the west, we have the proving and testing grounds for much of the war potential of our country. There we have our airplanes tested, and we have what we call the test pilot. Well, the Apostle Paul has tried Christianity under every conceivable circumstance, and he flies the banner victoriously.

In this book he will say, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Paul isn't speaking like a fellow that has sat behind the desk. He has gone out into the fields and he has tested Christ under the most trying conditions. Read *II Corinthians 11*, and there you'll see this man's boast of what he was. There in those verses you'll read things that you and I haven't come close to testing.

Have you been tested in the penitentiary? In the hungers? A night and a day in the deep? Thrice was he shipwrecked. You think of these things. Until you begin to test Christ and the things of God under those conditions, stop murmuring.

In verses 12-18, we have Paul's attitude toward the gospel. Particularly in verses 15-16, we

have his attitude toward others. We have also his attitude toward himself. In verses 19-36 -- his attitude toward his release. Verses 27-30 his exhortation that they stand fast.

Let's look again at verse 8. "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." Paul never feared to call God as his witness for what his life added up to. But here as we see this 8th verse, we have Paul's yearning for the saints there at Philippi, and we note that it was the same love that Jesus Christ had for them.

You'll never be able to minister like God wants you to until God's own love is in your life and in your heart. And in this case, the deep seated love. You notice how he says, "In the bowels of Jesus Christ," or in other words, in the inner most feelings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has his feelings for them.

You will note, however, that true yearning will always reveal itself in supplication -- your yearning for someone, your friendship for someone, your love for someone. How often you might go to friends and those in authority to intercede for someone you love. Wouldn't you?

If your wife or your husband that you dearly love, or your child or your parent, fell into adverse circumstances, would you do your best to help them? I'm sure you would. This is how Paul was and this should be how you and I are. How much do we take on our hearts those that need our prayers? Remember how Samuel once said of Israel when they wanted a king, "God forbid that I sin against God by not praying for you."

Christians' best desires instinctively become prayers. What do you want for your brother? What do you want for God's precious people? Are you content to just settle down with them being questionably safe? Or receiving some blessing? Or have you looked into the word of God until you begin to understand what the plan and purpose of God for this age is? And the true yearning of God over the Church at this time?

In fact, you can test the true desire of the heart or your heart or anyone's heart by the nature of their requests. How do you pray for the brethren? How do you go to the throne of grace? There you can come boldly. You know that. You've been told that. The book of *Hebrews* says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need." (*Hebrews 4:16*) Just a longing is a poor earth-born sentiment; and if it doesn't mount up to God's throne, it'll never amount to very much. Paul's longings for the saints reached into the treasure house of Christ, and there he realized were the unreachable riches for the believer.

You remember how he said, as he came back from heaven no doubt, in *II Corinthians*, "I knew a man caught up into the third heavens." He said there he heard and saw and recognized, unspeakable things, things that it is not "lawful" for a man to utter. That is, there is nothing in the language that would express it. He said, of these things . . . " . . . eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him." (*I Corinthians 2:9*) You think of ideas that come into the minds of inventors and the many luxuries that we enjoy tonight because of the active and fruitful mind. Think of your forbearers. How many of us have ever gone back where the pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth Rock? There you see the primitive setting and what an existence it must have been.

I can remember my precious old mother and eight of us children left with my father gone. She would work, scrub all our clothes on a washboard; and how she would mend and sew and iron and cook and raise a big garden and work in the fields; and we have these young women today that complain if they have to pick up an iron and iron some clothes.

You think of what invention has given us. But "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him.

But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit. For His Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." Now, if I know what God has for you and I don't do my best to see you have it, I'm a hypocrite of the worst kind. Paul knew the things that awaited the believer in heaven. God waited to freely give out according to our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Now let's look at the ninth verse: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment or discernment." It's so wonderful to have love, but we need to learn wisely a lot of times, and love is more than just a duty. You do need the love of God. If you have the love of God in your life, you have the sum and substance of just about everything, because God is love.

If anyone knew the relative value of things -- natural wealth, spiritual wealth, or whatever -- it was the Apostle Paul. If you'll go to the third chapter of this book of *Philippians*, verses 4-6, you'll see what Paul once had. Every aristocracy of the flesh seemed to be in this man's possession, and there came a day when he counted it all loss to win Christ; and then he suffered the loss of all things. It's one thing to say, "I'd do anything for Jesus." I've seen a lot of people like that in my years in the ministry.

I knew a fellow down in Oklahoma years ago. He was tighter than the bark on a tree, to use an expression. He said, "Brother Hill, you pray that God will bring an oil well to my farm, and I'll tithe." There were several just across from his farm and he couldn't find oil on his farm. That was splendid of him wasn't it?

So, the first thing and the basic need for the bridal life wasn't great knowledge. It wasn't gifts of the Spirit. It wasn't great mountain-moving faith. It wasn't the sacrifice that you might even give your life to be burned, but a discerning love. An understanding love.

Could you tell me what God is? He's love. If you want to know God, you're going to have to enter into the knowledge of God's love. Do you see how simple that is? Let me read it again. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment or discernment."

So -- a discerning love, the love that abounds yet more and more. That is a love that overflows the need of man. Do you realize that God loves the world? He loves every down and out, every broken, every vile, every low, every evil possessed man and woman in the world tonight. Now, that doesn't mean that they are going to get saved, but they could get saved! If you understood the love of God and had it in your heart, you'd do a lot more to see them get saved.

You would understand. Here it is. This world is filling with a cold, bleak, deadly hate, and it's just about to come to the tribulation period and end in that horrible war of Armageddon. I stood and looked over that valley of Armegiddo, and I thought of how the Bible said the blood would flow to the horse bridles. You might say, "That's ridiculous." One day God filled the great Nile River and every fountain in Egypt with blood. You see, this is God that said that. There's not that much blood in all the veins of all the people in the world? I don't care whether there is or not; God didn't say He was going to take it out of the veins of man. He didn't take it out of the veins of man when that blood flowed down through Egypt. I guess God created blood in the first place. It'd be no problem for Him to create an ocean full of it if He wanted to. So, I don't know the interpretation of that; I just know that God said it; and for that reason I know that's the way it is, and that's the way it's going to be.

God wants you to have in your heart His abounding love. Does God love this man here? Well now, suppose he got out here and got himself in some deep trouble. God quit loving him,

didn't He? You see, brother, the road isn't quite that narrow. It's few there be that find it, that's true; but every man, and every woman, and every boy and every girl, God loves them. And there is only one way that He can demonstrate it and that's as He uses you for a channel.

Christians are giving themselves to hate, and the tragedy is they'll turn around and say they love people. As an illustration, here's a couple in the church with two girls and a boy. I think I know them well enough that I don't believe their children could do anything, that if the time came that they would need their help, but their parents wouldn't do their best to give it to them.

Now would any one of you vote to send your child to the penitentiary? Well, that's natural love. You see, you love that sweet thing. Would you vote to send that sweet grandchild there to the penitentiary? Yet I've seen people claim they love their brother that would do everything they could to see that they were put over the road? Do you see what we're talking about? Don't talk about the love of God until you've got it in your heart and life, and you will need it. If you're going to be in the bride of Christ you're going to have to have the love of God in your heart.

This word "abound" means to "super abound in quantity and quality." That is, not simply a love that covers the need, but it overflows the need like a mighty river. It is the word that is found in *Ephesians 3:20* where Paul says "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think of Him." This is the word. It's basically the same word in the Greek. In other words, God wants you to have a love in your life that is exceedingly abundantly above all that may ever confront it because that's what He has. And if you're going to be like Him, you're going to have to have His love.

Overcoming saints are those who seek love above all else. Desire spiritual gifts and prophecy and whatever, but make sure that all of it is demonstrated by the love of God. "And I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment (judgment)."

God is love; and if you would know Him, you must be illumined in His love. So many saints are unilluminated, only partially enlightened. They are taught many beneficial doctrines, yet the doctrines may go no further about knowing Him. They might not take you into the love of God that makes you know Him.

You see, after all those years that Israel marched under the leadership of Moses, God said they knew His acts. He fed them every morning. He protected them every day. Serpents bit them, and all they had to do was look at a brazen serpent on a pole and they were well. Their clothing didn't wear out. Can you imagine forty years and their feet never swelled, their clothing never waxed old? Imagine if you had the ability to build a garment like that in this country we're caught up with fashion, and we throw good clothes away.

Do you understand that you can know His acts but never know Him? "Israel knew my acts, Moses knew my ways." So love knows Him. Love sees that day of Christ and its everlasting inheritance. It was such a love that constrained Paul to go on when the path bristled with an opposition that you and I have only faintly heard about. And only that love-constraining life takes anyone on. If you go with God, you may stay in church, you may stay active, you may do a lot of things, but there is only one thing that can take you on to what God has for you, and that is that constraining love. It was this quality that shone in Paul's life like the noonday sun. How many Christians do you know tonight that manifest the true love of God? You see, this world is dying, not for a lack of knowledge but the knowledge of God. We're the most advanced generation the world's ever seen. We've gotten so that we don't need God anymore. We've

put Him out of our educational systems. We've put Him out of most of the churches, and certainly most lives only want Him as a spare tire, something in the time of emergency.

So dear ones, there is a love of the first standard, and it was this love that the church at Ephesus had left. Many of God's precious people are satisfied to have just a good love or something of that kind. God help us to be equipped with the delicate instinct that feels its way into the heart of things, discerning the secret of things with a delicate perception.

Here Paul says that his readers advance in the university of love, that they advance higher and higher in love's knowledge and judgment, thus becoming like God. Such is necessary to approve things that are excellent. Some have a love that approves the good or the better, but the best is still before us. May God enable us to acquire a taste for His best.

The real essence of life comes with the revealing presence of God's love. The more love fills our lives the richer will be the revelation of the exceeding riches of his grace. Multitudinous excellencies will reveal themselves on every side. Then notice verse 11: "... that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." Thus you understand abounding love and increasing vision of God and the God of glory. It's by this that saints become rich and enriched. You may not have a penny in your pocket, but you're as rich as you'll permit God to make you.

Note the word "sincere" from a Greek word meaning "clear to the light." God's word is light, the Bible says, and its entrance gives light to us. David said, "It's a light to my pathway and a lamp to my feet." Jesus said, "I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," showing that there is a light, as He said elsewhere, that is darkness. If your eye be single, it is full of light.

What a lofty and splendid standard the word "sincere" is. It suggests a perfection so finished and profound that it's without stain or imperfection, and when it's brought into the sunlight it passes inspection. This, however, isn't my inspection. I have no right. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Who do you think you are? I don't dare do that. Now I can reckon with some things, but I have no authority to judge God's servant. "To his own master he standeth or falleth."

Suppose you've got a man out there and he's working for you, and he's standing around and leaning on the shovel or whatever like these city workers in town this last winter. Some of them went out and sat all day in their truck and did nothing. Well, Channel 9 TV got out and brought out all that dirt on them. And, of course, the mayor kind of lightly tapped some of them, and that was it. That's politics. I can't do anything about it. A man can come out here and stand in this street. If you have a man working for you, I have no right to judge him. I might see that he's not working and you're paying a guy for nothing. Maybe you'd listen to me, maybe you wouldn't. Especially if it was your son or your daughter, you might tell me to tend to my own business. Well, you see, we're talking about God's children. Better watch your step!

So, it isn't our inspection or our judgments that prove whether we are "sincere." Our judgments may pass on things that are of a dull standard. Only His can justify you and I in that day of eternity. So, if we have God's love and are enriched with the fruits of eternity, if we're enlightened and warmed by the grace of God, our entire life will be become transformed and changed even from glory to glory even to the likeness of the Lord.

Now verse 12: "But I would that ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." I'm sure all of us know about *Romans* 8:28, which says, "We know all things work together for good to them

that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." In the light of this, we need to realize that things just don't "happen," but directly or by permission they come from God. Now that's all things if you're a Christian. God doesn't show us right away how these events work together for our good, but he always does ultimately show us, whether he does it for you today or whenever.

Do you remember how Joseph said it? If ever a young man was abused, despised, ridiculed, and judged -- and they would have killed him, but God saw that they didn't. Thirteen years in one stretch in prison. Think of that. Finally he's revealed to his brothers, and they feel like, "Well, this is the end of us." And he said, "Now wait! You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." He came to the place that he could see that all of that worked together for his good. And one day you'll see, if you love the Lord, if you're the called according to his purpose. You'll see things that you just could not understand why they could come to pass, but you'll see that it was for your good. Someone meant it for your evil, but God meant it for your good.

There is no one that can get by God. There is nothing that the devil can do to you until God is ready for him to do it. God gave us one entire book to prove this to us in the book of Job. Oh how the devil wanted to kill him. The tragedy of poor old Job was that he couldn't die. He wanted to die. I think, if my memory serves me correctly, he speaks something like 37 times of death. He never speaks of life. That's us. We're occupied with death, mainly. Sometimes we get our eyes open and we get occupied with life. I hope all of you have here tonight.

So, God doesn't always show us right away, but He does show us. Many years went by for Abraham before he saw, and Moses, Joseph, David, and so on. So that which seems a menace turns to a blessing. Note how this is told at the very beginning of this letter for this reason -- Paul would have us confident, and God is moving him to write this. At the outset of your Christian journey one of the greatest things that you can learn is to be confident. And you will be confident if you trust the word of God.

It's when you lose sight of the word of God that you lose assurance. You lose confidence. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And you can. Look back. Do you believe for one moment Moses accomplished what he did through any strength of his own? Look at Shamgar. He had an ox goad, a kind of paddle on one end and a kind of sharp something on the other end. In those days the Philistines had robbed Israel of their weapons. Do you know what the devil has done to the church tonight?

You can't fight the good fight of faith without the whole armor of God. Where is the sword of the Spirit? How many of God's precious people fall into defeat because they don't know the word of God? You see people do the things they do because they don't know the word of God. Or, they may know about it and reject it to have their own way.

Poor old Shamgar. He went out. There was an invasion of 600 Philistines. He just took that ox goad; and when he got through, there were 600 dead Philistines. In other words, what's that in your hand? What do you have? I don't care if it's a rod, an ox goad, a trumpet, a candle, a clay vessel, a ram's horn. It's whatever God uses and chooses. You see "I can do all things." Now that's not just Paul, that's you.

That doesn't mean you are going to go out here and stop the sun or something. Joshua did that at the command of the Lord. David when he went against Goliath knew exactly what was going to happen. How did he know that? God certainly must have told him. He said, "I'm going to take your head and feed you to the birds. I know what I'm going to do."

And so, precious hearts, we learn that God makes all things work for our good. So that

which seems to be a menace turns into blessing. He gives us this instruction to be sure that adverse circumstances are for our success as we take our pilgrim pathway. Adversity shouldn't surprise us. Jesus never sought to hide the fact that we would have heartaches, that we would maybe have to go alone. Why, He made a statement, "If you want to be my disciple and you don't hate your mother, your brother, your sister . . ." You know He doesn't want you to hate someone. He wants you to love people. That word hate is a relative word. In other words, if it comes to the place that someone dear would try to step between you and your love of God, you'd say, "I love you, but I love the Lord more." You learn to put God first.

Did He put you first? You thought you gave up something. What did we ever give up? That's the tragedy of Christianity. We put the cross in a little gold chain around our neck or up on the steeple, and the real old rugged cross -- we abandoned it a long time ago. So, don't be surprised. Jesus almost boastfully points to the dangers that would confront us. Let us realize the storm cloud brings the needed moisture. I saw it do it today. That sunshine a couple days ago was beautiful, and early this morning it was nice; but it didn't give us any rain, and we really were needing some moisture. So, there was only one way to get some moisture and that was to have the storm. If you want to have the refreshing of God in your life you're going to have to have a few storms. Imprisonment brings greater liberty and vision to Paul. Paul's experience has been repeated, however in other lives. I've had some experiences, you have too. And if you haven't, you better get with it.

It seemed at times as if calamity or enmity would check or destroy our testimony and ministry, but the morrow proved that the effort against us worked for us. I remember reading years ago about a man Perry who went to the North Pole. His party camped out on an island up there, and it was just covered with moss; and they let a bon fire get into that moss. They thought nothing about it. It was just an island out there in the North Atlantic, and what did it amount to, so they just let it burn; And it burned that entire island off. Sixteen years later they came back and that island was covered with beautiful trees. What happened? The judgment that fell on that island and burned it black awakened the seeds that covered the island with a beautiful forest. Sometimes God has to let the fallow ground be broken up before He can plant the good things. He wants the good things in us.

"The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel: So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and all other places." We never know the real strength of a foundation or the anchor to the soul until they have been tested by the storms. What has made you and I here? Did the storm hit us? Why are we here? Well, let me tell you, picnic weather doesn't reveal the power of a sea-going liner. Only a tempest can do that. And when a Christian is put in a tight corner and every way of escape from sin and despair seems to be closed, then the worth or the worthlessness of their profession of faith will come to the front.

As for Paul, his experience became a ministry of growth, both to him and his brethren. Others came to realize his bonds were in Christ, and that's where you've got to see it. You see, Christ allows the trials. "I, Paul, the prisoner" of Rome? Why, of Christ! That's whose prisoner I am! If I know anything about Paul or human nature, I think there was a little chaffing there. I don't think he just went along with that -- "Well Lord, that's wonderful. Hallelujah, that's wonderful." Listen, he had a human nature just like you and me.

Remember up there at Jerusalem and in the night an angel appeared to him, saying "Fear not Paul." On a number of occasions he was told not to fear.

You remember out in that storm when the ship was lost on the way to Rome and they were

cast upon that island. Paul was down in the hold of the ship praying and the Lord came to him and told him, "Don't be afraid. There won't be a soul lost, just the ship. Now go up and tell them." Can you imagine him telling them that? What would you do if someone told you in a storm like that, "Now just don't be afraid. It's going to be all right." I tell you, you'd have to have a mighty lot of confidence in that person.

And so in verse 14 we see that they came to realize Paul's bonds were in Christ and his victory, and they began to understand there was a divine spring that was feeding and refreshing this man's life -- and such a spring. Such a spring has always been the strength of God's children.

Look back at the divine history of the nation Israel and at individual lives down through the centuries, and one thing will set them apart. Not their education. Not their physique. Not the color of their skin. Not the level of their society. I could go on and on. But their relationship and fellowship with God is what made them different.

To see Paul is to realize he was not an ordinary person. Secret resources of mighty strength and courage came to this man that were not natural. It's like I have a cousin who was in World War I, and they said he was the bravest man. He took German machine nests. He just ran out through the country in no man's land cursing and carrying on. He was later saved through my ministry. Someone said, "Why, Jim Will wasn't afraid of anything." And another fellow said, "Why he's just crazy." That was the explanation of why he wasn't afraid. That's almost the way it is.

Peter walked on the water and then got afraid, so don't get the idea that it's a horrible thing to get afraid. That's part of you. The thing that sets you apart and makes you different is that you're being fed by the power of God. Jesus Christ has been made to you "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

So the secret resource of Paul's strength and courage that showed no sign of exhaustion, enabling him in his crisis days, was God. Now if some sudden emergency throws you and I into dark and tumultuous conditions and we go on with God believing Him, it can only bring glory and honor to God. Remember, it's this glory and honor that He will one day share with you and I forever.

Again, tonight, verse 14: "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Paul's invincible attachment to Christ made others bold. The timid received holy courage. The fruits of Paul's testing became spiritual stimulus to those at Rome and to me too.

I look at him and I say, "Oh Lord, how could I complain?" And this is one of the gracious mysteries of the severities of the leading of our gentle Jesus. He will lead you into the most severe things if it's for your good. And it is for your good if He lead's you into it. We know. How do we know? It didn't say we understand. There's a lot of things you just know.

You don't understand a lot of things.

Philippians Study 4

We will close out this first chapter; and as we do, let's remember in the "laboratory" Christ is seen here as the life of life. You may be alive physically, but if Christ is not in your life, you're not really alive. Christ is the life of life. In this book of Philippians, everything that you'll one day wish you could be will have been found here, if you would want it.

I was thinking yesterday of the funeral of one of the saint's grandfather, so aged in one sense of the word. He'd never really learned to number his days, and yet when you think about it there are only three real days in life. Yesterday, it's gone. You couldn't change it. Jesus Christ can forgive it and change it in that sense, but you could never get a moment of it back. And then, today. Now this is really the only day you have. Because tomorrow may not come for you as far as this life is concerned. But then tomorrow in the ultimate will declare everything of today. And so we have yesterday, today, and tomorrow. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (*Psalms 90:12*) How precious it is that the wisdom of God is found in these epistles that God moved this precious man to write.

Let's read the entire first chapter to begin. Here, in the 14th verse, we find Paul's invincible attachment to Christ. It made others bold when they saw the boldness of Christ and the faith of Christ and the determined stand of Christ. The timid received courage, and the fruits of Paul's testings actually became a spiritual stimulus to them. Other's trials can become a stimulus to you. They awaken you. They move you. And such is one of the gracious ministries of the severities of the Great Shepherd's leading. The Lord knows how to lead you and I. Who would ever guess that the means by which the believers at Rome would be strengthened and established would be by seeing that great leader, that great pastor of the saints, judged and imprisoned?

In verses 15-19 we see the preaching of the gospel. Paul says here that some preach Christ of "envy and strife." This is a fearful combination, but you will see it over the years. That is, you'll see that the truth may come from the lips of those with wrong motives in their hearts. Now, there is a sense in which the word of God never returns void. It falls into lives, and it's strange some of the ways that God will bring that to pass. You see people that preach the truth in that manner, and yet Paul said, "Speaking the truth in love." (*Ephesians 4:15*) There are so many things that concern your life and mine that have to be by love. Faith works by love. (*Galatians 5:6*) Love covers a multitude of sins. (*Proverbs 10:12, 1 Peter 4:8*) We could go on and on.

We may preach the gospel simply for the sake of winning a selfish victory. Let me say to you, I would never want a victory if it weren't for Christ. What good would that victory be? And if Christ be in it, He'll see that you have the victory. Learn to put your confidence in Him. Oh, sometimes we want to fight so badly. But then, there can be no winning if Christ doesn't do the winning. Some not only want a selfish victory, but they gratify an envious and a quarrelsome spirit. Churches many times are the product of angry divisions. Pride can proclaim peace so amazing and invincible, but experience proves the depressing reality of these things.

Note, it wasn't all preached of envy and strife. Paul said, "some of good will." Such have no hidden passion. No dark and personal motive; no small fraternity that they're going to protect; no private aim; no ulterior purpose; no seeking to establish a little kingdom of their own. These do it in love. There is but one way to be in harmony with the Church as it came

into birth on the day of Pentecost. It was born and established in love, and that is to be constrained. If we are to work in harmony with it, we must be constrained by His love and grow into a fellowship that will terminate into a union of the highest level.

You remember the church at Ephesus in *Revelation 2*. So many, many wonderful things were said concerning this church. And yet, the Holy Spirit said, "I have somewhat against thee. Because thou has left thy first love." (*Revelation 2:4*) Your life began because "God so loved the world -- (and that's you) that He gave His only begotten Son" for you. That was the only way out.

There had to be the love of God. But then think of the love that Christ had to have to come. He who was rich to become so poor. There's no way that I'll ever know how poor he was, because his poverty exceeded far beyond just material needs. His was a poverty where He was forsaken in every sense of the word. Have you ever thought of how the Holy Spirit is pictured by the gentleness of a dove coming to the likes of you and me? Bringing the gospel to us. Coming again and again. Maybe in dreams. Maybe in so many, many ways. How He too must have loved us to come knocking again and again and again.

I've spoken of the young woman who went out in the slums of London because of the love of God that was in her heart. She found this derelict, this person that was just devastated of sin and poverty. She picked him up and took him to church and clothed him and fed him and did so many things for him. Then he betrayed her trust and went back to the world, and she searched him out again and found him and re-established him again. But the second time he betrayed her trust and went out into the world and gave his life back to a world of sin. And the third time she went after him again. It is said that the great modern day missionaries can be traced to that man's life. What was it that won him? Was it her going and criticizing him and doing her best to make him feel small and condemn him? It was the love of God that embraced him. It was the love of God that sent Christ. It was the love of Christ that went to the cross. It was the love of the Holy Spirit that searched you out. If you think that you'll ever amount to anything without the love of God in your life, you're sadly mistaken. The gospel can only go by the love of Christ.

But then the culminating thing of this is that first love. Think of it. What a contrast of motives and goals, one seeking to hurt Paul and his gospel and the other loving Paul because they loved Christ. How can you and I say we love the Christ we haven't seen when we don't love the brother we have seen? Oh, precious hearts, we need to be in harmony with God's program. The devil will do everything he can to turn your heart cold or fill it with envy, or bitterness, or hate or something of that nature. You will come up against the things that will challenge you and only you will know it. No one else will necessarily know it. But you'll know it. What will you do? You say, "Why, why? Why did that person mistreat me so? Why did that person do me that way?" Usually it's God's child that can do you the greatest hate of anyone, but God wants to fill your life with love. If you're not filled with love, you're not filled with God. And if you don't know love, you don't know God. And if you don't love your brother, you don't really know the love of God.

God will unite himself with man through his Son in the marriage of the Lamb. Have you ever thought of where we came from and where He came from? The psalmist put it like this. He said, "When I see the heavens, the work of thy fingers when I see the glories that are yonder. I realize they are just like a woman's beautiful crocheting or tatting or needlework. That's your work -- the heavens, the stars up there. And then I think of man, and I say, 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?' You made him lower than the angels and you've crowned him

with honor and glory." This will be the result of the love of God on both sides. So, you can give out the gospel in envy. You can do it to try to gain a little throne for yourself. You can have many motives in your heart. But there is only one way that it can come out in harmony with God, and that's when the love of God possesses your life.

Note, Paul is optimistic that regardless of what happens, he knows that Christ never loses. Do you realize Christ never loses? Judas thought he was getting rid of Him. But someone had to betray Him so you and I could be saved. His word never returns void. It brings about His purpose even in the most wicked of the plans of men. Their plans and devices actually come to nothing. It never works. "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." (*Romans 8:28*) You can't defeat that. Because love is God, and there is no way you can defeat the person that loves the Lord.

So Paul is in prison. Yet he says, "I know this shall turn to my salvation. What I'm undergoing shall turn to my salvation." Isn't that a marvel? You and I don't think that, do we? Somebody does us wrong, and we get so upset about it. But it's going to turn for your salvation as you love God.

Paul in prison, think of his surroundings. They were so hostile. His plans are all seemingly in confusion. You can imagine the thoughts of his heart and the plans of his heart, and what he wanted to do, this man that was so committed to Christ. His missionary journeys now seemed to come to an end. He's not going to get to go out yonder and out yonder and out yonder. But lo and behold, he's here tonight because he was in prison. That's how he wrote his letters. That's how he brought this to us. And he's been a missionary in thousands and thousands of places because he was in prison. Isn't that a wonderful thing!

But now it looks like it's all come to an end, circumstantially speaking. Many have forsaken him. Even Timothy is being shaken, and yet the visible circumstances simply don't reveal all of the facts. Paul, like Elijah, says, "The surroundings are full of the heavenly host." He believed it like Elijah did. "Open your eyes," he's saying to you. "Circumstances are not telling you the truth, because there are facts that can't be changed." You can't change the facts of God. I don't care what the circumstances shout at you. Are you in a predicament, and it looks like you're just sold down the river and there's no way out? Why bless your heart! Look up, because the real facts are over there. Dear ones, Paul by faith knows this to be true. He knows over the transient rules the eternal. Within the bitter antagonisms, God's invisible plans and purposes move on like a mighty river that you can't stop. Just be with God. Trust God. Don't trust what it looks like. Trust what he says.

Paul's foes seemed to be riding over his head. David one time said, "I have seen fools riding and princes walking." God often seems to reverse things, and he doesn't do them like you and I do. Yet his ways are always the victorious ways. You can't put God in a corner. You can't put God in a place where there's no way out. And if you're with him, you're just as victorious as He is. Think of it like this. If you're in the tornado season of tornado ally down through the midwest states, if you get down in there and get caught in one of them, you'll be just as safe as the storm cellar you're in. And when it crumbles you might not be safe.

So there's no one that can stop God, and they can't stop the purpose God has in Paul. How? Well it says, "... through your prayers." Isn't that a wonderful way? Paul said, "I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer." I know it. You don't realize your power, do you? I question if any of us quite realize the great lever God has put in our hands that will turn on the power.

You remember Moses, when Aaron was fighting in the valley, and it looked like the

Midianites would prevail; and Moses would lift his hands, which speaks of surrender. Did you ever try to hold your hands up a long time? Moses would hold his hands up, and Joshua would prevail. He'd get weary and his hands would go down, and Amalek would prevail. So Aaron and Hur each stood beside Moses, one got on one side and one got on the other side; and they helped him hold his hands up. There is a translation which I read years ago, and I don't know where I got it now, but it goes like this: "And because the hand is laid upon the throne, therefore God will fight with Amalek from generation to generation." So do you have a hand? It'll do the most good when you lay it on God's throne. He's made it possible for you to make that kind of a contact with Him. Oh the things that have happened just because of that. Well you say, "I've tried." Well you don't try, you surrender!

So Paul's enemies, just like Christ's and like it has always been, the greatest enemies of God have been Pharisee-type people. Again, the sinner and the Publicans gladly sought the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Pharisee would say, "He couldn't be very much, or he'd know what sort of a person it is that touches him." They were the ones that demanded his life. It's always been that way. It continues to be that way. It's utterly amazing how self-righteous we "rats" can get.

So, Paul's enemies seemed to have the ear of Rome. Who visibly seemed to have the power and the control of events? And yet that little band of obscure saints had a lever which controlled all power which still over powers and overrules every power of Satan and diverts the host of hateful circumstances to glorious and undreamed of ends. And this can be you!

I can remember my dear old mother but I never knew it at the time, in those days when it looked like my life was just one of destruction and ruin and when I threw it away in every conceivable way, she would pray all night for me. She would go to a window where she could get her breath and there she would pray for me. If you've every been in Kansas City in the summertime, you'll know it's about the hottest place that you could ever be, because it not only is hot by the thermometer, it's humid. No wonder I'm here! You may underestimate you (and I hope you will), but don't underestimate what you can do when you lay hold of God. The power is there!

The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ becomes the river (think of that) that later in this book he describes when he said, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (*Philippians 4:19*) Do you have any idea how rich that is? No, we don't, do we? ". . . All things are yours. And you are Christ's, Christ is God's." (*I Corinthians 3:22 and 23*) We're prone to forget who we are. We're prone to forget the plan of God. We're prone under the circumstances to throw caution to the winds, and forget and go along with the circumstance, and cry and whine, and complain and murmur.

Job speaks of death something like 88 times. He never speaks of life. Isn't that you and me? Oh, we can talk about death and defeat. We can murmur about our enemies. We can complain. We can say, "God, why don't you knock that guy in the head?" Well, if he knocked him in the head, he couldn't enrich you. That's who he's going to use to make you one who overcomes.

So the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the river. How big is that river? I don't care what your need is, it's in that river. And then the channel, through which the river runs; is the praying saint. God wants to use you. Let him use you. Seek the Lord. You say, "Well, I don't know how to pray." Start praying, and then you'll find out. I don't have any trouble with it, and I'm no better than you or smarter than you or more capable than you. I'm no more his child than you are. Why, just "wording" something isn't it. If that were true, these fellows that get up and pray at

these football games and open these political meetings with prayer would be "stem winders." But, you see, that isn't what counts. I sometimes (and I don't want to point to me particularly) get on my knees, and I'll get up and look at my watch, and I've been there for an hour or an hour and a half and have never said anything but just worshiped the Lord. That's what I'm going to do forever. Why not get used to it now?

Now let's go to verse 21 which should especially be a blessing to you. "For me to live -- Christ." Isn't that amazing? Now let me point out something to you. If you will find out the conception of a person's life, you'll have the master key to their career. What is your conception of life? There may be many designs and purposes, and yet that one conception will rule the life. What a person thinks of life is the "sovereign on the throne," and all else is minor and subservient to that monarch. Is it money? What would you do if you had a \$100 million? Usually when someone gets \$100 million they want \$200 million. When they get \$200 million they want \$500 million. When they get \$500 million they want \$1 billion. Fame or pleasure is what some people want. We could go on and on. But such are the realities of life to certain people, while God and His word are meaningless to them. And when these things are absent to these people, nothing is left. Nothing remains that's worthy of life.

My friend Ed told me a rather amusing thing though it was a sad thing. He had a cousin named Mickey Ohousen. Mickey was a nice fellow. He was a deacon in the church. But money was life to him. He owned several farms. I don't know how rich old Mickey got before he died, but he always thought an awful lot of me. He owned some land which he had purchased for \$80,000, and he turned around and sold it for \$250,000. And lo and behold a great power plant just near Leavenworth, north of Kansas City, came in there and bought that land for something like \$1,500,000 and it just made Mickey sick. He'd made all that money on it, but then somebody made so much more on it, and it almost killed him. Ed said he went over to the hospital at Leavenworth to see him, and he said to Ed, "Help me get up on the edge of the bed, Ed. Give me my teeth and glasses. Give me my ear phones." Ed said he gave them to him. Then he said, "Ed, I know where we can make some money."

Mickey was ready to die, but to him to live was money. To someone else, to live is fame. To someone else, to live is pleasure. But Paul said, "For me to live -- Christ." Christ! To Paul, Christ meant life. As you'll read in Philippians 3:8, Christ meant life to him to the extent that he suffered the loss of all things. For without Christ, all to Paul would be death. And so it should be to everyone of us.

We should get our feet, as it were, into Ezekiel's waters. (*Ezekiel 47*) He describes waters that flowed out to the ankles, to the knees, to the loins, and then waters to wash in. It was like a river that begets life where it flows. And so to live..... You may never have any money. You may never be famous. You may not have very much pleasure. Can you imagine how much pleasure Paul had? But to be gloriously alive is to fill everything with Christ. Thus, wherever Paul went and whatever the circumstances were that surrounded him, he looked for Christ in the situation. (I'm in prison. I'm looking for Christ there. I'm in the deep, I'm looking for Christ there. I'm in the shipwreck...) Do you remember when he was out there on the sea and he was down in the hold of that ship and Christ was there? He said, "Don't be afraid, Paul." He was over there in prison at Jerusalem, and the Lord came to him and said, "Fear not, Paul." Again and again Christ was always there. And Christ is always there. Will he leave you? Will he fail you? You know He won't if you know the truth.

But then, "to die -- gain." Isn't that amazing? How we dread to think of death. So, the one is the fruitful sequence of the other. That is, if life is Christ, then everything that unveils

him makes us more alive. Isn't that right? If Jesus tarries, death will remove that muddy curtain, and I'll be in his presence forever. You see, this body actually is keeping me from him. Do you understand that? What a wonderful thing to be ushered into the visible presence of Christ, into the sweet dawn of a fadeless day. And how blessed is that person who, when making up the balance sheet of life, can put death as one of the gains, or put it in the credit side of the ledger. However, those whose conception of life is money, fame, pleasure, ease, whatever, look at death as a loss.

I went to school with a young fellow who at that time boasted he didn't believe there was a God. He was a wealthy boy. I was just a poor guy, and yet he kind of liked to run around with me because I was liked and I could fight the battles if I had to. His name was C.A. Murdock. He heard me preach. He stood outside and made fun of me, they tell me. When he was 28 years of age, he died. I had a niece that was a nurse in the Missouri Methodist Hospital in St. Joe, and she said you could hear him scream and carry on, "Don't let me die. Don't let me die." You see, death to a person like that plunges all their fairest designs into a final and pathetic confusion.

For Paul to die -- gain! If you love the Lord, for you to die -- gain! You see, to Paul death wasn't a dead end where the meaning of life and its treasures would rot away into confusion but where his treasures would be unveiled forever. Hear him talk about it: "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (*II Timothy 4:8*)

Verse 22: If everything is Christ, if life has no meaning apart from Him, what a difficult choice to stay in the body or to "strike the tent." That is what Paul is faced with. Shall I stay in this body or shall I strike the tent? Seemingly, God had given him a choice there. But then I'll have you notice something, and this is so precious to me. That love who gave Christ to the world and that love that brought Him from the glory to the cross and to the death of the cross now constrains the apostle to stay, which was needful for the saints. The people God loved, the people Christ died for -- now they need Paul. So the same love that gave Him, that sent Him, that enabled Him now constrains Paul. So Christians feel a double tug. They feel the mystic pull of the unveiling and the tug of the immediate day. That is, Paul heard the call from the fields. He had written, "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace." (*Ephesians 2:7*) See those things? But then the call came to him from the fields of immediate service, which means more of *II Corinthians 11* -- stripes and prisons, etc.

Now for Paul, the two calls were in no way antagonistic, for the call from that cloudless day really only fired the call to a strenuous activity in the harvest field. You see, you'll harvest best when you're in harmony with that call over yonder. The joy that is set before you to win Christ will enable you to do the best work while you're right here. So, Paul's field of labor was the needy saints, a labor of love for their progress and joy of faith, to lead them into the higher grades of love, mercy, and grace. Here irksome duty changes to fruitful freedom. And here duty ripens to a rich joy where the small ideas become a vision of unspeakable glory. So to help others a few steps along the heavenly road becomes Paul's decision. He said, "I will." And I'll tell you frankly, precious hearts, I wouldn't be in this pulpit tonight but for you. You may not know it, but that is a fact.

Verses 27-28: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel." And so may the country to which we belong mark and make us known in our pilgrimage while we're here as we strive together here for the faith of the gospel. Do you know what you're defending? The

gospel. Isn't that amazing? The gospel that does and has done everything for you and will do everything for you, God let's you defend it. Well, it's just too wonderful to me.

Verses 29-30: "But unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." What a marvel. Unto you it is granted. Unto you? Do you realize there are levels of privilege in the Christian life? You're all, I suppose, here tonight God's children. You're born again. You're heirs of God. You are the aristocracy of heaven, and being that gives you the privilege that a lot of people don't have. Knowing what you know has opened up privileges to you. Do you know what they are? Well the natural, and carnal mind judges that the best should be measured by prosperity and good health. "I would have you prosper and be in health," the popular preacher says today. But in Christ the privileged children of God are those who suffer with Him, who bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, who fill up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. For as we suffer with Him, we'll reign with Him. If we deny Him, He'll also deny us. (*II Timothy 2:12*)

As we behold the four beasts of *Revelation 5:8-10*, we might wonderingly ask, "Who are they?" And you'll find them described in *Revelation 2:8,10* in the church of Smyrna and *3:7-10* in the church of Philadelphia. And there, these two things are seen -- suffering and love. To Smyrna he says, "Be faithful to death. I'll give you the crown of life." The church of Philadelphia represents the church of brotherly love. So a church, and saints, who never engage in stern and bloody warfare with the devil (remember who your enemy is) can never know the real mystery of the communion of the saints in light. Those suffering know the secrets of the hidden treasury of God that were given to Paul. That life which is a picnic is a shallow life. It's superficial. It never goes very far. And I know we're all that way. We do our best to protect ourselves, and that's normal. That's natural. But such lives never know the deeper joys and the treasures of fellowship with Christ.

Philippians Study 5

Looking at *Philippians 2:1-4*, the Apostle Paul is continuing to speak to these saints who are the very highest type of believer that there is. He says, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Note that in Chapter 1, Christ was the life of life. Until you have Christ in your life, you have no true life in the meaning that God speaks of life. You think of the millions and billions of people that are all about us tonight. There are great activities. You think of the meetings of the President and the leaders of Russia, etc. -- great events. The world picks it up and carries the news items and what these two men say and what is back of them. But as far as God is concerned, there isn't a thing that will go down in the light of eternity. Only what is happening in a place like this will register with God. Just as the children of Israel when the Passover lamb's blood was applied to the door of the dwellers in Egypt, God said, "This is the beginning of time, for you. This is your life. This is when you really began." (*Exodus 12:2*) So back in Chapter 1, Christ is the life of the believer. There is no life apart from Him. And in that Chapter, we had the inner look. We looked in. Is Christ in there? That's what counts. I don't know what else you may have in your heart or in your life, but the only worthwhile thing is if Christ is in there.

In Chapter 2 we see Christ as the pattern of life, and this is the backward look. That is, here we see the roots of Christian living. You remember how there were a great series of television programs a couple of years ago based on the book *Roots*. The author, a black man, traced the roots of black people back into Africa. It was something that he was proud of. I'll say to you, frankly, some of the finest people I have ever known, some of the people that have been the closest to me have been black people, even before I was saved.

We look to that life back there, (Christ's) that was lived in a human body, more than 1900 plus years ago. For that life that was lived, there is the same life that you have if you're a Christian. And the life that was lived there, you make sure, you can live too, because the Holy Spirit is the one that backs it. The power that enabled the Lord Jesus Christ to live as he lived is at your disposal. We look back to that life that He lived into the mind that was in Him and which activated His living. You see, something did that. By the power of the Holy Spirit. And later we'll read, "Let this mind be in you." This is the key to all true Christian living. The life the Holy Spirit would produce in us is that which he produced in Christ. You must realize that Christ was God. Now don't get away from that, but He was every bit a man also. That life that He lived here in this world, He lived as a man. He never performed a miracle for 30 years. Can you imagine that? His first miracle was at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. So we must establish that.

In these first four verses we have the exhortation to one-mindedness. There is just one mind. God wants that one mind. We have our lock boxes in the bank. Do you realize there is one key that fits every lock box? You have a key, and I can't open your box and you can't open my box: but the bank has a master key that can open any box. You see the difference? That's the mind that God wants to put in you and me. And this one mind is the key to all the fellowship

that we'll know with God and with one another. For this to be real in us, there are certain qualities that we must cultivate and allow to be manifest. Verses 1 and 2 are these qualities. And then there are qualities that we need to avoid, and verses 3 and 4 show these qualities.

Verses 1-2 are positive qualities, while verses 3-4 are negative qualities. One-mindedness is so necessary for the unity of the Spirit. You read in *Ephesians 4:3*, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." In verses 4-6 of the *Ephesians 4*, the seven great one's are manifest and stated, which God considers to determine what unity really is. What is unity? As far as God is concerned, you can be agreed about a lot of things; but unity is that which you do that God wants. Then you endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. It's far more than just surface sameness. More than an unbroken skin. I have one skin. This is not the unity that you see in a beautiful lawn, because it may cover many different soils. You see, the unity we're talking about is a vital kinship, not a common label. Such is not the answer. Baptist, Presbyterians -- that doesn't mean that they're united.

It's a common heart. When the hearts are the same. When the parentage is the same. When we belong to the same family. I can't tell you how real this has become to me of late. You see, I have four brothers. Now, all of them were saved, and one of them is still alive. He and I have had good fellowship over the years, but the true brotherhood is not necessarily that we were born of the same father and mother, but the true brother is a brother in Christ. You see, that's a forever thing.

I noticed that one of these talk show fellows recently discovered that his brother has AIDS. He himself is so against anything of that nature, and yet they showed a part of a film where he is telling his brother how he loves him. Now that is for a brother. How much more should this be if we be brethren. You see, we're brothers in Christ, and that's forever. All of my natural brothers will be in heaven, I know that, but supposing I had a brother that was lost tonight. You see, he's just my brother temporarily, and I would accept that. I wouldn't reject that, and I would love him. But on the other hand, here is someone who is my brother forever. We are kin forever. That is something that must lie at the base of true unity. You'll never have it until you love your brother as your brother.

Paul makes his plea for peace and brotherly accord. You'll notice he names the profound realities in which they are born and in which they can and must be sustained. (Not they can, but they must be.) Now you can sustain these realities if you will, but if you want God's best, you'll have to. Do you understand what I'm saying? I hope you do.

He writes, "If there be therefore any consolation..." This word means comfort. What is there in Christ? Is it comforting for you to know Christ? Put Paul in the prison at Rome. What was his comfort? Christ. What was his peace? Christ. What was his joy? Christ. What was his assurance? Christ. You couldn't shake him. You say, "All my money went up in smoke. I worked hard." I know it can shake you, but here is where it is. Everyone of you are heirs of God, and only you can take it away from you. Your wife can't; your husband can't; your sister, brother, father, mother, friends can't. No matter who it is, only you can take it away from you.

Now here is the base chord to all possible spiritual harmonies or Christian symphony. You see, we should be a symphony. The Psalmist in scripture looked forward to a time when "...everything that hath breath will praise the Lord." (*Psalms 150:6*) You talk about a symphony! You talk about a hallelujah chorus. That isn't going to be a chorus, that's going to be forever. Dear ones, true fellowship and true harmony and true unity are never the result of our little fraternities. We can have our little cliques, and we can have our little group. I go see you today,

you come see me tomorrow. And I call you today, you call me tomorrow. Us four and no more. And that is the way it is. Our little fraternities.

You remember over in the book of *Judges* (*Judges 12*) the Ephraimites wouldn't go to war with Jephthah when he had war though he invited them to. Then when Jephthah went over and won a victory anyway, the Phraimites criticized him that he hadn't gone to war with them. So they started a war with him and, of course, he whipped them. And then when they tried to cross over the river back to their land, Jephthah's men asked them, "Are you an Ephraimite?" They would say, "Nay." The men would say, "Say now Shibboleth," knowing the Ephraimites couldn't pronounce the H they would say, "Shibboleth". They killed 42,000. There are people that are just like that. If you can't say, "Shibboleth" my way, why you're nobody.

I received a letter recently from someone (I'd been in the ministry a number of years before he was born), and he informed me that he could no longer have anything to do with me. It's a shame that I didn't have a ministry until after he was born. Ridiculous, isn't it? I'm so glad that I learned to trust God to be my all in all in almost 60 years. He hasn't failed me. He never will. You see, this is the love that won't quit. This is where our fellowship really exists. Do you understand that? If you have fellowship with him, it won't matter who doesn't have fellowship with you. While you'll appreciate others (and you should appreciate others) if you ever walk with God, you'll have to make up your heart you're going to walk alone with God. It's wonderful to see other people that are walking with God, but if you'll walk with God, you will walk alone with God. Enoch didn't walk with another 50 people with God. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not for God took him." (*Genesis 5:24*)

Jesus is a friend that loveth at all times, and he sticks closer than a brother (*Proverbs 18:24*). His love won't quit. He will meet your every need. Our unity comes from a personal experience and a knowledge of God. In other words, if I am walking with God and you are walking with God, we'll have unity. You see what that is? You can talk about unity all you want to, but this is where it comes from. Such acts upon the life like an exhortation. It will move it with all the force of a persuasive eloquence. To seek to establish Christian union on any other foundation is to build on the shifting sands. A common ritual is no better than a rope of sand that any blow of adversity can scatter into confusion. You've seen that, haven't you? What is it? That thing that can be smashed into nothing just in the blink of an eye. What was there?

Well, a common organization is simply a mechanical order. It's always exposed to the rust of time and the rumor of any violent foe. A common creed, even though it uses the clamps of prejudice and violent passion, can never constitute a family as is purposed by our heavenly Father. Jesus said, "You go to my disciples and tell them I go to my Father, and to your Father." Isn't that a marvel? The same Father that Jesus had is yours. If you had a father that was a millionaire tonight, would you worry about finances? If you had a father that was the greatest physician in the eternities, would you worry about a scratch on your finger? Think about it. He's the one that raised Christ from the dead. Paul in his prayer wanted us to know the power of God to reward which believe, *Ephesians 1:19*. He said it was according to that power that he exercised when He raised Christ from the dead.

Dear ones, we're asleep to our realities. We refuse, it seems almost, to move in and camp and drive our stakes on our God-given rights. But there are so many phantom unions. All are mere counterfeits of the glorious reality. The first requisite to brotherly unity must begin with unity between the individual and the Lord. It's as I said before, I can't have real unity in God's sight with you until I have it with Him and you have it with Him. I spoke of how I went to a

symphony once and heard them tuning up. The clarinet wasn't tuning to the bass horn or anything like that. They had a pipe organ, and it was tuned to a perfect pitch, and every instrument was tuning to that organ. And when they all got in tune with that organ, they produced a symphony. That is exactly what this unity is. If two tune to Jesus Christ, they can ask anything. Isn't that amazing? Now what is our trouble? You know what the trouble is. We're out of tune. You learn to accept that, to believe it like it is.

When I'm in tune with Him and you're in tune with Him, we have symphony or unity. So a compelling, comforting intercourse in the innermost depths of the heart and life of the individual brings about perfect unity and harmony with one another. God help us to have harmony with one another. This is how you move mountains. This is how men know that Christ is in their midst, and that is how He is in their midst. Now, He is here anyway; but if you want Him in His reality and you'll come into unity with Him, and the other comes into unity with Him, it can be accomplished.

Now, it says in this same first verse, "If any comfort of love." Feast of fat things, and when we have tasted and found that the Lord is good and gracious, there must ring up in our heart the incentive of His all-constraining love. That is just a normal thing. Divine love is not the fruit of small obedience. God will allow to cross your path an experience that you'll find out you don't really love. Did you ever want to just get somebody and just kick the daylights out of them? You loved them, didn't you?

Now, we all have an old nature. Even a rat put in a corner will fight, so it's normal to fight. But when the Lord is your buckler and your shield and your high tower, your rock in a weary land...when He's all that He wants to be to you, He'll take care of you. And you learn to trust Him. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places." (*Ephesians 6:12*) So "If there is any comfort of love," and it can be a marvelous comfort. Your heart is at ease. You know it's going to work out. You know that "All things work together for good to them that love God." (*Romans 8:28*) So when we've tasted and found that the Lord is good, there will be a love, a constraining love that will spring up in our hearts. And I'll say again, this is not the fruit of some little molehill of something. This is where you'll come up against someone that you absolutely can not love unless He comes in you to love.

So don't get excited if you've come to the end of you. That's normal. Thank God that He gave you a test before you met Him. Because that union over there -- "Let us be glad and rejoice...for the marriage of the Lamb is come" (*Revelation 19:7*) -- that's going to be a love union. That church at Ephesus that had so many marvelous things about it, He had one thing against. They had left their first love. That doesn't mean the love that they had back there when they first got saved. The first love is the love when a man or a woman falls in love desperately with a companion. This is the first love. And this is the first love that we have with Christ.

So it flows from a great companionship as one is tested in the way. "We love him because he first loved us." (*1 John 4:19*) We can never fully explain the mystery of God's love. I've preached about it. I've thought about it. I've prayed about it. I've spent hours and preached I don't know how many sermons about it. It always is something that is beyond and beyond and beyond. It's beckoning. So we can't fully explain it. But there is one thing -- we can know it. *Ephesians 3:19* says that we can "know the love of God which passeth understanding." Do you know that love?

Let me show you what I mean. I'll use one of these big words I don't like to use but that's

the best way I can do it. Take the word etymology. It can't take us to one of it's secrets. Do you realize that there is no definition for it? Try it. We simply come to certain experiences where the heart in it's natural state should be cold, hateful, and resentful, and yet we find it burning within us and constraining us to do good and overcome evil with good.

How easily we forget we were slaves in the land of Egypt and the Lord our God redeemed us. How easily we forget from whence we were digged. How easily we forget the whips that were on us and think of the garlic and leek and cucumber that we had over in the land of Egypt. You see, we can forget who redeemed us and we quickly become Pharisees, somehow believing we must defend His righteousness. In doing so we practice so many un-Christ like things, such as strife (we will see them down in verses 3-4) vain-glory, etc.

We get to thinking we're better than someone else. Look, precious hearts, if "better" would have accomplished something, the Apostle Paul had it all before Christ came to him. All those things that he would glory in and that we tonight are prone to glory in...how foolish! How quickly the devil can give us a little something and make us think we're something. Some think they're something when they're nothing. If you're anything, it's in Christ that you're anything. You have just as much right to the best as I have or anyone else. You have just as much right to God's best as Paul had, and that is what we need to recognize. Believe it. Live in the reality of it. He'll make it real to you if you just let Him.

One moment the outlook can be gray, cold, cramped. Then as He inspires us, our hearts brim with sunshine and warmth. The life is full of color and the heart with song. When love fills the heart, life beats with a new pulse and an impulse. Brother embraces brother in one accord. Then we go on. "If any fellowship in the Spirit . . ." How tremendously this book has grown for me. I could preach a sermon on any one of these phrases. Love is the spiritual organ, and by it's ministry we correspond with God. You can't correspond with God who is love unless you have His love. Can you see that?

Take a television program -- it has to have a transmitter and a receiver, and they must be tuned to the same wave length. If you lose that identity, you lose the picture and the voice. There can't be either picture or sound. You have to be tuned. And love is that fellow feeling with God and without it we simply do not commune with God. He speaks, we listen. We speak, he hears. We're in touch with one another. We're on the same wave length. Love has to put us on the same wave length. Again, think of it in *I Corinthians 13* "Now abideth faith, hope, love . . ." Faith and hope are tremendous things. Don't try to get along without them. But the greatest of the three is love. Without it, all mysteries...zero? That's right. You see, you can't communicate with God unless you love. And how can you say you love God whom you haven't seen if you don't love you're brother you have seen? Simple deduction, isn't it? How simple God made it for us to know the truth.

Outsiders may know nothing of the sacred communion, only as we tell them. They don't know what is going on. It says, "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He can hear them. He can see the activity, but he doesn't know, just like we can't see the sights and sounds that are speeding through space right now, though they are right here in this room. Why don't we see them and hear them? We're not in tune. I could go in there and get that television that's in my office and set it here and tune it to Channel 9, and you'd know the sights and the sounds; that is, some of them that are here. Only those in tune with God know the reality and can know fellowship of the Spirit that is moving in tender quest of others.

What is the Holy Spirit doing? What does he want? What is He here for? He is doing everything He can to get you to go with God. He is out there reaching out. God loves the world. The love of God reaches out and feels tender, gentle feelings. Does He want you to have God's best? Sure He does. So the Holy Spirit is here doing everything He can to woo you, lift you, inspire you.

Now, "If any bowels and mercies." (that is, tender mercies and compassion). When this is our state, there will go out from us the most exquisite feelers to the frail, to the broken, the sore places in life. Such made Jesus a friend of publicans and sinners who gladly sought Him. The Pharisee rejected Him, but the sinner and the publican gladly received Him. They said, "He has gone to eat with publicans and sinners." He told them that the people that are well don't need a physician, just the people that are sick. Do you see that's what He's doing? If you want His richness in your life, recognize that you're needy.

Dear hearts, God help us to never get beyond being needy. Some of the most religious people that I have known never win a soul. Have you ever watched that? Butter wouldn't melt in their mouth. No wonder. Butter doesn't melt in an iceberg. I marvel how gently a good physician and a good nurse handle the weary, the wounded, the broken that they never knew. And how much more it's true if that one they're dealing with is someone they love. And yet God's children treat other Christians oftentimes worse than they would treat a sinner. There is nothing more needed in this mad world rushing to its destruction tonight than the love of God. And there is but one channel through which it can flow, and that channel is the Christian. And where can it be found? Dear hearts, there are millions of Christians in America, but where do you find the real love of God? Dear ones, don't be caught up in the devil's program of hate or the lack of love. Many can weep, but there is no light nor sight in their tears. The compassion that is full of eyes is such a rarity in the church tonight, and yet such is the ministry of blessed and mighty power.

In *Philippians 1:9* the Apostle said, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." So this full-of-eyes tenderness will certainly belong to those who, in that intimate fellowship with Jesus in that day when he takes His bride, will sit on the throne.

Then notice verse 2 which says, "Fulfill ye my joy" or fill full. Paul knew a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory. Certainly the Lord had given him such a joy. You know if you have tasted and found the Lord gracious, and you've found Him rich, and you've had a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory. Certainly these saints had already given a joy to the Apostle in many ways, but now he asks that they fill his joy channel to overflowing. You see, there wasn't any lack of joy of the Lord; but, in addition to our joy in the Lord, there are other joy channels which only saints can fill. Do you remember how he said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always making request for you with joy?" (*Philippians 1:3*)

There is a joy of giving. It is past revenge to strength of wisdom and doing good to them that do you evil. Past the poisonous growth of self to the fruits of selflessness. Are you on the stormy sea? Probably some of you are. All of us have had a chance to be. Are we going to leave our footsteps in that sea? Are you going to walk above it, or will you look at the storm and the waves and start to sink? Even then, He is faithful. I want you to see that. "If our hearts condemn us, He's greater than our hearts." (*1 John 3:20*) "Though we fall, yet shall we not utterly be cast down for underneath are the everlasting arms." (*Psalms 37:24*)

So, Peter, you did look at the waves, and you started to sink. You that walked out there just like Jesus did, He didn't let you sink. He lifted you above the waves. Above and beyond

everything. "Happy is the man who compassion not himself in that thing which he alloweth."
(*Romans 14:22*)

Philippians Study 6

In Chapter 2 Christ is seen as the example, so Paul here points to the Lord Jesus. What have you received from Him? What have you seen as to His life? What does it mean to you? That is what he is saying in the verses 1-4. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies. The deep seated things from the inner most being of the heart is where mercies flow from you, and that makes you like God. If your life is not a merciful life, you're not God- like. "Fulfil ye my joy" -- or that could be said like this, "Fill full my joy." -- "That ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord (or of one harmony) of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Reading the fourth verse in three other translations may help you a little. Phillips' translated *Philippians 2:4*, "None of you should think only of his own affairs, but each should learn to see things from the other person's viewpoint." The New English Bible says, "There must be no room for rivalry and personal vanity among you, but look to each other's interests, not merely your own." And then Williams translated it, "Stop looking after your own interests only, but practice looking after the interests of others too."

In the natural, if I skin my finger, the rest of my body will look after it. I cut my lip shaving the other morning, and it didn't seem to heal right. It was real sore for about five or six days. I began to think I had an infection in it. My entire body was in sympathy with that part of my body. Now that ought to be ever so much more true in the spiritual body.

Here in these first four verses we find the forces that make for accord or unity. Whether we ever really come to it in this life or not, we are one. The church is just one church. There aren't several churches such as Baptist, Presbyterian, etc. There is just one true church. There are many divisions that the enemy has caused, but thank God there is still the one. We found earlier that verses 1-2 gave us the qualities that are positive. Christianity is something positive.

"And if there be therefore any consolation in Christ . . ." All the things listed in verses 1 and 2 are positive and necessary. If you are going to go with God, there must be certain positive things. There have to be. That is, you don't have a choice. There have to be. And if we are to make progress to the 3rd-4th verses, then verses 1-2 have to become real in our hearts. Verses 1-2 are real in our hearts, verses 3-4 are out there with others. We must avoid the things that are stated in verses 3-4. For an example Verse 3 says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory . . ." This word strife is friction. You find that a factory in itself only runs smoothly if there is no friction. Pour just a little bit of sand or grit into a bearing, and you have trouble. I often refer to this as my mind goes back to a good number of years ago. We lived out in the country, and one of the great railroad systems of that time came through near our farm. It was called "The Cannonball Trail." A freight train would come by every night just about 9-9:30. You could hear its whistle for miles. Once in awhile it would have what they called a hotbox. There was no oil in the axle of the big wheel, and you could hear it scream and squeal -- such a high-pitched sound as it came across the country. It was making that noise because it wasn't running without friction. "Now let nothing be done through friction" or that would bring friction. As people get together there must not be friction. That's the thought that is here. If this church is to run smoothly, there must not be friction. Paul lays his condemnatory hand on two very perverse and perverting spirits that so often defeat Christian lives. Not just

you personally, but it can defeat others. These two things are like twin enemies of the welfare of God's precious people, and they wreck havoc in us individually as well as others who become involved with friction and vain glory.

Now Satan's efforts to destroy the unity of the Spirit are seen in many, many ways. Only when the Spirit's unity is kept can any meeting be what it ought to be. Do you remember in *Ephesians 4* where it says, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" When Israel went in to Canaan, it was with ease that they overthrew Jericho. They had no problem. All they did was march and blow trumpets and ram's horns and give a shout; and the city fell into destruction. But then, shortly after that there was trouble. They were defeated at Ai, that little place. They were defeated there because a lack of unity came into the camp. One fellow stole a wedge of silver and a Babylonian garment. All of these things went against the Holy Spirit.

You may not realize it, but it isn't you or me that accomplishes things in this place, it's Him (Christ). And He is the one that we must ever be in harmony with. Now, to be sure, He is using us and, to be sure, He is doing a work that eternity alone can begin to show forth. Yet at the same time, He is doing it. So the devil is out to destroy the unity of the Spirit. He'll do anything he can to get you at odds with your brother.

Note, the first thing is the party spirit. The second thing is the spirit of personal vanity. You will find many of God's precious people devoted passionately to a party who care little or nothing for the truth. It doesn't matter to them what the truth says as long as my little cliché gets the thing going. Me and mine; and I come to you, and you come to me; and I call you, and you call me. There is such a thing as being a little closer to some than others. That is true, but this is not necessarily a party spirit. This is true in almost every walk of life. You'll find it out there in the world as well as in the church. In the church is where Paul is concerned. Who can estimate the loss when Christians are thus motivated, when saints take "strange fire" in their censors to go to worship God. They become motivated by strife. What is the energy of some saints? It isn't Calvary. It's disharmony. There's a difference. If you can't say, my "Shibboleth," then I kill you. When saints become feverish in controversy and passionate in declamation, laboring day and night for a triumph which is contrary to the word of God, pretending to be champions in the sacred cause of Christ, a scriptural judgment of their efforts shows the true goal of life is forgotten or ignored. While they would appear to be shining knights maybe it's shining "nights." In the cause of truth, often the true welfare of saints or the church is disregarded. We must want the welfare of God's people, the church. Small squabbles are magnified into petty campaigns. They fume for a trifle and are cold when it comes to the augustness. They fight to have their way and forget all about being set for the defence of the gospel. In such cases sectarianism eclipses Christianity. Personal purpose is the valued thing more than the keeping of the faith. Paul said, "...I have kept the faith." (*II Timothy 4:7*) This is something that you are to guard. The man-made becomes more valued than the God-born when the spirit of strife overtakes our hearts.

Such may be great in service. They may have great knowledge. There may be great faith displayed on their part. There may be great gifts acting in their lives. They may be very sacrificial. You don't have to be a Christian to be sacrificial, though. Go to India. I have been in a few places, and it's utterly amazing what some of those advocates of such doctrines will do to support their religion. Think of the Hindu. We know missionaries that we were real close to some years ago. They brought back their own personal pictures. One man was hanging with hooks in his back up to a scaffold, just by those hooks. There was another man sitting there

stone blind. He had looked at nothing but the sun for years, and he held his arm up until it grew rigid. He was doing that for his religion. Precious hearts, there are people that will make tremendous sacrifices for error that wouldn't go to first base for the truth. The love of and for God and others is not the constraining force of such things. Thus the service does not reflect the beauty of Christ, and their best efforts hinder others in their Christ-like growth. "Let nothing be done through strife . . ." If I come to you with something contrary to the Bible, that's strife. Am I going to help you or am I going to hinder you? I may get you to agree with me. I may get you to join my party, but what are the results in your life as well as mine? Such things can usually be traced to the desire for vainglory or the applause of men. Why would I want to upset you and gain you with other than the truth unless it's for vain glory and man's applause? I don't need your applause, and you don't need mine. We need God's. The day will come when it is going to be the fruit of the Spirit or you're empty.

Isn't it amazing how little of the fruit of the Spirit can be in Christian lives? Some of you will never reach the height of my ministry. I, as far as being in the great soul-reaching campaigns, will never reach the ministry of a Billy Graham or someone like that. That isn't my ministry. Now if God is going to bless Billy Graham because he reached so many for Him and that's going to be the greatest reward that there could be, and here you sit and you never had a gift to preach at all...would God not be a respecter of persons? But here Billy Graham, with all of his fame, may not be as filled with the Spirit as you are. He may not have the fruit of the Spirit as much as you. Every child of God can be filled with the fruit of the Spirit.

I have some fruit trees in my backyard and I have some shade trees in the front yard. I never expect to go out and pick a peach off that maple tree that is so cool and shady. But I never expect to go out to that peach tree and get the shade that I get from that maple tree. You plant one for fruit; you plant another one for shade. Now God wants fruit. He has planted you for fruit. He wants your life, of course. In the capacity that He may lead you, He will back you 100%. If He ever wanted you to stop the sun, you'd do it. If He ever wanted you to part the Red Sea, you could do it. It isn't a Moses that parts the Red Sea, though God lets him do it. It's God with that staff. He raises the staff, and God is there. So God will use you in the way He wants to use you, and you very definitely fill a very wonderful part in His eyes in your particular place in the body of Christ. He will reward you just as richly as He would someone great. And in the case of a meeting like this, you may be rewarded more because you are hearing truth; that say, for an example, Billy Graham never, never could tell you. He wouldn't know anything about it.

How many in strife usually desire vain glory and are looking after the applause of men? How noble to find a person like John the Baptist who said, "He must increase but I must decrease." (*John 3:30*) Paul speaks of such later when he speaks of Timothy. "All men seek their own and not the things of Christ." (*Philippians 2:21*) He told them he'd sent Timothy to them that he might inquire concerning their state. What is your state? That is what counts. If you don't know God's word and if you don't walk in the light of it, you can be swept into confusion. It's amazing how the enemy can confuse you if you don't know the word of God. You'll begin to measure things by size, by color, by popularity, if you don't know the word of God. Do you realize the Bible says, "...That which is highly esteemed among men is abominable to God." (*Luke 16:15*)

How tragic when we desire man's applause more than the sanction of God. How tragic to seek to appropriate to ourselves that glory that can belong only to God. That type of person ultimately will be defeated. In such cases we become a terminus rather than a thoroughfare.

In other words, everything quits inside of me. It gets to me. Bring it to me. I'm to be a thoroughfare. I am to stand; and when I get through by God's grace, I hope I have pointed you to Him. I hope you see Him. I hope you are enriched more because of what He is to your life. And so, dear hearts, I tremble when I say such are like the Pope and sit in the place of God and seek to deck themselves with majesty and take the dues that belong to Christ to themselves. May God help us to see all such is but a transient sovereignty and as brief as it is empty.

The way to avoid this pitfall and loss, Paul tells us here, is to humbly seek the Lord that he might deliver us from both fatalities; that is, from the destructive fever of faction and the diseased conceit of vanity..

Note how he says it, this is the remedy. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in the lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." As William says, "Stop looking after your own interests only." Now God wants you to look after your own interests, but don't let that be the only thing. "Practice looking after the interests of others," too. How much of a blessing are you to your brother? How much do you bring to Him? Oh the damage we can do to one another if we have a great influence to turn one another from the truth.

"In lowliness of mind..." It's in the mind. We're told in the fifth verse, "Let this mind be in you." What was that mind? It's a lowly mind. He sought nothing for Himself, just everything for us. He was rich. This is something that we don't understand. Rich as it's applied to Him would completely snap our minds to try to take it in. "Father," He said in that prayer in John 17, "now restore to me that glory which I had with thee before the world was." Paul said He didn't think it robbery to be equal with God." (*Philippians 2:6*) In other words, He didn't take a thing from God to say "I am equal with you." But now let this mind be in you.

You are somebody. Do you realize that? You are now the son of God. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be..." (*I John 3:2*) This is right now. Now, "Let this mind be in you." And if the mind of Christ that made Him give it all up, and He did give it all up and go to the death of the cross, be in you, there will be no problem, You won't have any problem being humble. You won't have any problem bringing yourself down to men of low estate. You won't go around putting on airs and making yourself superior to someone else. The days will come when you will find, if you yield to God, how superior you really were. But precious hearts, in that time now you won't hesitate to go down to any level if that mind leads you to do it.

So God has provided the perfect remedy against these two perilous enemies of the soul. It is that which we do. In I Peter 5:5-6 we read, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

I've told you on other occasions about Johnny Dunham. He loved the lord, but he was just one of those fellows that if the Lord would bless him just a little bit he would get like a Banty rooster. He recognized that to a great extent. I remember him testifying in the camp meeting in Topeka, and he said he prayed for several days, "Lord, humble me, Lord, humble me, Lord, humble me." And he said he finally gave out praying, and God said, Johnny Dunham, humble yourself under my mighty hand. If I humble you, I'll kill you." Well that's what it says here. "Humble yourselves therefore." You're the one that's going to have to do it. God will bring the circumstances and the conditions. Will you humble yourself to the conditions? You will if you believe that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord. But instead we just

give someone else as good as they gave us. Jephthah got deliverance by delivering his brethren. (see *Judges 11*).

Note: "Lowliness of mind." This word comes from the same root that we get the word tapestry or rug from. Do you know what a rug is? I believe that which Paul had in mind was a rug and I believe I could interpret the Holy Spirit's thought here when I say God would have us willing to take the wrong even to the extent that we be walked on. Does that go over real good with you? Now if it be for the glory of God and if it be to protect the truth, that's a tremendous victory. Has somebody walked on you? They didn't defeat you, you defeated them. Do you remember what Jesus said there before Pilot. Pilot said, "I could crucify you." Jesus said, "You could not do anything if it were not given thee of my father." Peter took out his sword and whacked off the servant of the high priests ear, and Jesus said, "Put away your sword. Don't you know I could call for twelve legions of angels?" He stuck the ear back on the man's head, and those fools went ahead and arrested him. Can you imagine that? How blind the devil can make you. Once you get set with something it can be as dead wrong as Satan can make it, and yet you'll be determined to see it through to the disastrous end. And that's what it was to them, but it was God's purpose. That's what we must not lose sight of. God always has a purpose, and His plan is always carried out. Now it may take Judas to do it, but there are plenty of devils around. If God needs a devil there's plenty of them around. If he needs a Demas, (*II Timothy 4:10*) there's plenty around. If he needs an Alexander the coppersmith, there's plenty of them around (*II Timothy 4:14*) There are plenty of people that are willing to do Paul harm if you just find them. Well, God knows where they are. He's got their name and address and number of hairs in their head. He knows all about them.

So many saints encounter experiences that are like sharp flints in the path, and they bruise and cut their feet, if I might illustrate it that way. Those feet can become festered and sore, and the persons find themselves unable to walk. Well, do we try to lay a soft carpet in their way, or do we try to add affliction to their way? Paul said, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." (*Galations 6:2*) he didn't tell them to fulfill the Ten Commandments but the law. "That ye love one another." I'm appalled by the lack of love in Christian lives. So many are measured by other means and would seem to be "giants" and yet they are "pygmies" when you realize that they are without the love of God. So how do we esteem others? We do such with kindly thoughts, gracious sympathies, helpful services, bowels and mercies, gracious forgiveness. These are all Christ-like and God-like. The Pharisee would stone the woman. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee." (*John 8:11*)

Repeatedly Jesus went to be guest with sinners and Publicans. He ate in one Pharisee's home, and a woman came in and anointed Him with precious ointment. She cried, and her tears gushed out on His feet; and she took her hair and wiped His feet. Then that scamp, that serpent, that snake who said, "He can't be who He said He was. If He was who He said He was, He'd know what sort of woman this is that touches Him." Jesus said, "You're a generation of snakes and vipers." You must realize that Jesus could not be defiled. You touched Him, and you went undefiled. The leper touched Him and he became clean. The dead touched him and became alive. You see, there is nothing you can do to Jesus. You can't hurt Him (*Luke 7:36-50*) He said, "Simon, I'd ask you a question. A fellow owed so much money and he couldn't pay it. And someone else owed so much and he couldn't pay it. And someone else owed not so much and he couldn't pay it, and the Lord forgave them both. Now which one of these do you think would love him most? "Oh" Simon said, "the one that he forgave the most." He said, "That's right. I came into your house as a guest. You didn't give me the common courtesy to have the

doorkeeper to wash my feet. But this woman from the moment she came in hath not ceased to wash my feet with her tears and dry them with the hair of her head." Dear ones, realize that probably the vilest thing in the sight of God is self-righteousness.

How do we esteem others? We show them kindnesses. We're sympathetic with them. We're merciful. We're forgiving. Some of life's waves can be so rough. Paul spoke of sorrow upon sorrow. Circumstances for some is a ceaseless pain. Do you realize there are some of God's precious people that have seemingly nothing but heartache? Some of God's precious people carry about some painful affliction or something of that nature. Are you sympathetic? Do you pray? Do you offer them help? It is the blessed privilege of Christians to lay a soft surface on life's roads for others if they will. When someone comes your way are you willing to put a soft rug down for them? Maybe they come to you and their feet are sore and swollen and they are unable to walk correctly, etc. Do you kick them and condemn them and shut them out or do you embrace them? Jesus does if given the chance. That's the way He acts. He said, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. (*Matthew 11:28*) That's always the way of the Lord.

Such is possible only if we are filled with the comforts of love as we read in the first two verses in the fellowship of the Spirit and the compassionate love that springs up from the very depths of the heart. It isn't something you put on. Such enables us to graciously stoop. So, if to know the will of God is that we allow others to ride over our heads, so be it. Like Jephthah, "What he gives me, I'll take." And this is the secret of the lowliness of mind and is the very opposite of the spirit of haughtiness and pride.

Consider strife for a moment. Strife adds to the difficulties of those we influence. It terribly aggravates the agonies of another person's road. To submit to lowliness is the very opposite of the natural man. We're all born with that attitude to fight. The natural man's view of life is like the Pharisee. It is the survival of the fittest. "Let the weak perish." That is the attitude of the world. We must show no weakness but pin them to the wall. Crush the weak. That was Hitler's way of doing it. That's the way of so many. "Let's get rid of the weak." Jesus said, "That's the kind I'm going to use." Now Moses, I got rid of your strength. Now I can use you." "Oh Lord, I'm a man of slow speech." (He was obviously tongue tied and a stutterer.) "Oh," he said, "I'll give you your brother Aaron." God will take care of you. You can make excuses, but you can't make an excuse that you're too weak. The only time He can't use you is when you're too strong.

"God helps them that help themselves is the gospel" of the Pharisee, and they represent the brother of the prodigal. Do you remember how the poor old wasted prodigal got up from that pig pen and went home? He said, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Just let me be a servant in your house." That father said, "Bring the best robe. Bring the ring for his finger. Put shoes on his feet. That fatted calf out there, go kill it. Let's have a feast." Do you know what his brother said? He said, "I'm not going to go in and eat with that rascal. I never did leave home. I'm good, I'm...I'm...I'm." And when it was all over, he stayed outside, and that old prodigal had the feast. Stick around and get the feast.

This lowliness of mind counts others better than themselves. That doesn't mean that here you've got a brother that's raking through the gutters and he's better than you. The thought is that you esteem him, you want to help him, you want to be a blessing to him. "Look not every man on his own things..."

In other words, "The best way for you to be of service to God is not to look on your own things but each of you on the things of others." I want to see you blessed, and in seeing you

blessed, I'm blessed. To see you enriched makes me richer. To see you have God's glory adds to my glory. Do you realize that?

The measure of our spiritual growth can be measured by the circles of our sympathies, our concerns for others, our labors of love, our prayer life, etc. So what is the circumference of our outlook? Are our sympathies represented by a little, small umbrella? Maybe I can get under it and maybe one more. Brother Copley used to say it, "Us four and no more." How big is your thinking? How far does your love reach? How great are your sympathies? Are they God-like or are the Pharisee-like? Who did God love? "God so loved the world..." (*John 3:16*)

Thank God, thank God. When I meet someone I can't love, I'm going to the alter. I mean that. I might not agree, but there is one sure thing -- I will love you. Do you know how a tree records its age and growth? Did you ever cut through a tree? It will have what we know as tree rings. I'll tell you a real sweet story about that. You read of the shittim wood in the Old Testament tabernacle. When the children of Israel went into the wilderness they were to fashion the tabernacle in the wilderness In the holy place and holy of holies there were boards that stood up and down that were cut from the shittim wood. I have a piece of that which was given to me years ago by Brother Benton. He said that to count the tree rings in a board of the dimensions of the dimensions that were of those boards that stood up and down, God would have had to have planted those shittim trees in the wilderness at the time that He promised Abraham He would bring up his seed from the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan. In other words when God makes you a promise, He has made all the provision to meet that promise. Do you understand that?

God's promises don't go astray. You may not see how He is going to fulfill them, but He never ceases to fulfill them. For an example, you can cut an oak tree, and you can find the rings. Some of them will be quite narrow. That was probably the year of pretty strong drought when the tree didn't grow much. But every year it will add another ring and another ring. That is how you know its age and growth. So it is with the soul as to its growth in grace. How many years has the grace and the love of God been in your life? How great was the growth? How much did your sympathies grow? How much did your prayer life grow? How much did you mature in the love of God? Did you begin to love like He loves? Did you begin to see like He sees? Did you begin to pray like Jesus prayed? Did you begin to give? Did you begin to be sacrificial? All of that should be in our lives -- the praying, the serving, the giving, etc. Do you realize how far the love of God can go? Oh, I love my boy, my daughter. But what about divine love? Divine love goes farther than loving my daughter, my mother. "Yea and I say to you, love your enemies." (*Matthew 5:44*) Did you ever read that? The love of God loves the world, and that's what we need. We don't need just a little bit of love like Peter expressed. There are some people that will say they love you, but they don't even love you like Peter loved Jesus. If these things don't grow bigger and deeper in our lives over the years, then something has to be wrong with our roots. Where do the roots of your life go?

Do you remember in the *Psalms*, where it spoke of the tree that was planted by the waters and his leaf doesn't wither. That's just a natural condition. That tree can be destroyed. But our roots should go down into the benefits of Christ. What is Christ to your life? He's an example here. And Paul prayed in the night and there was a man who told him to come over into Macedonia and help. Another place Paul said he must see Rome also. So how big? How great? How wide is the circle of your sympathies? How much do you love? Do you love everybody? Them that despitefully use you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my names sake? Do you still love them? That's the kind of love that is going to sit on the throne with

Jesus Christ. This is a love match. You must love him, and He furnishes the love. With that life of Christ that is in you maturing and producing fruit, it's just as normal for you to love someone as it is for a peach tree to produce a peach.

Phillipians Study 7

Let's read *Philippians 2:5-11*. One of the keys to understanding the book of *Philippians* is to realize where Jesus is in each chapter. It's a marvel how each of these chapters is so clearly divided as to positioning Christ as concerns you and me or the life of a Christian. In Chapter 1, He was within -- the new life, the Christ of the resurrection. He is in you. You may not fully lay hold of that or fully understand its tremendous meaning, and yet this is where you find Christ. He is within.

Now here in the second chapter, He is not seen in us, though He is in us. The emphasis is that He is behind us. In this chapter He is our example. The Christ who was prophesied and came to this world, the book of *Isaiah* tells us, was a root out of a dry ground. In other words, He was life in the midst of nothing but death. There was nothing in the human race but loss and death and destruction. He, however, is like a root or life coming up out of that dead situation. You can't explain Him on any natural or historical grounds. Here are all these millions of people, and here is one that's like no other. He isn't like any other person that ever lived in this world. Of course, He's a man who lived in this life, tempted in all points as we, subject to all of the living that we encounter. He lived, He spoke, He gave a life that perfectly satisfied God. He was here over 33 years. At the end of it not one thing could be said against Him. God himself said this, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Every testimony but those that were hired to lie about Him was that He was a good Man, a wonderful Man, a just Man, a righteousness Man, a holy Man. Even Judas who betrayed Him said, "I have shed the blood of a just Man."

He is like the old copy head. I don't know if they still have such things in school or not, but when I was a kid in the writing class they gave each student a book with enough pages that would cover the school term. Every one of them at the top had beautiful script writing. Everyone was to copy that, and there would be about 50 lines. Well, I did pretty good on the first copy; but by the time I got down to the end, a person would have to be a genius to read it. The trouble was I copied the first line, and then I copied my line, and my line, and my line. By the time I got through copying my line, I didn't have anything worth looking at. That's the way with people. They try to copy somebody else. We don't copy somebody else. There is just one person that you can copy. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." You don't follow Christ. Follow Paul as he follows Christ. Note the word "mind." We come to appreciate this word. It's found four times in verses 2-5. Verse 5 says, "Let this mind be in you." Give it permission. Don't withstand it. Don't withhold it. Don't oppose it in any way, the thought is. Now you must realize He will never force you." It has been said "He'll make you glad you did, but He'll never force you. You have to submit to Him. He is the one person that will not force you to yield to Him simply because those that have God's best are going to have to make a choice; they're are going to want to. You won't find many who really want to. So we must let Him. "Let this mind." What kind of a mind? Why this particular mind? Why the emphasis on this mind? Well, this mind is an humble mind. We simply cannot be humble in life unless we are humble in our minds, because the mind is really the pattern chamber of life. What is in here (in your mind) will be out there (in your walk). You can't be something else. Like Harvey Springer said years ago of the mayor, Quig Newton, linking him with communism, "When a man runs with skunks, smells like a skunk, and looks like a skunk, and acts like a skunk, he must be a skunk." He'd say, "Quig Newton, are you a communist?" You see, you

can't be something on the outside that you aren't in your heart. The Pharisee's tried to be, but they didn't have anything in their hearts, so they weren't compassionate. They weren't tender or loving. They weren't generous. They weren't merciful. If you are like Christ, these are the things you must be.

You'll notice the word "therefore." It reaches back to the rich resources of Chapter 1 and especially you see it described here in verses 1-2. Here we find four of those resources that are referred to in the "therefore." In verse 1 we find, 1) "If there be any consolation in Christ." Then, 2) "Be likeminded." That is, if there is any consolation in Christ, be likeminded. Then, 3) "If any comfort of love" have the same love. "If any fellowship of the Spirit," be of one accord, be in harmony with that. 4) "If any compassions and mercies," be of one mind. What's in your life? If there is consolation in Christ, you'll be like Christ. If there is any comfort of love, you will have that same love. If there is any fellowship in the Spirit, you will be of one accord. Remember in the book of *Ephesians* 4:3, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." If there is any compassion and mercy in your life, you'll be of the same mind. That is the mind that you must let be in you. "Let this mind be in you."

Note in verses 3-4, "Let nothing" and then in verse 4, "Look not." So let nothing be done through strife, or vainglory or self-interest. You must refuse that, and such gives place to the lowliness of mind. You can't be lowly in mind and strive and seek vainglory and have self-interest. You will have to have God's interest at heart, and you'll have to love people and want to bless people if you are to have a lowliness of mind.

We realize that Christian fruit requires a Christian mind. That's understandable, isn't it? You couldn't possibly bear peaches on a plum tree or from the root of the plum tree. They can graft peach limbs into a plum tree, that's true, and gain life in that sense. But if you plant a peach seed, you're not going to get plums. And if you plant a plum seed, you're not going to get peaches. Christianity finds its roots in the mind of Christ. Let's go back and see these verses 5-11. They are some of the most majestic statements that could ever be uttered. It's revealed in such simple language.

Here you see the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. First in heaven, then on the earth, and then back to the heavens exalted, no longer as God but as a Man at the right hand of God. There He is our representative. "So let this mind be in you." We found love in the previous chapter, and it's referred to in this chapter, but now we have love and mind. These are the two likenesses that are fundamental. They're affinities that truly reveal our kinship with Christ. You cannot reveal your kinship to Christ and not have love in your life. And you can't reveal your kinship to Christ and not allow his humble mind to be in you. Do you understand that? That's what your Christianity must flow from and be inspired by.

When we have the mind of anybody, we share the very springs of their being. Physical likeness is one thing. Two may look alike. Oftentimes you'll see a child who looks like his father or mother, but he will have an exact opposite personality. In other words, simply because on the outside they are look-alikes doesn't make them alike down in their hearts. In the heart is where we are like Christ; and, of course, it will come into the outer images as well. But unless it's in here, (in the heart) it can never shine out there. So here we have inner likeness which is more than outer or detached likeness. It is the way of seeing life, its ambitions, its goals, all its activities. It is the likeness of all life's springs where conduct is originally fashioned. The Bible tells us in the book of Proverbs, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." You see, it's out of the heart that the mouth does speak, and this is one of the things that Paul was inspired by.

We should consider this. If we have the same mind, the resemblance will be in the life, not likeness physically, and I emphasize that. The Pharisee would make you think he belonged to and represented God, but when he went into the market place, he pulled his robes about him and condemned everybody. You couldn't satisfy him. Remember how they took the woman in the very act of adultery and dragged her to Jesus? Jesus didn't sanction what she did, but he did forgive her; and he said, "Neither do I condemn thee." (*John 8:11*) Again, when He went to have a meal with the Pharisee, and when Mary (Magdalene, no doubt) came in and anointed His feet with her tears and wept over them and dried His feet with her hair and put the ointment on them, the Pharisee said, "He couldn't be very much or He would know what kind of a woman touched Him." You see, the Pharisee thought to separate himself.

Dear hearts, you and I have a built-in something. We're just like a duck. Did you ever see how white ducks will dabble in the muddiest places sometimes and come out and wring their feathers and be just as white as before they went in there? We have a built-in something when Christ is here. We can try to be like the world, but we just will never be. We're different. We have Christ within. And if we have the same mind, the resemblance will be in life. We will love as He loves. We'll be gracious as He is gracious. We'll be merciful as He is merciful. We will be forgiving as He forgives. *Ephesians 4:32* says, "Forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Did someone do you some wrong? You had better forgive them like God forgave you. You might find yourself on the short end of the stick one of these days if you don't.

So Paul shows that though the chambers of life were once filled with the unclean imagery, with conceptions so opposite to God, with Christ in him and the mind of Christ in him (and us as well) and God's love in us, he will simply refurnish us. Isn't that wonderful? He will put his own furnishings in our hearts and lives, gracing and glorifying us as he renews us in mind. The Bible tells us to be renewed in mind, to have a new mind. We have the mind of Christ; now be renewed. And we must know we simply cannot minister the gospel of Christ unless his mind is in us. It has to come from His mind in us.

Now note, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Precious hearts, our Savior shared the essential attributes of God. If you and I belittle Him in the slightest, we only destroy ourselves or something for ourselves. You think of the modernists and some who would make Him just an example. How sad! If there is nothing behind and beyond the carpenter of Galilee, if He were just a good man, if He were just a pleasant off-shoot of the human race, a little different than most men like Socrates or Mohammed or Joseph Smith or someone like that, if you class Him with such things. As one who takes His place alongside the great prophets and leaders of the human race, then His ministry becomes nothing but another crusade. He is only a reformer, and His death was only that of a martyr. But if we would touch the unique, the awful, the august of Calvary, if you're going to know what it means to you and understand it, we must go beyond Bethlehem and Nazareth and seek God and ask Him to help us stand in that eternal abyss of the past. As Moses once asked him, "Let me see your glory." And God told him, "Moses you could only see the back parts of my glory. I'll hide you away in the rocks and the back parts of my glory will pass by, and you can see that." And afterwards when Moses went down to the children of Israel, he had to hold a veil over his face or they could not have looked upon Him.

Dear ones, ask God to let you understand, to get just an inkling of what it was like before the worlds were. There before the worlds were in that supernatural glory which Christ had with the Father before He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, He was in the form

of God. He was omniscient. He was omnipotent and omnipresent. He filled everything. He was everywhere. He was very God of very God. He was equal with the Father. He didn't rob God of a thing by saying I am equal with you. He took nothing. But He gave this up. If you and I stand in reverent imagination at that time and if we are to faintly grasp the cries that came from the cross, we will have to do that. You'll never fully grasp Calvary until you see that it started back yonder in the abyss of the eternity past -- there when He made Himself of no reputation but took on Him the form of a servant. It's incomprehensible and beyond our finite brain. There is no way you can grasp that. You can't even grasp the immensity of this universe. It would be hard for you to grasp the distance between here and the sun. Now if we deny this Calvary and it becomes just one of the common executions of that day -- and there were many of them, two with Him -- and if you deny "in the beginning, equal with God . . ." words are not sufficient. You just come to realize because there is no way you can say this. You can try. You can do your best, but if God doesn't get ahold of you, you'll never be able to touch close to it.

He thought it not robbery. He didn't grasp at his divine prerogative. You'll find the love that He is sacrificial. God is love, and His love here sacrifices majesty and dignity for lowly service that it might clothe you and I in finery. Paul said it like this. ". . . though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (*II Corinthians* 8:9) How rich are you going to allow Him to make you? You wouldn't be sitting here hearing this if you weren't a candidate for it. You didn't accidentally come here. You might have had circumstances and happenings that would cause you to say it's just an accident. It is not an accident. Again, we go to Ruth and Boaz. Was it an accident that Ruth married Boaz? Well, what if and what if and what if? What if there hadn't have been a drought? What if Elimelech had not gotten his eyes over on Moab and left the house of bread? What if when he got down there he hadn't died? If he would not have died, he might have kept his two sons from marrying these women. He'd have said, "Now look, if you have any children they're forbidden to go into the congregation of the righteous for generations. You don't want to do something like that." But he died, and his sons married these two girls and then they died. What if they hadn't died? What if? Naomi might have just said, "I'm just going to stay here. I'm not going to try to go back to the house of bread." What if? What if Ruth would have given up like Orpah did? What if when they landed there it would have been winter time instead of harvest time? Divine providence. There was no accident in any of it.

Love gives up it's royal robe; and when love is in the heart, greatness can walk unrecognized. What was it that constrained Paul to write the life like no other? He said, "The love of Christ constrained me." That's how it happened. He couldn't write about "Let this mind be in you" if it weren't in him. He understood that mind. Think, what if Jesus had come to this world in the robes of that glory that was His before the worlds were, that glory which He had with the father? What if He would have come like that? Why the heavens would have had to flee from Him. The heavens will roll together like a scroll when He turns on His glory as a man. What do you think would have happened to you and me? They never would have gotten to you and me. Our fear would have shut the door to life forever, and we never would have asked Him to abide with us. Remember on the road to Emmaus when the two disciples said, "Abide with us for it is yet evening?" He hadn't turned his glory on yet, or they would have known who He was. So his very glory would have been a bar to you and me. But if you'll go to *Luke 1:78-79*, you'll find that He came like the dawning of the day, so gentle, so tender, so soft, so refreshing.

Verse 7 goes on to say He emptied himself. "He made himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." He just simply emptied Himself and became everything He had never been before. So, dear hearts, in doing so He starts that unspeakable descent of seven great steps that you'll find in these verses that only He could take. Nothing and no one could reach and rescue humanity but Jesus himself. "They shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." (*Matthew 1:21*) Think of the Titanic resting on the bottom of the Atlantic ocean several miles down all of these years. Now they finally got a bell that went down and photographed it, but man can't go that deep. Well, no one can go low enough to get you and me but the Lord Jesus Christ. He "emptied" himself -- the beginning of self-renunciation which culminated on a cross. He was forsaken of man and God. We, who deserve to be forsaken, now by faith in Him are guaranteed that we will never be forsaken nor will He ever cease to love us. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (*Romans 8:35*) To know this is so precious.

So He stripped himself of all honors and glories that heaven gave Him, and He came to the earth and never sought one of its honors or one of its glories. Do you realize that Jesus could have come down, down, and down and still been above anything that this world could ever confer on Him? But He didn't just come to be a man, He became the servant of man. He stripped himself of everything that He might lift us to the unsearchable riches in the ages to come, to show us the exceeding riches of His grace. He took upon himself the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and became man's servant. He was a servant to God and a servant to man. Note how He said He did always the things of His father. "Have I been so long time with you . . . and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (*John 14:9*) Everything He did was because of the Father's desire and love and mercy to you. He manifested the Father; He was His channel.

You read in that marvelous *13th* chapter of *John* how they were having their supper; and after the supper, He arose and laid aside His garment, and He took a towel and girded himself with a "slave's apron" (is how the Greek says it). And He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet. That's the most amazing thing. He takes here the place of the most common servant. He gets down lower than the lowest. If you're going to lift a piano, you're going to have to get down and have enough strength to get under it and lift it. You can't stand up on the ceiling and lift it. He must come down to the lowest. And so, precious hearts, here, girt with the slave's apron, He holds us with awesome and continuous wonder.

Do you know how difficult it is for you and I to humble ourselves? You know you, don't you? "Well, if somebody gives me a sock, I'll sock him right back" that's the way I used to fight, and I'm tempted to do it sometimes. It wouldn't be any battle for me if I wasn't tempted. But I've come to the place where I say, "God, I don't want you to hurt my enemies." I wonder down deep if I'd feel a little satisfaction if I heard about someone who stepped in a booby trap. I don't want that. Did you ever see the picture of David and how he dealt with Saul, who sought his life, who hunted him like a partridge on the hillsides of Israel? When he heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan, he wept. One of his songs is written to that end. "How have the mighty fallen." (*II Samuel 1:19*) If you love God like you ought to and like He wants you to, you don't want the devil to get advantage of anyone. The devil is your enemy, and he is the enemy of all that do good. Now I have to know when I read "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory," when I see no shred of mercy, no shred of love, no shred of longsuffering, when I see people deny and defy the word of God (it is better to take wrong from your brother than to get justice

from civil authorities), when I see people do that, I know they're at odds with God. I know He'll take care of the situation.

For example, in the case of Aaron and Miriam, Moses pleaded for them. When Israel went back, He pleaded for them. God said, "Let me wipe them out." He pleaded and said, "Oh, no. Don't do that." Dear hearts, that's what God wants in you and me. You can't beat that, because that's God. "If God be for us who can be against us." (*Romans 8:31*) He wants you to be at peace and rest. That's the greatest victory you can ever have, not knocking somebody's teeth out.

Who can measure the distance between "equal with God" and the "death of the cross"? I can't measure that. I can't measure much of anything. I can read about it. I can ask God to help me appreciate it, help me somehow to personally understand it and grasp it and make it my own. But there is no way on earth that I can really know what it was to be God. And there is no way that I can really understand what it is to die for the sins of the world, but that is what we have here: "Now let this mind be in you." That's when you become something and somebody. That leads you to God's eternal best. That will put you on the throne. That will lead you to the bridehood. Isn't that wonderful? Between the two extremes -- possessor of all that God is and clothed in royal robes, then naked being physically destroyed as He is made sin on the cross. Dear ones, what a descent into the blackest of pits, and He did it voluntarily. He did it because He loved you. He did it because He was merciful. He did it because He was forgiving. He did it because He was longsuffering. He did it because He was gentle. What could you say wrong about him and tell the truth? But you would exhaust a lifetime to try and tell about His goodness. "Let this mind be in you." Are you with me? I pray God that you will be.

Imagine Him in the beginning as He laid aside all. Suddenly, one day he's no longer equal with God; He's God's servant. Do you remember back in the book of Genesis when Adam fell? Do you know what the trinity said? "Man is now become as one of us." Which one? You know which one. He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He was the sin offering yonder in the abyss of the eternities past. If you don't grasp that, you're never going to quite come up to what it is. So, precious hearts, as He laid aside all and began that purposeful stride, His face set as a flint, as He went down, down, down, into the lowest conditions where man is found, bound, helpless and hopeless, Christ determined to touch the bottom, was obedient unto death -- that grim monster that all others have to obey. He voluntarily laid down and said, "Take your best hold." And the devil did. And He gave up the ghost, and three days later every bond, every fetter, everything that can ever threaten you and me He took out of the way. Isn't that a marvel! We don't die. We may sleep someday, but we'll never die! "He that lives and believes in me shall never die." Did He know what He was talking about? Oh, yes!

So here He is as He gives himself to that grim monster, tasting the bitterest as He drinks the death of the cross. And not just death, but the worst kind of a death. Not just the most intense suffering, but the utmost shame. That's harder than the suffering. I've learned a little something about that and it's meaning. And in these simple words, may the Holy Spirit enable you and me to feel a little of the last reach of his condescension and embrace us in our need and lift us to the height that only eternity can bring us to fully understand.

This mind is never a cringing mind. There is nothing cowardly about it, just humble. "Don't you know I could call for twelve legions of angels . . . Pilot, you could do nothing . . ." There

is nothing cringing about him. There is nothing fearful. There is nothing cowardly in anyway. He was the master in every situation.

Verse 9, "Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And so as seven great descending steps went down, at the bottom He embraced man. He didn't come back in that exaltation alone. *Ephesians 2:5 and 6* says we are quickened with him, raised together with him, and seated together with him. Well, it's too much for me! I would have us realize it wasn't just Him personally that was raised, but we were raised with Him. You see, by faith I'm already in heaven. You are too. He raised us up with Him. I know I'm down here, but I'm as good as there. "Whom He justified He also glorified." Isn't that amazing? That's you and me. Who knows, in half a wink of an eye we could find it so. You see, it's real, it's guaranteed and established. It's something that is done.

In the garden Jesus said, "Restore to me that glory . . ." He's back at the throne now, but He didn't go back like He once was. In this age He is there as the intercessor, the high priest, the advocate for you and for me. Do you know what an advocate is? That's a lawyer. Do you know what that is? "If any man sin he has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Do you realize the devil is there using you right along? All Jesus has to do is say, "Here it is Father" -- a man with a rank and dignity above all is there, sharing with believers privileges and attainments in grace past finding out. He himself, the superlative excellence and fountain of all we shall ever have or ever enjoy. No wonder we hear the combined voices in the book of *Revelation* which are like the sound of many waters, like the sound of mighty thunderings as everything that hath breath comes to praise God. How wonderful! Who could you praise but Him? Any title, any freedom, any deliverance enjoyed in this universe will be because of Him. He cleanses heaven itself, the Bible tells us. And I would that you and I would realize what it means and begin to worship Him here and now and not wait until we get over there and have to. "At that name every knee will bow and every tongue will confess" -- not that He is the Savior. Some tongues will never confess that. Judas never did confess He was his Savior, though he admitted he had shed innocent blood. But you and I, we do. Every tongue, however, will confess that He is Lord. Think of the people who curse Him and despise Him and die cursing Him and rejecting Him and saying they don't believe in Him...one day they'll confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. How precious it is that everything will pay homage to Him, and the universe will join in the doxology singing His praises forever and ever.

So, "Let this mind be in you." You won't have any trouble really getting down to the nitty gritty if that mind is in you. You'll count it a great privilege to be a servant. What do you think about it? Can you see the wealth that is there?

Philippians Study 8

We find Christ in this second chapter of *Philippians* as our example. He's behind us. In chapter 1, He was in us. Now with Him in us, the second chapter of *Philippians* begins to clear up as to the meaning the Apostle and the Holy Spirit had. We take Him for our example. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ" - is it worthwhile? Shall we look to Him? "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." There will be a great prize fight this coming Monday night. Millions of dollars will come to the two participants, and one of them will end up with a crown that will fade away. We are after an incorruptible crown and a crown that will make all of the crowns of this world put together seem like dirt.

In this portion, we come to working out our own salvation. There is no way that I or you could slightly measure the reach and the wealth and the worthiness of our salvation. When God gave his precious Son for you and me, He gave us everything there was. It was my distinct pleasure to lead a woman I had done business with to the Lord Jesus recently. It just seemed like such a precious thing without resistance of any kind. I'd known her for quite some time and always thought she was Jewish. She received salvation, but just like a little baby that is born to a billionaire, she didn't have the slightest idea what that salvation added up to. There are many of God's precious people that never go any further in the things of God than a baby does in the natural. In this study we're talking about your salvation. It's important. How important it is only eternity will divulge. If you lay a hold of your salvation, a day is not far distant when you will treasure it like nothing of this life.

There are many, many busy bodies who think they know how to work out everybody else's salvation, but you must realize only you can work out your salvation. You can't work out the other fellow's salvation. I wish we could work out one another's salvation, but we can't. That's an individual matter.

In the first verse of this chapter we read the word "therefore." This brings to bear all of the first chapter in connection with what he writes now. Then in verse 9 we find the word "wherefore." This brings to bear what God did for his Son after the resurrection. He came and fully obeyed his Father, even though it meant the death of the cross. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God gave it all up, laid aside everything, and died the vilest of the vile on the cross. God didn't betray Him one iota. There is no jealousy in the Godhead. There is no seeking after the other fellow's wealth in the Godhead. And if we're true children, these won't be in us. Here God raises Him up. He doesn't just raise Him from the dead, but He highly exalted Him and as a man gave Him that name which is above every name. In this 12th verse, "wherefore" gathers to itself that mind of Christ we must allow to be in us and dares to link your life and my life with the life of Christ. Isn't that amazing?

We have the same life the Lord Jesus Christ has right now, today. Eternal life. God-life. We're born of God. God didn't give us a kit and ask us to work it out or put it together. He takes care of it. Now the Holy Spirit has Paul to record the awesome descent from being equal with God to the death of the cross, from rich to poor. His majesty there, and then His poverty on the cross. He was stripped naked, dying as a common thief to rescue man from darkness and death. So, therefore, with this in sight and this compelling example before our heart's eyes, he says, "You work out your salvation with fear and trembling." You have your salvation to work out. You see, you can't work somebody else's, and they can't work yours. You may

stand and wish you could. The responsibility rests with the individual. And for that reason you can't blame anybody but you if you don't win.

We are to work out our own salvation. Now His was to do the will of God, and could yours be less? What is the will of God for you? Only you can find that out. To do so, however, I must realize and lay hold of the absolute fact that only as His humble mind becomes the key to my own life will I or can I make the sacrifice His example requires. As I take the appointed road of my salvation, where will it lead me? Where will it lead you? Who knows what a day will bring forth? Who knows what is out yonder? But we do know He has control when we trust Him. How easily we are lifted up in pride, thinking we are something when in reality we have nothing. Apart from His salvation we are nothing. It is as we learn the road down and descend into other's needs with a loving desire to lift, redeem, and rescue that we can work out our own salvation. Is this the yearning and longing and the burning of your life? What is it? Someone said that Brother Hill should quit preaching, but woe is me if I preach not the gospel. You couldn't even faintly say something like that if you knew what it was to be called to preach.

We take root downward, and we bear fruit upward. If like Paul, we take to ourselves the attitude of the bond slave, the servant of the Lord, we shall acquire the mean and the majesty of the monarch. You must go down in the will of God before He can lift you up. And let's remember that He won't always lift you up in this life. Your day will come. This is not our day. Don't you know that? We don't know what men might do to us. This is not our day, but our day is coming.

Now, marvelous things develop in us as we seek to serve and beautify our brother. The strength we spend in lifting the robbed and half-dead wayfarer from the ditch, binding his wounds, pouring in the oils of gladness and the wines, and caring for his welfare works in our soul like the exercise in the gym works on our bodies. It develops our spiritual life into his image. You can't be like Him unless you allow "this mind" to get in you and you reach out to the other fellow and the needy. That doesn't mean you go out here and you just grab onto anything. It has been my precious privilege to lead many a soul to Christ on a one-to-one basis. I don't know why others don't or can't. Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." All you do is "let this mind be in you." That mind took Him to the cross. That mind will bring you so you can deal with people.

Dear hearts, we are like bulbs. We can commit our tulips to the ground and to the winter snows and let the winters pass over them and see them reach their purpose of beauty in the spring. Or we can put them up and leave them in a package and dream about what they could be. You see, you have to commit your life. You have to be willing to put it in the environment that Jesus wants it to be in. If you will deposit your life and be willing that it be a sacrifice, and if you will be willing to put it in the place where you are sacrificial, you'll never lose a thing. God love you, you'll gain and gain and gain and gain. There is no way I could tell you.

So only the right ministry can work out our salvation. The Apostle's gospel is like the soils and the environment to which the bulb is committed. And we can no more work out our own salvation and neglect or reject Paul's ministry than the bulb if you leave it in the package. There are certain things that bring it to life. I go out in the spring of the year, and I know better than to put beans and corn out in February, but I do go out the latter part of February and plant lettuce, mustard, beets, carrots, onions, and things like that. I know that's the time to put them out. God knows exactly when to bring certain things your way. He brings things your way that he might develop you. "My Father," Jesus said, "is the husbandman." (*John 15:1*)

Leave it to Him. Any Christian that never lets that mind be in them that brings the descent into the need of others deprives themselves of the very elements needed to fertilize and mature their own growth.

So to work out my own salvation I must invest my talent for the Lord. You read twice in the scriptures how that the lord gave His servants certain talents, one with one and one with five, and then He went away and He came back. In Matthew's record of it He asked them what they had done with their talents. The man with five said, "Here Lord is your five and other five." The man with two said, "Here Lord is your two with other two." The man with one said, "Lord you reaped where you didn't straw, so I was afraid and I went and hid your talent in the earth. Here it is just as shiny and nice as it ever was." "Why," he said, "you wicked and unprofitable servant." Dear ones, his work was for others. If you want this mind to be in you, you must always be concerned that you'll reach others, help others. We'll never share the honors and the glories of the Lord unless we embrace the pangs and humility He endured as He descended to redeem man. If you think you're going to do this job without getting messy, you're badly mistaken. "Woe is you when all men speak well of you, when they say things falsely against you, then jump as high as you can and shout as loud as you can." (*Luke 6:26*)

Note the mood in which this must be done -- "With fear and trembling." Now that's something that a lot of people completely mix themselves up on. This is not that fear of a cringing slave who is forced into unwanted service with a whip at his back. God never works in this way, and He never wants robots. The angels are his robots. He can tell them to do it and they do it. Jesus told them He could have commanded twelve legions of angels. He could have just told them to do it, and they'd do it. God doesn't do that. God wants your loving worship of Him, your free worship of Him.

I read a true story of a rich ruler in one of the Arabian countries. He had 600 beautiful women in his household, and whenever one of them would displease him, he would chain her ankles so that she would have to crouch around a big pool of water he had in the center of his castle. Whenever he would come by she would have to jump in the water like a frog. He thought he was getting worship, but he wasn't. Every one of them hated him. They would have killed him if they could. But God's servants love Him. Jesus himself said, "I come in the volume of the book it is written, I delight to do thy will Oh God." (*Hebrews 10:7*)

Look what it took Him to. "Let this mind be in you." Too often we want a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye; but God wants us to be like the Christ. He wants us to be coworkers together with Him, sons who move in glorious liberty in this vast estate, who like himself and like Christ and Paul are constrained by love.

God so loved He gave. Christ so loved he came. Paul so loved he went. And this describes the fear of the lover not that of the slave. The fear of the lover is something that grows and clarifies the joy of the relationship. The response of the lover is like that of two tuning forks. It came back to my mind the time when I was a young fellow in school; and in the science study we had a tuning fork in a room, and you could just tap one of those forks and the other one would start ringing. So sensitive. I've thought of the Eskimo up in the cold north in the winter. He'll stand by a blow hole of a seal, and he has a little feather that he puts in a fork; and when that seal gets up to the hole he'll breath and that will cause the feather to quiver, and that is when he strikes with his harpoon and gets the seal. God wants us to be like that. We are responsive to His word, responsive to His thought. He has two ways of guiding us. One of them is with his eye, and the other way is with His hand. "He brought me out with a strong hand." (*Psalms 136:12*) and "Whom He loves, He chastens." (*Hebrews 12:6*)

The response of the lover is like those two tuning forks, responding to the other at the least vibration. There is the guidance that can come in your heart and He can just speak. You and I know that. If you've gone with God any length of time you know what it is to be led in your heart. Peter went out and wept bitterly when the Lord just looked at him. I think of the fable where the sun and the wind were arguing which was the strongest. There was a fellow down there with an overcoat on, and the wind said he'd blow it off of him. But the harder he blew the tighter the man pulled his coat about him. The sun's turn came, and he began to turn his heat loose on that fellow, and in a little bit he took the coat off. That's the way God is. He is persuasive. He does the thing lovingly that stirs our hearts for Him. How sensitive are we to His desires? This is what will determine if you and I work out our salvation. He loves that man. If I represent Him, you will know He loves you as I contact you. You may not accept it, but I'll let you know He loves you. I let everybody know, just about, that I ever talk to that God loves them.

So our work must be that of the love touch. If and when we lose that touch, no matter what our claim is, the word declares our lives have no profit in them. They become sounding brass and tinkling cymbals and are nothing. So may we keep ourselves tremblingly alert to the Lord for only then can we receive His instructions and His thoughts. So, the words fear and trembling simply do not mean response to the whip but our response to our lover, the Lord Jesus, and His purpose and plan in my salvation. So "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

So how am I going to work out my salvation? Let's find out. If our work doesn't bear his mark; if amid all our doings, our gifts, our learning, our faith, our sacrifice; if we're not co-workers together with God (and we can't be if we're not tuned to His love); if we do not follow His blueprint; if we try to do things without Him, we are like the fruitless branches of the vine. Only as we are tremblingly alert to Him do we work out what He works in.

Now you and I know it's our nature to take matters into our own hands. We have come far when we can stand still and see the salvation of God. If my life is a life that's concerned with His will, you can't defeat it. You don't need to try. You can't drown it. You can't burn it. The lions won't eat it. You can't do anything until He is ready. So, precious hearts, too often, like Peter in the garden, we cut off the other fellow's ear. So through the Holy Spirit, God is always with and within us, working in and then working out. He worketh in us, this says, to will, and this is the spring of impulse. There can never be a move for God without this initial impulse, no life out of chaos until He broods over it. The Spirit of God, we read back in *Genesis 1*, "brooded" over the face of the waters. That's how you and I came to life. I would still be out there a sinner, if alive, or in hell a sinner, if dead. But He brooded over me. And like a mother bird broods over her nest, so He brooded over you and me, and life came out of death. He brooded over the waters, and life came out of the destruction that was upon the earth.

So every holy initiative flows from Him. Let us realize, however, any holy impulse mocks us if He doesn't with that impulse bestow the power to reach the goal. He works in us both to will and to do. Moses would have delivered Israel 40 years before with his ability to slay and whatever, with all of his warrior skills, etc. But they weren't ready to be delivered. Then God takes him and gets him ready to deliver them. Now the mind of Christ had to get in Moses. He gets to the back side of the desert, and there God speaks to him and says, "Go deliver Israel. Their cry has come up to me. They are now ready to be delivered." God works in us both to will and to do. He starts them out toward the land of Canaan. They come to the Red Sea, and

God enables them to part the sea. They come to the desert. God enables them to live in the desert. He keeps them just like you would be kept in a castle. In the cool nights, there was a warm fire, the pillar of fire, over them. In the hot days, the shady cloud shaded them all day. Water flowed from a flinty rock. Manna lay on the floor of the desert. God fought their enemies. He stayed the sun and things like that. Precious hearts, He worked in them to go and then He enabled them to go.

Now do you think you've got it all figured out for you? Did you decide one day you were going to go and He had nothing to do with it? And then here you are. You came to your Red Sea, and you know how to build a bridge, so you just took off and built a bridge. No, it's as impossible for you to go with God without the ability of God as it would have been for the children of Israel to leave and defy Pharaoh and his hordes and make it through the wilderness and to the land of Canaan like they did.

So through the Holy Spirit, God is always with and within us, working in and working out. How precious it is. Let us realize that every holy impulse is of no value unless He helps us. So to will and to do simply means He speaks the first impulse and then He directs the final achievement. He reveals to us his unspeakable purpose, points out to us what our lives are designed for, and then by His grace gives the ability to realize the amazing plan of His good pleasure. Now what did he tell you He wanted you to do? What if the revelation is given you? What is the plan and the purpose that our lives have been embraced with? Do you think you can get in the bride of Christ? Can you add one inch to your stature by giving thought? We're talking about the greatest achievement that has ever been offered to man. He's going to have to do it. He will do it. "Oh, please do it," you say. He is saying, "Please let me do it." He wants to. He is the author and the finisher. The good work He has begun, He will perform it. He will do it. But now wait a minute. He may take you down into the valley of humility. I don't like that, do you? But if you trust Him He'll make it a place of springing, singing waters. How precious this becomes as you learn.

So the valley of humility becomes that exceeding glorious place where we're blessed to the heights. And when we walk in loving fear we find ourselves becoming like a well watered garden, filled with the flowers, the spices and fruits as was the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon. So "Let this mind be in you," the mind to descend the slopes of humility. There we will find the place of exaltation.

Now we are ready for verses 14-16. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." In this portion we find the spirit of repining. Note -- "Do all things." In the beginning He said, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." Now He says, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Here are two tempers that mar and ruin so many of God's precious people and defeat them, destroying their fruitfulness. That is, first the spirit of repining that robs our work of anything that is sweet like Christ. Then there is the spirit of wrangling that saps the strength of God's precious people. You can't get into a wrangling set up where God enables you. The energy for fights, for strife, for things like that has to come from the devil and the old creation. Do you understand that? God doesn't back that. God backs love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, tenderness, goodness and faith. Against these there is no law.

There is a law down here on Broadway that dictates the speed limit to be 35 miles per hour,

but there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. Your life can be filled, though it seems most people want nothing to do with it.

So the work of salvation with murmuring is like a bearing without any oil. Jesus said he delighted to do the will of God. Reluctance to work out our salvation shows the lack of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Our lives need to be submerged in oil. Paul said, "Be not drunk on wine wherein is excess but be filled with the Spirit." (*Ephesians 5:18*) And then he shows the fruitage of being filled with the Spirit -- "Singing to yourselves in Psalms and spiritual hymns...singing or making melody in your hearts to the Lord." Dear hearts, is that your life? Is there a whistle in you? Is there a song in you, or is there a complaint and murmur in you? Is there the determination in you to knock someone's tooth out or chop off their ear? You're going to come out of it one way or the other.

God is for you; and with God for you, you can. We go about murmuring because we're not moving smoothly in the oils of joy. There is something that is like grit, grinding in us; and we're being controlled by circumstances instead of the word of God. Duty goes with prayer and worship. We need to enter His presence in the multitude of His mercies. How did you get up this morning? Here I am a child of God. Maybe He'll come before today is over. What a provision He's made. Who knows, who knows? And you get to singing, "Oh, He's coming after me. Like Him I shall ever be. I'm so glad that He is coming after me." Is that the way it is? I trust it is. Don't come this far and then not get God's best. If so, we're of all men most miserable.

What good is our testimony when we're submerged in complaint and disputings? Do we enter our day counting our blessings or magnifying the obstacles? We can't give out of an empty life. We've experienced of late lives that should have been brimming like the run off of streams up here in the mountains, and yet they clogged down it seemed without a drop. When the fruit of the Spirit fills our lives and warms our hearts, that warmth fills our service with eagerness. And when the heart is full of Him, our lips will gush with His praise and we will do all things without murmurings.

Note the next one -- the mood of wrangling. There have always been a mixed people in Christian life. When Israel came out of Egypt, there was a bunch of them that did everything they could to bring strife and division, everything they could to put down Moses. Even Miriam and Aaron spoke out against Moses. Moses pleaded for them. God said, "Now wait a minute. If someone spit in her face that would be something. But she's going to have to be leprous. I'll answer your prayer. I won't kill them Moses." So Miriam broke out with leprosy (see *Numbers 12:10*). Abraham had Lot. Israel had those who murmured, and the Bible says, "There must be heresies among you." (*I Corinthians 11:19*) That's Paul statement. "That they that are approved might be made manifest."

At times we have those come to the front that lead revolt who are never active in leading good things. They so quickly join controversy when they never join the truth. They love disputing and wrangling. Their energies are spent in incidentals, and they have little if any strength for essentials. The real work of the church is seeking out the lost and building up the believer into the purpose of God. That's what our place is here. Not only are we getting ready, but this is how we get ready. Can you understand that? I hope you do. But these are eager to join those who go astray that their lives, meant to be a channel of life and refreshing, contribute to strife and division. Such never work out their salvation. Note that 15th verse: "That ye may be blameless and harmless." Such describes the character of the saint who with the mind of Christ works out their own salvation without murmuring and wrangling. Such are like pure

gold that has no alloy to it. How far many are from the wholesome attainment. Many do what they do for strife and vain glory. How can such produce the workings out of their salvation? In the midst of this crooked and perverse world, we are to hold forth the word of life; and the effort to remedy the wrong can't be remedied with more wrong. Do you see, we're here to bring life, not strife. We're here to bring peace, not turmoil. We're here to show the world out there that there is a peace that passes understanding.

This precious woman that I led to the Lord the other day said she had observed my life for so long and realized that there was something there. You can't reach them with other than the word of God. So our work is to bring God's plan and purpose to those who are out there about us, men and women who are lost and others who are starving for the word of God. Paul said, "That I may rejoice."

There is a day coming when I want to be able to rejoice about you precious people. I want to see you with God's best. Oh how happy that will make me. What is my life for? I received a letter from a party that gets the tapes all the time. That letter and it's contents itself was compensation for anything it seemed that I had ever encountered. I think of dear Sister Burge there in heaven. I think of dear old Brother Johnson. I think of Sister Myers. I think of these precious people that one day I expect to be a crown of rejoicing for me.

And so our gracious ministry will be Paul's radiant crown in that day. Yes, a thousand times I say, "Father, thank you not only for Jesus but for Paul." And we all find our reward in the other fellow's salvation. How many people have been refreshed because you came by? How many people love the Lord because you came by? I'm not trying to put you under conviction. We only have the record of one person that great man Jeremiah led to the Lord. He may have led others. So it isn't necessarily how many you lead to the Lord but how many did you give the word to? Did you stand up for the truth? God will reward you just as much if they do or they don't. It's our business to "Let this mind be in you." And let it carry us to the place God wants.

Philippians Study 9

The following is *Philippians 2:1-24* from the Conybeare translation. Hopefully, it will be a blessing to you as it has been to me.

"If then ye can be entreated in Christ, if you can be persuaded by love, if you have any fellowship in the Spirit, if you have any tenderness or compassion, I pray you make my joy full; be of one accord, filled with the same love, of one soul, of one mind. Do nothing in a spirit of intrigue. (Incidentally, that's quite a word. The Authorized Version says, "Let nothing be done through strife," and that word means guile, meaning a selfish party intrigue...conducted in a mercenary spirit, and more generally, cunning; and it's used a number of places.) But in lowliness of mind let each account others above himself. Seek not your private ends alone. (You do seek your own ends that you might win Him, etc., but don't do that alone.) But let every man seek likewise his neighbor's good.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but stripped Himself of His glory, and took upon Him the form of a slave. Being changed into the likeness of a man and having appeared in the guise of men, He abased himself and showed obedience even unto death, yea death upon the cross. Wherefore, God also highly exalted Him above measure and gave Him the name which is above every name. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of all who dwell in heaven, in earth and under the earth; And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed me, not as in my presence only but how much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you both to will and deed. Do all things for the sake of good will without murmuring and disputing that you may be blameless and guileless; the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Holding fast the word of life that you may give me ground of boasting, even to the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. But though my blood be poured forth upon the ministration of the sacrifice of your faith, I rejoice for myself and rejoice with you all. Do ye likewise rejoice, both for yourselves and with me. But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheous to you shortly that I also may be cheered by learning your state; For I have no other like minded with me who would care in earnest for your concerns. For all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the trials which have proved his worth, and that as a son with a father he has shared my servitude to proclaim the glad tidings. Him then, I hope to send without delay as soon as I see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

Verses 17-30 give us the human example of this mind in you. Remember, in the first chapter Christ was seen as the fountainhead of life. In this second chapter, He's seen as the example, or pattern, of life. Now we come to see men and women just like you and me as they let the mind of Christ be in them. God will not force His mind and His purpose on you. This is a choice that only you can make. I don't care how much you love someone and want them to have this choice, they alone can make the choice.

There are six words that I call your attention to before we go further. The first is pattern. We have to realize His life is the standard by which certain values are judged, whether they be Christian or unChristian. We must not practice or claim to that which is foreign to Him and claim it as Christian. So to work out our own salvation, we absolutely cannot act in strife, and

the objective cannot be vain glory. And our doings must be without murmuring and disputing. Three things are needed to mature Christian life, and one of them is this pattern. You have to have the proper pattern.

You can't start to build with God without His plan. For instance, when the pillars were put here in our church, they found that two of them lacked just a tiny bit of coming out plumb. If I had been building, knowing no more than I know, I would have gone ahead and just put those pillars on there. But they told me if we would set these pillars on that uneven level, by the time you got up on the roof you could be out eight or ten inches. They put little, thin steel shims under those pillars, and then they were all plumb. How much more do you suppose God demands the exact pattern? He is building things for eternity, and He gives us illustrations for that.

Two of the sons of Aaron attempted to bring fire into the presence of God from a source that was other than where it was supposed to be. It was called "strange" fire, *Levitations 10:1-11*; and if you look into it a little bit, you'll find out they had been drinking wine and were just a little bit tipsy, no doubt. They didn't have their better judgment about them, and God struck them dead for bringing this strange fire into His presence. Now God is very exact. He's gracious, tender, gentle, loving, and long suffering, but it has to come out like He says, not like you or I say. So there has to be the proper pattern, and only Paul's gospel gives us this pattern.

The second word I call your attention to is persistence. This is the practice of life. That is, it takes a daily living to have God's best. You can plant a peach in any part of the world where the climate is suitable to growing peaches, and it will produce peaches. So no matter where the incomparable seed of Christ is planted, the Christ life will be found. That is as simple as it is. You can't please God without this Christ life.

Then there is the third word which is power. Then there has to be power. We had a pattern to build the church and we material, but there was no way we could put this building up without the exercise of power. There was manpower. Then when we put the windows up, there was big machinery power. They lifted these windows which weighed a few tons with a big crane and put them into place. The Spirit-filled believer is given a power that is startling and challenging. I won't take time to go further than to refer you to the first chapter of *Ephesians*, verses 19-20, where the Apostle said that he prayed that we would understand what the exceeding greatness was to reward which believe. There was an experiment of the State Agricultural College in Kansas. They planted a pumpkin vine; and when a little pumpkin came out, they put a one-pound weight on it, and it grew. They increased it to 2-1/2 pounds, then to 5 pounds and 10 pounds. They finally got up to where they had 75 pounds resting on that pumpkin, and it was still growing. If God put that kind of power in just a pumpkin seed, what do you think He put in you when He put the life of Christ in you and filled you with the Holy Spirit? Do you think you and I could complain and say, "I can't". We may fail, but it won't be because we could not have the victory.

Then the fourth word is personality. Now our power is not just God's power as it is seen in nature in that pumpkin, for an example. That had to be God's power in a sense. He put that power in that pumpkin seed. But the power of Christ himself is dwelling in you and I. Remember He said, "Without me ye can do nothing." (*John 15:5*) And, "He works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (*Philippians 2:13*)

The fifth word I want you to consider is possibility. If our lives, individually or as a group, are limited to human achievement, I don't care how great the genius would be on our part, it

is nothing if Christ does not do it. I don't care how great the talents would be. We can sing with a beauty that the world has never heard before. We could exercise such talent as the world has never seen before. But, precious hearts, the possibilities are zero at best unless He accomplishes it. We either know His promises; or we'll end up with nothing. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (*Hebrews 11:6*) Faith has to come by His promises so if you don't know His promises and you don't seek His will, your possibilities are zero. You will not accomplish anything in your life. You may be like those fellows out there swinging that empty ax handle, but you should be building.

Then, finally, that word prospects, the sixth word. And what are the prospects? Why you know..."That I may win Him!" Paul said, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not to me only, but to all those also who love His appearing." (*II Timothy 4:8*) Now that's you if you want to qualify!

Now we come to the human examples. First, let's see Paul in verses 17-18. Note how he said in the Authorized Version, "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all, for the same cause do ye joy and rejoice with me." Here we have the mutual joy of running together. Nothing next to the word of God brings a joy and a rejoicing to a pastor like the flock who are won in the cause of Christ and for the glory of God. Note: he said, "If I be offered What a man Paul was. Always ready to spend and be spent for Christ. And all Christian life must have this characteristic. If you're not willing to spend and be spent for Christ, you'll never end up with God's best. He gave His all to reach you. You must be willing to give your all to reach Him. Let's go again to the Apostle Paul. What did he say? He said, "I counted all things loss . . ." He was willing. He had that characteristic. And lo and behold, he turned around and God took everything from him. So all in all it really came out that way.

Most Christians want and are satisfied with bloodless living. Do you know what's the matter with the church of Jesus Christ in this generation? They are not willing to bleed. I preached a series of sermons some time ago where I mentioned the giving and the praying, etc., and how it all must reach out and bleed. Is our prayer comparable to His prayer? Do we pray and give it up, or do we pray and refuse to give it up? You can pray and believe God.

So many of God's precious people will give great amounts of money, but "though I give my body to be burned and don't have love," it's profitless. Money won't do it. Of course, some believe it ought to cost you; and if it does, that's fine. Some give what they can easily afford. Their prayers and gifts are detached things. When the vital is demanded they refuse to be counted. Jesus said, "If you would be my disciple and hate not your father and mother . . ." (*Luke 14:26*) This is a comparable word. In other words, you love the Lord first even if you have to deny your mother, your father, your wife, your husband, whatever. Did He love you first? You know He did.

Jesus said, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of . . ." (*Matthew 20:22*) Many like the triumphant entry and will spend a little money on gay decorations and banners and palm branches. It doesn't cost much to break off a palm branch, especially if they are cutting them off their trees anyway. They will go out there and throw them in his pathway; but when the crowd turns from hosannas to "crucify him...crucify him," these kind somehow leave the "cloud" for the "crowd" and steal away to seclusion.

Paul's commitment was "That I may know Him." So, "If I be offered . . ." The thought is akin to the drink offering that is poured upon the offering. In other words, think a moment of the strong and gracious figure he employs. First he addresses those saints in their newly

acquired and gloriously dignified role as priests to God. Do you realize that you are priests to God? This was a tremendous right in the Old Testament and still is in some churches. If you're a priest, you're somebody. You may be a priest in this world and not amount to a plug nickel in the sight of God. You see them here ministering at the altar with sacrifices. These are not animals or birds, etc., but their own faith. God will try your faith. It is more precious than gold. Paul here speaks of the sacrifice of your faith. Isn't it awful when you think you believe God and he doesn't answer you? It can be pretty rough. Why does He let us down? Why does He seem to turn the heavens to brass? I thought He would jump at our every beck and call. He has your welfare in mind. The things that they are doing are the fruits of our faith.

What are you doing? What are the fruits of your faith? What a precious and beautiful figure this really is. Only occasionally could they have gone to the temple with a sacrifice. Think of it like this. This altar is within the temple of the Holy Ghost, which you are. That's the real temple. That's the temple of temples. You're a living temple. The Bible says you are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Think of how that Shekinah glory rested over the tabernacle in the wilderness. That represented the Holy Ghost. He rested over the golden altar, which figured Christ. But today you are His temple, and this fire should burn all the time and the sacrifice never cease. There should never be a moment in your life that you wouldn't be willing to sacrifice if it were required of the Lord. Now, He's very good and tender and is not going to treat you bad. You'll find that out as you go with Him.

So each child of God can wear the sweet, clean, not tarnishable linen of the righteousness of Christ and place on the altar the fruits of their own life, dedicating to Him the thought, the purpose, the desire, the affections, the courtesies, the daily labor, the sorrows, and joys. You can dedicate your life to God, and this is how you do it. This is just what those Philippian believers were doing. Do you want to be Philippian believers?

Paul at Rome feels that his own suffering was one with theirs. In fact, so much so that it seems like the same altar. He has the same altar as they do; and if he's called upon to die, it will be like a drink offering that he'll pour upon their offering. Each is enriched by the presence of the other, going up to God as an odor of a sweet smell, acceptable in the sight of God.

There are a lot of things you can offer God. You can offer God a billion dollars and if you're unsaved, it will be contemptible to Him. You can offer to Him the greatest kind of sacrifice; but if it isn't of Him, it's like filthy rags in His sight. And yet here you can offer up the most simple things in His will and to His glory, and it will be like a sweet-smelling savor to Him and all of us can do that. This is just what those Philippian believers were doing. Paul at Rome feels his own suffering was one with them and so was enriched by the presence of the other. Paul now counsels them. "I joy and rejoice with you all." Here we have a secret of imparting a sense of buoyancy and triumph in Christian life. Do you know what your strength is? It is the joy of the Lord. That's what going to keep you buoyant. That's what will keep you above the floods. That's what will keep you above the criticism. That's what will enable you, if necessary, to turn the other cheek. It's such a wonderful thing. No believer ever sacrificed themselves unto the Lord without entering into the joys of the Lord.

So our own joys multiply when we enter into the sacrificial joy of others. Other Christian joys act like a tonic on our home as theirs is by ours. Let me show you how easy it is. Remember when Jesus saw the widow cast in two mites? (*Mark 12:42, Luke 21:2*) That wasn't much was it? Almost anybody could gather up two mites. But He said she put in more than all of those people put together that day. Do you see how easy it is to be the odor of a sweet smell to Him? Mary came with her box filled with the spices of nard. Do you know what he said? "Let her

alone. Against the day of my burial hath she done this." (Mark 14:3, John 12:3) Did you ever think about Him in your life? Did you ever think about the joy that you bring to Him?

We want to bring joy to one another too, of course. We ought to love one another and respect one another. What would you do for even your brother in the natural? I have four brothers. One of them is still alive. I remember one time up in St. Joe. My oldest brother had a problem, and his wife was going to send him up if she could. My other brothers and myself got in the car and went to clean out south St. Joe. But when we got there, he had reconciled everything. Whether it was his fault or not he was our brother. Think of that. What would you do for your brother? That's just a little drop in the bucket what you ought to do for your brother in Christ. There is where the real relationship is.

When that widow cast in her two mites, it was like blood. When Mary went in and put the nards on him, it was like blood. And such things are linked with Christ and Calvary. Think of the joy that these two women found right then. And I'm sure they're both finding it tonight. Dear, sweet Sister Burge I'm sure is finding the joy tonight. The sacrifice that she made, the little that she could do was so much. How she and dear Brother Burge could tithe out of that meager amount with those hungry mouths, only God knew. I did my best to see that they never went hungry. But on the other hand, whether I did or didn't they gave.

So all true sacrifice is linked with Christ. And every son of sacrifice ministers at the same altar. Such are the bleeding saints of all time, and we can rejoice with all the martyrs of every age who spent their lives in the cause of Christ.

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly." Every fruit of Christian life has to have it's beginning when faith is put in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul seems to have no desire that isn't rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a man. No hope finds substance apart from the Lord Jesus Christ for Paul, and actually no hope will have any substance for you apart from the Lord. You will find that out one day. I find most Christians root only their crisis in the Lord. The only time they really get their lives rooted in Christ is when they're faced with some catastrophe or trouble, and they view heaven as a place they have to be someday reluctantly dragged to.

The wise root heaven and all of the purposes of God, be they great or be they small, in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you don't root your life and your little and your big things in Him, you're not going to reap them. They won't solve themselves properly either. You see, that ultimate day with it's bigger matters is not the only important thing. This day with it's smaller matters, the plan of the moment in the common place journey, the often hum-drum comings and goings, we ought to root them all in the risen Savior.

We can think of our life like a great estate that we have the privilege of turning into a garden for Him. That's what the Shulamite did. She said, "My beloved has come into His garden." It was just as barren as anything when He first got a hold of her. What was in your life before He got a hold of you? Nothing, nothing but refuse. You were worse than the dirtiest dump in the world. And then He got a hold of you and gave you a vast estate. Then He said to plant it for Him. Is that what you're doing? Great plantings can be there. I've seen some of the greatest gardens in the world. Sturdy oaks, small and fragile plants and bushes, fountains and streams -- tender things. That's what you want to put in your life. Love potions. The Lord is a lover, and He wants you to make love to Him. Courtesies? Delicate impulses? Trembling hopes? Aromatics? Spices...sweet smelling, incense. These are the things that you can put in your garden. Fruits that are sweet to His taste. When should you put them in your garden? When He comes? No, then He won't come and visit with you too much because it's too barren down

there. You don't want it to be like that, do you? We better start getting busy. We don't know how much longer we have to put the right things in the garden.

What was Paul's hope in the Lord? His hope was to send Timothy. "I hope to send Timothy," "I trust to send Timothy." Why? That Paul might be comforted when he knew of their state. How sweet is this tender and heartening look into Paul's life. "I send Timothy," he's saying, "that I may be comforted." That is, Paul took comfort in the progress, growth, and development of Christ in the believer. Do you realize this is almost a foreign thing to the church tonight? Do you realize that most preachers could care less whether you mature in Christ or not? Do you realize mainly they are not interested in your state. They are interested mainly in your money or whatever. The waters from other springs are refreshing to Paul, however. This is the enriching secret of the communion of the saints -- knowing that we are one, bound together by the grace and the power and the gifts of the Spirit, one with another.

Oh that we could visit one another's lives like Solomon went into the garden of the Shulamite and there find things sweet to our taste. Too often we get to visiting with someone, and what do we find? What do you find when you visit with your brother? Is there a garden there? Is there refreshing there? The possibility is they might just give you some shoots off those beautiful flowers and fruits that are in their lives, and you can plant them in your garden. Too often it's otherwise. We come away with bitter feelings, not feeling we've been exhorted or edified one iota, just feeling down.

Notice verses 20-21. Here we have a sad contrast of leaders who are not like minded. Do you realize there are those that would teach you and lead you that are not like minded? They don't have the mind of Christ. They don't have a mind like Paul. They don't have a mind like Timothy who naturally will care for your state. They're not interested in you. They're interested in "me." Do you understand that? Listen, precious hearts, my best treasure and your best treasure is how much you can do for each other. Those who don't care for the Christian's state are legion today. The reason they don't is that they seek their own as seen in verses 4-5. They are active in things of strife. They are seeking a vain glory and don't really care for the things of Christ. Like Alexander the coppersmith, who did Paul much evil, they would do evil. And like Absalom, who wanted David's kingdom and tried to steal the hearts of the people to get it, little realizing that only God can give a kingdom and only God can take it away. Don't you know that? Who built this place? God. I think He owns it. I think He can give it to anybody He wants to. I think He could take it any moment He wanted it. Put your confidence in Him. Yield to Him.

Timothy was like minded with Christ, and thus he sought the things of Christ. What was this mind? It was an humble mind. It was a mind that went down, down, down seven steps. He didn't go down just to our level, but beneath us. You can't lift somebody unless you get beneath them. You've got to get under them to lift them. So He got under. And only when we have the mind of Christ will we do this. Some have the very opposite of the mind of Christ that was in Paul and Timothy and others. These are consecrated to a heedless wreckage. They build chasms of hate and ill will. They turn muddy torrents into the garden of the soul. They would destroy the tender fruits that bring the fruit of the Spirit instead of the caring for gracious and friendly fellowship. They're leaders marching under the Lord's banner but careless of His affairs. Theirs is a selfish quest, caring little for the interest of Jesus and of the saints.

One day Jeremiah stood in the gates of Jerusalem. There it had been sacked. The people were starved. The glory was gone. The walls were breached. Israelites were being taken prisoner. He had pleaded, "Don't, don't." And that plaintiff, pathos-filled cry, "Does it mean

nothing to you all ye who pass by?" (*Lamentations 1:12*) Does it mean nothing to you tonight that the child of God isn't really thought of? The state of the believer is left to chance. Just as long as I have my way. Oh, what's my way or your way or anyone else's way? It's only the way that Christ wills that is going to win. It might end up in a prison down here. So what? Paul stepped from the prison to the chopping block and then to glory, and wouldn't you like to have his reward?

They set themselves as authorities, and Paul warns of their kind. They lie in wait to deceive. Thus those who are not rooted and grounded in God's word can be tossed about and carried away by their cunning craft, and this is such a pity. The greatest tragedy of all, it seems to me, is that they never seek the things of others, and thus they never find their own things. They seem to seek realities, but they accept counterfeits. They seek for joy but find only a fickle happiness. They seek comfort but spend their lives over moldering comforts. My nice car, my nice home:.....all of it is molding. All of it is rotting. All of it is getting old. "The fashion of this world passes away but he who does the will of God will abide forever." (*I Corinthians 7:31*) Let us realize we simply cannot ignore our brother's state and find our own. If we really would find our own, we must find them in the things of Christ. Timothy sought the things that were Christ's. Are you Christ's? He paid an awful price for you. Then, we must seek the things that are His. We must seek each other's well being. We must seek each other's state. Your standing, I can't seek. Christ sealed that once and for all. But your state, he left that to you and me.

Verse 22: "But ye know the proof of him." How beautiful it is when one stands the test of exacting experience, and they stand to prove to God. You've seen him. You watched him go through the fire. You know the proof of Timothy. God has proven him. Dear hearts, let God prove you. Don't let a test come and you fall flat on your face. Timothy cared for the person's state. So when we get together, we want to edify each other. That should be our purpose when we come together.

Philippians Study 10

I don't know how much you realize this, but are you aware of the fact that eternity will mainly be a time of worship. There will be many, many other things, but God seeks such to worship him; and here is where we learn to worship Him. You learn to worship Him because of His goodness and what He's done for you, and that's the reason we need to know the word of God. We need to know how rich and precious the Lord would make us.

As we look at the second chapter of *Philippians*, we see Christ as our example. Christ is our life in the first chapter; and in this second chapter, He becomes our example. He is the person that marks the way we live. Of course, the Apostle Paul shows in his book in *Corinthians* the true way that you and I in this age imitate Christ, and that is to follow him; that is, the apostle Paul, as he follows Christ. You couldn't follow Peter. Peter was a wonderful man. You couldn't follow John. You can read about a lot of the wonderful things that John wrote and Peter wrote; but to follow Christ in this age, you have to follow Him as Paul followed Him.

For an example, the Apostle Peter looked on him as the King of the Jews. He was the rightful heir to the throne of David. Paul saw Him in the capacity of the bridegroom that would one day have a bride. Jesus told the disciples that when He came into His kingdom they would sit on twelve thrones and rule with Him over the twelve tribes of Israel. Now our objective is much, much more precious than that. He is offering us a place with Him that has never or will ever be offered again.

As you read this you may think, well who am I? It isn't what you have, what you know, who thinks you're wonderful, or anything of this nature. It is what you are in Christ and what He desires and is able to make you. He can take any one of you and so mature your life that you will be ready to be in the bride of Christ when that time comes. That will be the height of all achievements to the natural man.

Please read *Philippians 2*. In this chapter we see Christ, the example, and the mind that was in Him that brought him down. Who could imagine what it was to come down from His place? We can't even imagine what it would be to come down from a place such as the King of England. We'd have to be the King of England to understand that. We can't even understand what it means to be the President of the United States. How could we understand someone who, "Without him was not anything made that was made." (*John 1:3*) He who stretched the heavens. He who inhabits eternity. He who sits on the circle of the earth. It's utterly amazing, but one day that was Him. But His mind brought Him down and down and down.

You see, He loved you. He knew there was only one way to rescue you. He had to do it, and He couldn't do it as God. He had to do it as man. There had to be a man pay the debt of men. This brought Him down. That mind in Him got into the Apostle Paul, and Paul went out to give his life as Christ gave His life. He gave his life for the things of Christ and to tell people about Christ. Do you realize what it meant when you came to Christ? You'll never really realize what it meant to Him. He loved you.

Then Paul not only was interested in those saints at Philippi and all other saints, he sends Timothy; and with that mind in Timothy, he naturally cared for their state. If you think you want to be a true pastor, you'll have to have God to do it. There is no way that you could do it otherwise. Now we're coming to Epaphroditus.

Oh the sweet and beautiful testimony of a worthy servant of the Lord. Note how his life combines faithfulness with tenderness and a sacrificial self-forgetfulness even to the point of death. The mind brought Christ to death. The mind brought Paul to the renunciation and loss of all things. This mind brought Timothy to be a faithful laborer with Paul and to care for their state, someone the Apostle Paul could trust to send to them. Now it's in this man Epaphroditus, combining faithfulness with tenderness and all of these things to the point of death. This is the mind of Christ that becomes a benediction to others. Every believer must face the responsibility of discipleship. Whether you want to or not you are a disciple, and you must face that responsibility.

A man, Jesus said, went away and dispensed of his goods and gave out talents. He came back, and the one with ten said he had invested it and gave back his ten plus ten more. One with five said he invested it and gave back five plus five more. The one with one said, "I knew you were an austere and demanding man. I knew you reaped where you didn't straw. I was just so afraid I'd lose that talent that I hid it away. Here is your talent." He said, "You unprofitable servant." How tragic. Now you will get just as much for investing the one talent as you will for investing the five or the ten. There are far more people with one talent than with five or ten. In fact, those with five or ten in our day are usually the unfaithful ones. It's the one's with the one that are faithful.

His mind will find expression in us or we'll deny Him the right both to will and to do of his good pleasure. You must understand we are today's addition of the saints of God. If you would read in *II Corinthians 3*, you will see where Paul wrote, "Ye are our epistle written in the hearts."

Notice in verse 25 who Epaphroditus was: "my brother." What a statement. "My brother." One of the most precious truths a believer can ever fully understand and embrace is their kinship one with another forever. What can and do you do for your natural brother at times? You've heard about the little girl carrying around a big fellow almost twice her size, and someone asked her what she was doing carrying him around. She said, "He's my brother." That's what we do for our natural brother.

This word brother embraces the deep roots of kinship. It's the closest intimacy of a blood relationship. It literally means born of the same parentage, the same seed, the same womb. Today it is often applied to a lodge, a political party, a team, something of this kind. Such can be made up of many sources. In a lodge you can have rich and poor, and they may not have anything in common but just that lodge. Here we're just one. Jesus said, "Father, I would that they be one even as we are one." (*John 17:21*) You may resent it or reject it or fight against it, but one day you will find the brother that you might have treated like a dog is your brother. The word brother has a greater significance than a lodge. It goes beyond mental or intellectual association and expresses the subtle currents that move in the soul. When Paul uses this term, he visions the realities, the purposes, and motives that are ours in life because of being Christians.

This life and mine have everlasting hopes -- where prayers ascend that are acceptable unto God, where the unspeakable riches of Christ's grace are bestowed, where powers that are exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think await to accomplish God's unspeakable purpose in our lives. It's God that is going to do this if you'll let him. "Let this mind be in you." That's the solution, the key, the thing that opens the treasure vaults of heaven.

So the word brother carries the meaning of the new life we receive when we're born again by the blood, or the incorruptible seed, of Christ. Paul and Epaphroditus had each tasted and

found that the Lord was gracious and had become partakers of the divine nature, even God's own eternal life, which forever makes us brothers. Do you see that's you? Do you realize that Paul is your brother? Do you realize that God has blessed you with all spiritual blessings just like he did Paul? Do you realize what God wants? God hasn't sent me here to tell you this to just mock you. God doesn't set a big feast back behind a window to a starving person and let them die in the street and refuse to give it to them. God entices you with his best and wants you to have it, and yet this is so easily forgotten. I never cease to marvel how lightly we regard one another at times. Oh the things I've seen Christians do for natural relationships and then do the most dastardly things to their everlasting relatives. It's wonderful to be true brothers one to another. How much more this should be true when we realize our everlasting bonds. How brave and sweet our companionship can be in the Lord. It can be much better than in the natural even. When brother and brother thrill in one another's joys and successes and in love bear one another's burdens, what a sweet and wonderful thing it is. What a test if we come to the place where our brother has a great need and we pass him by. This is what tests you. As we go with God we'll find not only do brethren not have this positive love they manifest, sometimes they manifest a positive hate. To mature in Christ until this relationship becomes an unshakable reality to us is to enjoy the cups of delight and pass it to one another, to exchange revelations and give to one another's ears stories of the Lord's goodness to us and his dealings with us rather than the cheap and destructive gossip that often passes from one to another. Such are the efforts of true brothers and such was Epaphroditus, "my brother." Christians who would seek to add to another's burden or destroy do not know the love of God no matter what they claim.

Our text hints, if you'll notice, that Paul had a wound. Sorrow? Do you think Paul had sorrows? I thought he was above sorrows. You will never get above sorrows. Jesus was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief; but He had a joy and a peace that nothing could disturb. You understand when you walk with God that doesn't mean you won't have any sorrows. You can be burdened down with sorrows. Note three times in this chapter Paul speaks of his sorrow. This text hints that it was kind of like a wound. But God had a brother who could be used to apply balm to his sorrowing Apostle. Have you ever thought what a wonderful privilege it would have been if you could have ministered to the Apostle Paul?

So if Paul spoke of his sorrows, sounding just a little depressed and little bit feverish and heavy, Epaphroditus knew how to pull the blinds, raise the window, and let a little sunshine and fresh air in from heaven to him. That is just what he does. What a privilege Epaphroditus counted it to be allowed to minister to Paul, who had ministered so much to him. Paul, who was such an expert at bringing to others life and exuberant strength and grace. So each flowed out to the other. Epaphroditus to Paul, Paul to Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus needed and Paul ministered life to him. Now Paul is in prison and needy, and Epaphroditus ministers to him, each with the gracious sympathy of the Lord. Made one in Christ, they were brethren and lived inter-penetrated lives, each embracing the other with redeeming grace. How is it with you and me?

Worker is the meaning, "in labor." (*Verse 2:25*) Epaphroditus wasn't afraid, and I want you to notice this especially. Do you know what a hack horse is? He's the kind of horse that pulls the old, gray wagons around. They'd come around the alleys in the old days pulling cans and trash, etc.; and today they are millionaires. If there was any service or something that was akin to great drudgery without banners and brass bands or the applause, Epaphroditus was the person that gladly did it. Never should we be afraid to do the little, menial thing. I remind

you so often that the woman who gave two mites gave more than everybody. Mary poured on Him the nards and anointed him. Such a small thing. God doesn't measure you by how much, but how able. He gives to you, and then he expects you to minister. I would say the greatest gifts that are given to the cause of Christ are from the people that are the poorest.

So many want to be a show horse and like to prance around a ring with the applause of others ringing in their ears, while a common hack horse carries their hay and oats to feed them. They like that. Common task has no appeal to the show horse. You wouldn't think of taking Secretariat and hooking him to a gray and taking him down the street, would you? But Epaphroditus counted it a joy to be their messenger. He was an errand boy taking a hazardous journey to Rome. Can you imagine the danger that lay in coming from Philippi to Rome? And he came to give Paul a gift for his wants. Whatever it was I don't know. I'm sure God's record book carries this sort of an entry. Willing saints at Philippi, constrained by the love of Christ, decided to send to Paul's wants a token of their regard and goodwill and debt. And faithful Epaphroditus was chosen to make that harsh journey. You will find that item up in the glory world one day. God never forgets.

I want you to think a little bit about this fact. For Epaphroditus to identify himself with Paul would not have been an easy thing to do. Paul is in the penitentiary. He is facing the death sentence. All in Asia have forsaken him. This was no small matter. He writes a letter to Timothy, "Don't be ashamed of my chains." (*II Timothy 1:16*) But here Epaphroditus gladly makes this trip, and it may have been a part of what brought his life near to death. We read that he was "nigh unto death." What he encountered on that journey I don't know. He may have picked up some horrible disease, or he may have been caught along the road. He may have been caught out in a storm. Then when he gets to Rome, you must realize that the dignitaries didn't come out and give him the VIP treatment and roll out the red carpet, etc. I imagine they thought that anybody that would visit that man ought to be chopped up too. So his was the errand of commonplace. Do you dread the commonplace errand? Don't. If it's for Christ, it's the hardest kind of an errand to carry out. Do you realize that? To be some big shot celebrity and have people falling around you isn't hard to do.

Have you heard the true story about the missionary who had given his life in service for the Lord in Africa? This happened years ago when Teddy Roosevelt was our President. Teddy was returning from one of his safari's in Africa; and when they came to New York to the dock, the brass bands were out to meet him. And this poor missionary went to a shabby room with no one to greet him, broken and spent with no money. He got on his knees and cried, "Lord, when Teddy Roosevelt came home, look at what happened. I came home, and no one even recognized me." And as he put his head down sobbing, the Lord said to him, "Son, you're not home yet."

You learn to rejoice in tribulations also. The road that others find monotonous and dangerous, Epaphroditus finds filled with bird songs and strewn with flowers; and best of all, on that road you have the sweet companionship of the Lord Jesus Christ who said, "I will never leave you . . ." (*Hebrews 13:5*)

Let's go a little deeper with this thought -- not just worker, but fellow worker or laborer. I learned on the farm as a young man the wisdom and worth of matched teams. We had one team that if they just stood out here, both of them were such big, fine, strong gray horses, you wouldn't have known which one to pick. But when you put them together to work, it was almost a chore to work them. One lay back in the breaches and one stayed up in the collar. This one back here let old John pull it all. Then there were the blue ribbon mules at the American

Royal in Kansas City. Several times it was my privilege on the farm to work those two mules. All you had to do was pick up the lines and say, "Get with it." Both of them laid in the collar. What a team! Here is a team. We've got a job here. The most marvelous, wonderful job (if I may call it that) that the world has ever had. You'll never, never, never have anything as valuable to you and sweet to you and as rewarding to you as the labor in the gospel of the grace of God. You say, "They wouldn't miss me." Oh, yes they would.

To work with Paul demands more than that. Not only is he a fellow worker, but he's a fellow soldier. You can get by pretty good if you don't tell the truth and if you don't stand for it. When you begin to make a stand for the truth, you're going to meet an enemy. You might ask, "Why?" "Why does God permit it?" He wants you to know who He is.

Israel knew God's acts; Moses knew God's ways. Moses went out and slew that Egyptian and hid him in the sand; and if he could have just gone on and done that, he never would have known God's ways. Can you understand that? Because he would have gone around boasting and sticking his chest out and whacking off heads and whatever. So he finds out that he's on dangerous ground, and he flees. God dealt with him for forty years. At the end of the forty years, God sends him to Egypt. Think of the task and think of what he found out about God. He found out that God could bring the greatest nation in the world to its knees. He found out that God himself could pass over the land and spare anyone that had the blood on the door and kill the firstborn of everybody that didn't. He found out that God could protect him overnight from Pharaoh and his chariots. He found out that God could part a sea. He found out that God could make a river run from a dry and flinty rock. He found out that you could cut a tree down and make the bitter waters sweet. He found out that he didn't have to cook a meal, he didn't have to hunt down an animal. He didn't have to do anything. He found out that he could just get up on a hill and raise his hands, and Joshua could whip everything that was down there in the valley.

God wants you to know Him, but you never will unless you become a good soldier, a fellow soldier. There are a lot of people that work for God, but there are not many that work together with God. Paul said, "Co-workers together with God." Let's put it in an illustration. Here I am downtown, and I'm going to build a big center down there. They'll have the blueprints out one of these days, and I'm hiring help. And I say, "Well, I have to put this convention center up here." Then this fellow comes to me and he tells me he'd like to work but he's not going to follow that blueprint. I would have to tell him he couldn't work with me then. Go out there and dig a hole and do anything you want to, but don't do it on this property. We've got a plan here and we're going to build this thing according to this plan. Paul said, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (*Romans 2:16*)

Do you realize the vast majority of God's precious people don't have the first inkling of an idea of what God is doing at this time. He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. (*Acts 15:14*) Then after that is over, He is going to "return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down." Talk about a revival! When those Jews become evangelists, no man shall say, "Know ye the Lord: for all shall know Him . . ." (*Hebrews 8:11*) A knowledge of the Lord is going to cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. One shall start up to Jerusalem to worship, and seven will take hold of his coat and say, "Let us go with you."

Here the hack horse becomes a war horse. Isn't that wonderful? Only the Christian who is willing to be a servant of the commonplace things makes a good soldier. When the battle lines are drawn, the most willing workers become the most glorious warriors. Do you realize

America has had the world's best soldiers up to this generation? Do you know why? Because they fought for homes, farms, freedoms, and families. When the British came out in their red coats and slick uniforms, the Minutemen just cut them down like a scythe cutting down wheat. They had something to fight for. "Give me liberty or give me death." Did you ever hear that statement, "Our children almost are not taught to be patriotic anymore."

Note one more characteristic as Paul paints this man's portrait. "For he longed after you all and was full of heaviness (that means sorely troubled) because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death . . ." I don't know why. This is such a worthy thing, however. That is, he didn't want to burden those whom he loved with his trials. What self-forgetfulness that he would not want to cause them anxiety or be a burden to them. Do you know what some people do? You meet them, and you don't like to ask them how they feel because you walk away so depressed. But here Epaphroditus wouldn't tell anyone how he felt. He was so sorry for them and anxious. "He longed after you all and was full of heaviness because ye had heard that he had been sick." He didn't just have a little headache. Indeed he was sick "nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." This indicates Paul had some real sorrow at that time. You can imagine with people deserting and walking away and churches rejecting him and his message, it would have given him sorrow. So though the journey for them had brought him nigh to death, the mission was important to Epaphroditus.

Verse 29: "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation." Now this is the way we should treat Epaphroditus if he should come our way. Hallowed by the Lord's presence, note: "in the Lord." "Receive him -- in the Lord . . ." We know too often how we praise the servant and forget who makes everything that the servant does possible. And yet at the same time, if you have a true servant he should be honored as such.

What should we value in a leader? I was asked to go and pray with a woman who was dying of cancer years ago. She was in Lutheran Hospital, and I went out there. The mother and several of them were there. I went in and, of course, I'm just old corn-field me. I talked to her and really got down to the nitty gritty about her soul and what her condition was. That's what counts. Then her mother said later, "I didn't think much of Brother Hill. He isn't like our minister. Our minister has such a wonderful bedside manner." (Probably like putting ice on her back.) Well, what are you after? His dress, his oddities of manner, private habits, personal duties, recreation, etc.? The measure of a minister had better be what has he given you about the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation." We impoverish ourselves, dear hearts, when we withhold the honor from someone that is honorable. "Because for the work of Christ, he has come nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." This mind in Christ brought him to death. This mind in Paul brought him all the way down. This mind in Timothy made him naturally care for their state. This mind in Epaphroditus brought him to the gates of death. So we honor Epaphroditus because he honored the Lord even to the gates of death. So many are like old Pliable (in Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyon) when he came to Despond. They say they'll go if it doesn't cost them.

Many years ago as I was establishing this meeting here, we needed a furnace. I couldn't get anybody to help me get it. They wouldn't sign a note. I went out and mortgaged my car and bought a furnace for the little white church that used to sit here. Again, we needed an organ. I couldn't get anyone but Richard Robinson to help me. He gave me \$50.00 on it. I

went out and mortgaged my car and bought the organ. Later when I took it home and we put one of these nice organs in here, someone called and told me I needed to ask the church to take the organ home. (I'd loaned it to them for eight years.) I since learned to do whatever the Lord told me to do. I learned when a deacon doesn't "deac" he ought not to be "deac."

Epaphroditus never got so close to the Lord as when he was nigh unto death and neither will you, if Jesus tarries. When we begin to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel, begin to rejoice for that is really when you're getting rich.

Philippians Study 11

(Phil. 3:1-6)

I am an heir of God, the creator of everything; I'm His heir. I'm rich potentially like nothing of this earth could ever begin to offer me. But on top of that, He has put everything on His Son. He's given Him the name above every name. He is the center and the circumference of everything. God has no plan but in His Son. He has no purpose but in His Son, and He's offering me here and now joint heirship with His Son. It's a wonder of wonders that we spend a lifetime and then just faintly embrace this. God help us to do that.

Here we see Christ the prize, who is the true objective of life. I don't care what else you have in mind, nor does He: there's nothing that comes up to this. It's such a wonder that God who wanted us to have eternal life, and made it possible as He gave Christ to us, now wants above everything to bring you and I into the relationship of that which is typified by a husband and wife in the natural. In *Revelation 19:7*, we see, "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

Nothing will inspire us and hold us in the storms of life and keep us going on with the things of God like seeing Christ in this greatest of all relationships. You may not see it now, but if you ever do, it will keep you going on in spite of anything and everything as it becomes a reality of your life. Think of the way God revealed himself to Abraham. If you go back into the Old Testament, you'll find the Hebrew words of El Shaddai, etc. They were an ever expanding revelation of the meaning of God to Abraham's life. He said, "I am El Shaddai, Abraham." (*Genesis 17:1*) (In other words, I am the strong-breasted one, the Nourisher, the Strength-giver. I want to be this to you.)

All of you that are born again came one day to know Christ as your personal Savior. What a joy it was. What a wonder it was. Then in the next step, He probably showed you that you could receive the Holy Spirit just like He as a man did there at the River Jordan. And then among these things He showed you that you were saved with an everlasting salvation, that you were secure. We sing the song, "Builded on the Rock." We don't hold the rock, the rock holds us. Then the Lord reveals to us that He is our healer. Almost 60 years ago He showed me this, and I've had Him take me through such tremendous things in the healing sense. Now He wants to show you that He wants you to be in His bride. This is a mystical company who will make up that closest of all places that man will ever know with the Son of God.

The ultimate fruit of the first love that the church at Ephesus left can be yours. Isn't that a marvel? If you could look on any church that you know about today and give it all the things that were true in the church at Ephesus we see in *Revelation 2*, you would think -- what a marvel! "But I have somewhat against thee." That marvelous church left their first love. Isn't that amazing? It didn't mean all that were in that church left it because the Smyrna saints came out of it. They were those that were faithful to death.

Today He is offering you this unspeakable privilege to rule and reign with Him, but you'll have to learn to do it here and now. This is school day. I heard a portion of Jesse Jackson on the news, and he was urging his followers not to lose sight of the prize. His prize was that the Democrats would win the presidency. Man can be inspired to give up, spend, be spent, and whatever for a little bit of temporal glory. All of that is just temporal. It amounts to nothing. If you think any politician is going to do much for you, you give it up. One person is going to do something for you, and He does it for free. Don't lose sight of the prize.

This is the inspiration not just needed, but that which the child of God must have in order to be inspired to make the efforts that we must make if we'll have God's best. God wants you to have His best, but it will cost. He will back you with His wealth.

The Holy Spirit knows that we need the forward look to see Christ as the bridegroom and to be what He wants us to be and knows we can be. I don't care who you are or how weak you are. I don't care what you do or don't have. I don't care if you don't know how to read or what you are educationally, the Holy Spirit will make this possible to your life if you'll seek Him. There is no excuse. Now this is the practical view and value of believers, and following this view we shall be like Him, "for we shall see Him as He is." (*I John 3:2*)

The first six verses of *Philippians 3* warn us of the unregenerate that are among us as well as the carnal, and notice that it says, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers . . ." Isn't it a tragedy that some of God's precious people are evil workers? They don't seek your welfare. If they can't get some personal glory, they won't spend five minutes with you. Isn't it strange how you can spend some time in some people's presence, and you just feel like you have been robbed when you go away. This is possible. Then Paul tells us to "beware of the concision." This covers both the sinner and saint; both can be evil workers. The dogs, however, can only mean the unsaved, as we'll point out later.

Notice: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." This indicates that this could be the only thing you have to rejoice in, but that's the only thing that is really worth rejoicing in, in the light of eternity. The portion has to do with mere professors, men and women with unchanged natures like "vomited dogs," "washed sows," that Peter talked about in *II Peter 2:22*. Such trust in religious forms. This is especially true of the Jew in that day. Paul in verse 3 shows the marks of true believers who are circumspect in heart, who worship in Spirit, who rejoice in Christ, who have no confidence in the flesh. Then in verses 4-6 we have Paul's claims, which if it were possible for anybody to be accepted of God on such a basis, he certainly would have been; but he declares himself to be the chief of sinners. (*I Timothy 1:15*.)

So, "Finally -- rejoice in the Lord." Finally? This is not the end of it all, but this "finally" here is that you have Christ as an example. And you have his life in Paul and Timothy and Epaphroditus to show it can be real in you as an example. So you have every reason to rejoice. Is there anyone reading this who wouldn't have reason to rejoice if you're a Christian? That's something that no one can take from you. They may catch you down here on Broadway going 45 miles an hour, and they can give you a ticket; they can arrest you; they can take you to jail if you resist. In fact, if you get real adamant about it, they might even shoot you and be cleared of the charge. But we're talking about something no one can take from you. Here is something that no one can beat you out of. You can have everything, and you won't take a thing from me. I'll have everything too. When you have Christ, you have everything. All things are in Him.

So here, finally means you...you; what are you going to do about it? You might say, "Brother Hill, my circumstances are so hard." Let's note that this counsel springs from a man whose circumstances make anything you and I encounter pale by comparison. There isn't a person reading this that can come close to the circumstances that the Apostle Paul was confronted with when he wrote this letter. Think about it. I've had people forsake me but, dear hearts, all in Asia forsook him. I've had others to be shaky; but his son in the faith, Timothy, was tempted to be ashamed of his chains. Have you ever been without money? He had nothing. Have you ever been cold and unable to protect yourself from the cold? They called him Paul the aged; he had lived such a hard life that evidently he was broken far before his time. But here this physically broken, old man is in a cell where the chill never leaves; and

he had left an old coat back yonder at Troas. He said, "Timothy, do thy diligence to come. Come before winter. Don't let me have to encounter this again. And that old cloak I left at Troas, bring it with you." He had nothing to entertain himself with or to be of value to him. "Oh, just come. Bring the parchments. I need something." (*II Timothy 4:13*)

You'll notice here that this epistle and its author show all who go with God sing like a nightingale in the storm thrush song. If you go with God you'll come to the time in the natural where you'll have anything but a song. Have you experienced anything like that yet? Maybe your circumstances were such that there wasn't a thing you could look at and feel a joy about. I doubt if we've come to that place yet, but you might. Then is when you learn how to sing the song of the nightingale and the storm thrush. The difference is these birds are created with that nature, and they can't do anything about it. The nightingale sings in the night. The whippoorwill sings in the night. The storm thrush sings his best song when a storm is on. That inspires him to sing. But, precious hearts, you'll have to do it by choice. You'll only do it when you realize that all things are working together for your good because you love God. (*Romans 8:28*) You'll do it only when you realize that there are treasures there that no one can take.

Paul, as he writes that last epistle, writes: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which whom the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." (*II Timothy 4:8*) Do you see they couldn't take that away from him? They had taken his friends. They had taken his comforts. They had taken his good name. They had taken and taken and taken, but here was something they couldn't take. So there is nothing friendly to produce lightheartedness and buoyancy of spirit in the time of the trial that you can and may face but this vision. Such songs never flow from "things" anyway. Things can make you happy, but things will never give you this song. This song can only be inspired by the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of God. So Christian joy is never rooted in circumstances but in the Lord. These are the same hallowed soils in which Paul's hopes and purposes were rooted. His initiatives of life whether they were great or small were all found in Christ. "The love of Christ constrains me." (*II Corinthians 5:14*) That's how he explained it. Paul plants nothing in the transient. These are alien soils to him. He roots all in Christ and His promises, and thus we see the rare and valuable fruit of the Spirit in his life. We see a joy that is here mentioned and found where you never expected to find it. Now if you were on an expedition to the South Pole and went ashore a little way from the South Pole and you walked upon a banana grove, what would you think? "It's impossible!" you would think. "It just can't be here." And it couldn't be there in the natural. So don't expect to have this joy and rejoicing in things. That doesn't keep you from having things. If God has given you things, enjoy them as much as is possible. But hold to them lightly and recognize that any one of them can go like a puff of wind. God can take them at any moment.

There is an attorney in Denver that I know of, and he and his wife couldn't have healthy children. They had some children, and they died; and he is bitter against God for doing that to him. That would be like an apple hanging on a tree and being bitter because a worm got in it. The curse is out there. You marvel that any of us have any health at all if you know the facts. You don't have any right to anything. We have people that work with the sick. You could be that person just as easily. Why did the disease overtake this party and not you? You see people with cancer. That could be you. You see a drunk. That could be you but for the grace of God. And so it comes to be. You begin to realize that if God has given you something, rejoice and see that it was Him that did it. How good the Lord is to us.

Here we find joy along side the faith, hope and love found in chapters one and two. All of

them are drawing their nutriment from the unsearchable riches of Christ. Do you realize that you wouldn't have one speck of faith but for Him? "And without faith it is impossible to please Him." (*Hebrews 11:6*) Do you realize there would absolutely be no hope for tomorrow apart from Him? Do you realize that there wouldn't be a speck of love that God would accept if it weren't for Him? So the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy -- joy...that is what we are talking about here. Joy is something you can have and not have an ounce of happiness. Happiness comes from happenings and things. Joy comes from the Lord in spite of things. You can have the joy of the Lord at a funeral. This is what God is putting in us. If our roots are in the infinite, how can the events of the finite bring us to failure? They can't. I don't care what happens to you, if you have your roots in God no circumstance can make you fail. Do you remember *Psalm 1*? I was fishing with my sons recently, and I went by a great big tree with half of its roots out there in the river; and I thought of *Psalm 1*, "Like a tree planted by the water, whose leaf withers not, who bears it's fruit in it's season." What can stop it? If your roots are in the promises of God and the mighty river of the Holy Spirit, nothing can stop you. So rejoice in the Lord!

Paul exhorts his readers to seek the treasures and joys that suck all of their nutriment from the infinite. A Christian is always in danger of being enticed into superficialities, of seeking delights and satisfactions in exhausted resources. You can be tempted. I can be tempted. All of us can be tempted. We can be enticed, and such is like the grain that fell on the stony ground. When the sun came it withered and scorched, because it couldn't get its roots down in any soil or moisture.

I don't know how many of you have ever had an experience like this; but when I was just in grade school, the teacher would fill a pan with wheat and put a cheesecloth over it and pour water in it. In two or three days or so the green wheat would come up through that cheesecloth, and it would be so pretty and green. It would get up maybe two inches high, and then it would just wither away, turn yellow, and die. Why? There was nothing to sustain it. It had life in it, but that life was not sustained and not kept. So like the wheat, you and I may be deceived by apparent growth. We can see something spring up all of a sudden in a life but then they don't get themselves in the promises of God. That's the reason we need Bible study. That's the reason we need prayer. That's the reason we need the fellowship of the saints. That's the reason we need to gather together and not be "as the manner of some is" as they forsake the assembling of themselves together. (*Hebrews 10:25*)

Precious hearts, when I got saved almost 60 years ago, I believe there was something close to 300 of my relatives that came to the Lord during that time, plus friends. I have nieces, nephews, cousins, great nephews, and great nieces from that day that never darken a church door anymore. Most of them are successful. They drive nice cars, live in nice homes, have nice families, etc.; but everything in the world will not stand by them when the chips are down. One day the chips will be down. Do you understand that? One day it will be payday. It may tarry. It's amazing that God has lots of time. He knows what to do. You might say that you know something is going to happen but you just wish God would hurry up. Maybe he wants you to, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." (*Exodus 14:13*) and to know that, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..." (*Isaiah 40:29-31*) Dear hearts, when the hot trial comes if you are in God and your roots are in His promises, the results will be inevitable. You will bear your fruit in the season expected and nothing can stop it.

Paul, an ever mature believer, knows the things we hear in God's word need to be repeated. He said, "To write the same things to you, it isn't grievous to me." (*Philippians 3:1*) If I repeat a sermon, I'm getting a lot of good out of it even if you aren't. I'm like the fellow who took

over a church in St. Louis, Missouri years ago. He preached *John 3:16* the first Sunday, and the next Sunday he preached *John 3:16*; the next Sunday he preached *John 3:16*; the next Sunday he preached *John 3:16*. He did that for about five weeks, and the committee called on him and told him they enjoyed that sermon the first, second, and third time he preached it. They asked him, though, if he didn't know anything else? He said, "Of course I know something else. When you believe *John 3:16*, I'll preach something else." So that's the way it goes. The lessons of life need to be repeated to us again and again and again. You can't hear the word of God preached if your heart is open and not have it begat faith in your heart. That is what you need.

To hear and read the truth is valuable to us. "For you, it is safe. And it isn't grievous to me." We need to go to the table often in the natural. Did you eat some green beans once and that was the end of it? Did you eat a piece of steak once and you never did want another one? Did you eat a piece of pie and you never did want another? It would only take you about thirty days to run out of anything to eat, and you'd starve to death. How valuable the word of God is to us. If you think that you can exhaust it in one or two or three or four, five, or one hundred sittings, or a million sittings, you are in bad shape. This is the written word. Christ is the living word. This is alive as you take it.

Both pleasant and unpleasant things need to be repeated. Often ministers value numbers, etc., more than the state of God's people because they don't want to offend anyone or make them discouraged in any way. Also, we need to realize our value and our strength lies in God and without Him we are nothing; we have nothing; we can do nothing. So suave and smooth sayings may gain numbers, but it won't gain you the best that God has for you.

Note verse 2: "Beware of dogs." To understand this you must realize that dogs in the eyes of the Jews are not like these little poodles you see out here in a dog show. They curl them up and wash them up and even have jewelry for them now. Now you may have a little pet dog, but make sure one day it will return to its own vomit. God said to the Jew because of what it represented, "Without are dogs." So you can imagine the Jewish countryside and the towns. Dogs were there, but they were a mangy outfit. They stayed outside, snarling and fighting. They were vicious. They were dangerous. They fed on the awful, the rotten carnage.

I remember a little dog I had named Buster. I loved that dog. We'd let him come in the house in the wintertime at night until it got time to go to bed. I can see him yet. He was a little black dog with gold eyebrows and had a stub tail. I had him from the time he was just a little pup. I'd say, "Buster it's time to go to bed." He'd droop his ears and his head and his tail didn't wag an ounce. We used to laugh at him when he picked his feet up and started towards the door. He almost made you feel sorry for him. I remember this one night he stunk like I couldn't imagine what. We found out he'd been over there eating on an old dead horse. You see, he loved it. We fed him good, but it wasn't because he was hungry that he ate that. He just had that kind of a nature.

There are sinners, and they have the nature of a dog. You could no more feed them on the things of God than you could turn the moon back. Dear hearts, a sinner is a sinner. Anything he has or does is on the outside as far as God is concerned. So in that day they had those prowling packs of dogs in the streets, they were dangerous, vagrant, and on the outside of life. A sinner is just like that. Don't expect a sinner to really enter in to what you have. Now they can get saved and enter in, of course. But if you try to carry on with a sinner, you must realize, "Beware of dogs." Let's say I have two pit bulls shut up in my yard, and they're roaming in my yard; and I have posted on the fence all around, "Beware of Dog." Would you just open

the gate and walk in if you could read? You say you wouldn't try something like that, but you had better beware of the sinner. Yes, testify to them; love them; tell them how God loves them; do your best to win them; but don't go with them. Beware of them. Don't spend your time with them. There are Christians that think they can spend their time with sinners like that and have evenings, etc., and fellowship with them. It won't work. "Beware of dogs."

So dogs picture those who live outside the things of God, contented with externals. Such may be very religious. They emphasize the things of the flesh like the Pharisee. He made the outside of the platter clean while within is vomit and filth. Most believers practice such things as *Galatians 5:19-21*. Now they never killed anybody, we hope; but what about idolatry? What about hatred? What about variance, strife, heresies, lying, and coveting? We could go on and on. There are Christians that practice these things and ignore the fact that it is the inner life that counts. Lying doesn't flow from the inner life. It is a work of the flesh. Read *Galatians 5*, and you'll find that lying, drunkenness, murder, etc., are works of the flesh. Let's put all those works of the flesh on a tree and let those sweet children of yours go out in the backyard and pick up and eat the lying apple and the other one pick up and eat the murdering apple. Which one will die the dearest?

Paul speaks of the circumcision representing outer things, fleshly claims; yet these are the kind that so often bite and devour. They think they are clean and yet they're not. So Paul warns us to beware of life that is only on the outside of things. Instead, what do you have in your heart? This is what inspires the life. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." (*Matthew 12:34*) So, "Beware." There are always evil workers around, men and women who will occupy you with small temporalities, making big things out of them. They speak of the things you must and must not do, keep and not keep, Sabbaths and don't eat this and don't do that. They speak mainly of the failures of others. You get in some people's presence and all they can talk about is somebody's failure. That's real edifying if you have an appetite for dead horses.

Such know little of the humility that weeps and prays in secret. Paul ever sought to get believers occupied with the true things of life -- the rich and the intimate things of Christ, those things that bring the peace and joy of a family life, happiness of the family circle. We were poor, but we were a family that loved one another. Oh, we had our little fallings out once in awhile, but it didn't last but a minute or two. I can remember how we used to gather around and play Rook and pop corn and make taffy and fudge and sit around and just enjoy one another.

That's the way God's people ought to be. They ought to enjoy the family circle. But here we are. Maybe you're not as educated as I am; or maybe you're not as smart as I am; or maybe you're not the right color, and maybe, maybe, maybe. Precious hearts, don't wait to get to heaven to find out you're a family. You're God's family, and such love one another. Protect one another and fight for one another; bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Think of the happiness of a family circle. If we would reach the family circle, we must enter the secret place of the Almighty where we breathe and hold communion in the glorious fellowship of the Lord. I can't be in fellowship with the Lord and you in fellowship with the Lord and not have fellowship.

"...Rejoice (this word means glory) in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh." This is another characteristic of the inner life; that is, the spiritual home life as opposed to the life of the dog in the street. The dog growls and snarls and whatever. The Christian rejoices and glories in Christ. He has something and he knows it. Those Christians who practice such

things as gossip and whatever have their eyes on now. Their eyes are on the shrine and what it profits me now or what can better me now, rather than what do I have in my heart which is forever. They think of material gains and more of ecclesiastical privileges than they do the spiritual grace of God. Their confidence is in the flesh and thus glory in the things of the flesh. They usually have a tongue set on fire of hell like the men who would smite Jeremiah with their tongue?

When a normal child is in the home in the presence of the family, there is a certain detachment from the street life. You don't have to worry about that child if it has the right environment and has been taught properly. You don't have to worry about them getting out there in the street life and being torn of the dogs. The Lord becomes the all and all in everything to them. Their little self-righteous candles become of no use to them and is no longer wanted by them. If you come into the living, loving light presence of God, you won't try to carry your self-righteousness around anymore. Never, never, dear hearts, allow the flesh to usurp the throne of your heart which belongs to Christ and the Spirit.

In verses 4-6 we have Paul's own claims for righteousness. You can read them. If ever a person could glory in the flesh, Paul could. You'll note that there are seven things that he had in the natural -- treasures that are coveted by almost all of mankind. Do you realize that most people would be pleased to possess just one or two of these things? Paul has seven of them.

Seven is the number of fullness or completeness. Here are the coveted treasures that are counted among the gains of men. Let a man get a billion dollars. That may be all he wants, because he thinks he can buy everything with that. He may be surly. He may be a drunk. He may be a cheat. He may be a thief. He may command people to be killed. He may be guilty of so much, but his money gets him by. Well, Paul seems to have belonged to almost every kind of aristocracy which excites the dreams and kindles the aspirations of men. He must have moved in the aristocracy of wealth. Even when he went to prison the first time, he lived in his own hired house. If you were wealthy, you could hire a place and live in this place and have a soldier there to guard you. You could live in comfort. But when Paul went to prison his last time, he had nothing and thus lived in the dungeon. He must have moved in the zealous aristocracy of culture. Think of his cultured and high place in the ecclesiastical aristocracy -- a Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He gloried in his blue blood of the tribe of Benjamin, that proud, warring tribe. He, as most, would sum such things up as gains. Wouldn't you? Would you say this was gain? Would you put it on the credit side of things? Would you sum up money as a credit? Yet something happened that brought Paul to deliberately put all of these things in the loss column. Can you imagine that? Would you like to have a million dollars.? You know you would. I could use a million dollars today. I don't know how well I'd use it, but I could use it. You could put that in the credit side or the debit side. Paul put it in the debit side. Not because it in itself was wrong, but for the way it might entangle him. God will give you every penny He wants you to have if you trust Him. Nobody can stop Him.

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision." (we've been really cut off at the cross) "... and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Paul, who had an opportunity to have confidence (if you could have confidence in anything), one day said it was all dung and threw it on the trash heap.

Philippians Study 12

There couldn't be a more important revelation to your heart than what you'll find in the third chapter of the book of *Philippians*. You can read this, and you can learn to quote it. Years ago when I was holding a revival in St. Joseph, Missouri, I came in contact with a Catholic priest who would come out and hear the services. He would stand outside, and I would talk with him in the daytime. He especially had learned to quote several of the New Testament books and knew and quoted so perfectly the book of *Ephesians*, but he knew absolutely nothing as to what it contained.

I realize that we can mentally know what is going on, but the reality of the Bible study could forever pass you by. God forbid that this be. I realize that there isn't a one of us here that the world would consider mighty, influential, or brilliant, but every one of you here have been visited of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, the Creator of the universe, has tried to get to your life and make you realize that in the eternities to come you can rule and reign with Him, and you can own and win Him. Of course, when you win Him you win everything, because He is everything. He is the center; He is the circumference; He's God's man. God has no other plan but the plan of and in His Son.

It doesn't require a college education. It doesn't require brilliance. It doesn't require a high I.Q. The simple truth is that this can grip your heart and your life. And no matter what your natural condition is, if it needs to be quickened, God can quicken it. Don't tell me that you can't because you can. You can have God's best; and if your heart will open to it, you will have it.

Let's read *Philippians 3:1-10*. (Note in verses 5 and 6 if you will look closely, you'll find there are seven great aristocracies that the flesh can possess that belong to the Apostle Paul. They weren't things that he was reaching for; they were things that he had. Most of us know something of the meaning of profit and loss, and some of us may keep books. Certainly the government with its income tax laws will cause you to keep track of what goes on. I'm sure though, as we pause to look down life's road, we are aware of a day when we will enter into His eternal presence, and everyone will be rich as compared to this life, because better is a doorkeeper over there than the dweller in the tents of the wicked here. You might ask is that really just tents? Well now, the Tajmahal is just a temporary dwelling when you are in this world. Buckingham Palace is just a temporary dwelling when you are in this world. There's nothing that is stable here.

Abraham sought not a continuing city here, but he sought one which had foundations whose builder and maker was God. (*Hebrews 13:14*) One day we will enter there, and everybody will be rich; but some will be joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. I have to believe that some who are reading this will know that fact in the light of eternity, and I do know that all of you can.

We're prone to neglect or forget and not realize what should be on the credit side and the debit side of life. My thoughts went back to the time when the Indians traded Manhattan and Long Island for a string of glass beads. What a trade. Now the beads would be worth a lot of money if you could get a hold of them today, but they wouldn't even come faintly close to the worth of Manhattan and Long Island. So people can be blind to the true treasures and take a hold of temporal treasures.

Note: The Apostle Paul once coveted treasures that he called gains, but he now comes to

count them worthless. How could such a thing be? Let's look at the world tonight. If the ordinary person had one or two of these attainments or possessions of the Apostle Paul, they would be high headed until you could hardly get around them. It's a little amazing how just money alone can suddenly put you in an upper bracket where people wouldn't spit on you ordinarily. After centuries of history of the human race, you and I have seen men and women, and read of them who come and go, who live and die, who brought nothing into this world and they took nothing out. You must realize that. What was Einstein when he met God? What was Alexander the Great when he met God? What was some tremendous great athlete? What was the Pope when he met God? These things are of only temporary value and can, in fact, be of eternal debit to our lives. Paul saw this, and his decision becomes more and more sensible after we look over the history of man. We find out that almost without exception, the human race are "Esau's." They trade a birthright for a mess of pottage.

Remember we saw earlier how Paul belonged to almost every kind of aristocracy that is coveted by man. He was a rich man, no doubt. There was proof that he was born to a wealthy family. He was certainly cultured and highly educated. He had the highest kind of office in ecclesiastical circles. The roots of his life reach back into blue blood, if there ever was such a thing, in the natural. Religiously speaking, he was the offspring of men and women who had talked and walked with God; that God had visited; that God had made covenants with; that God had fought battles for. What an illustrious background this man could look back to as he looked into the roots of his life. These and other claims gave him kinship with the most exalted peoples of the human race. Down deep there isn't a cleaner, finer people on the face of the earth, because of what God has done in their lives.

Gains, yes Paul had many gains in the natural. No wonder he said, "If any man think he have whereof he may trust, I more." "Just bring on anyone that you want to," he said "If he thinks that he's got something that he can trust in, I have got more than he has to trust in." What treasures to be able to list in the ledger of life. Think about it. Think of who I am. Think of what I am. Think of what I know. Think..think...just look how great. Paul could actually say that. Yet here, he deliberately transfers all of these possessions to the debit side and brands them "dung." No wonder Agrippa and many others, no doubt, called him "mad." And if you and I embrace it, they'll call us mad, too. We're crazy. We're nobody ,...nuts.

The value of our judgments depends entirely upon the quality of our standards. That is, if our standards are low, naturally the judgements will be worthless. For an example, here is a young man or a young woman, and alcohol or dope gets a hold of them. Right in the beginning let's say they have influential friends and wealthy parents. They have all of these things, but they begin to allow liquor to get a hold of them. Before it is over they might do anything for a drink. What do they trade? They trade everything they have for misery.

What do we have? Oh, thank God, most of us have a comfortable living. We maybe drive a nice car. We may live in a nice home. We have good food. We have friends. We could say a number of things, but I've seen people trade away their birth-right for such temporal things. I've had men and women trade away the things of God because of a companion or a child. Dear ones, listen. It comes down to this. The devil can make anything look worth your time if he gets control. What are your standards? Are they low or are they high? Are you willing to just drift along? One brother said to me, "I'll be in the innumerable multitude anyway. I'm not going to go to hell." Well, I don't want to be in the innumerable multitude, because I don't have to be. And I hope you don't want that. Bless your hearts, that's wonderful! It will sure be a lot better there than it will be on the devil's side, but think of what you are about to trade

away. "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens, in Christ."(*Ephesians 1:3*) Now that is saying it in about as few words as you can say it. God has blessed every one of you with all spiritual blessings, but they are in the heavens and they are in Christ. And Christ hasn't taken his throne yet and you haven't gone to heaven yet, so all of these things are like money in a bank that can't go broke. You can, however, forfeit them and fail to take a hold of them.

So an alcoholic will give anything for a drink, and everything depends upon the standard. It's the ideal that provides the test. What is your ideal? That will provide the test of your life and what you do. I can stand here and look back at the chandelier, and it's just beautiful. There are reds and blues and greens and yellows in the reflection of light. They will reflect light just like a diamond will; but when it comes down to the best, would you give a blue/white three-karat diamond for that chandelier? You'd be a nut if you did, wouldn't you?

So you have to think -- when tested, what do you want? What are you laying a hold of? When Paul dedicated his life to those things which we read about and which he counted gains in society, you understand at that time he had never been made alive. He had never looked upon the Lord Jesus Christ. But when the glory of the Lord that out shone the noonday sun came upon him and he had a conversation with the Lord on the road as he made his way to Damascus, things changed.

Later, Paul was led blind into the city where he was left blind until he was prayed for and received the Holy Spirit. Then he was led into Arabia where, he tells us, the gospel that he preached and the dispensation was revealed to him. There the unsearchable riches of Christ were made known to him. That was what cheapened the former things. And it will for you. Now that doesn't mean you won't treasure certain things. You will love them. You will appreciate them if you have them. It simply means that there is no way in the world that you will cling to them if it means they come between you and Christ. If they interfere with spiritual values, the Apostle Paul counted them all loss. And in the mind of the man who once put others in prison and voted for their death, for their supreme and sacred worth all of those things he once counted as credits now became refuse; those very things that he once would have died for.

Can you imagine going into a home at night and dragging women and children out in their night clothes and throwing them in jail? Paul was willing for the death of Stephen, God's martyr. Think of things like that. Anything that would push you to do those kind of things would have to be overwhelming in their value to you. And yet all of that now, as Paul sees the Lord, is judged by the glory he had seen and understood. And he said, "Why compared with that, it is just dung. It is of no value." He said, "I count all things loss."

So seeing Christ and the wealth of glory decides the passionate pursuit of things, spiritual above everything that was natural. Gains are now loss. This other aristocracy has taken over in his life. The new course of life and it's goal is reached by four grades of fellowship in the school of Christ. To embrace them can mean suffering the loss of all things. This is something you will come to understand as you go with God.

To count all things loss is one thing. I've seldom seen a Christian that wouldn't say, "Well, the Lord can have anything." But then one day circumstances came that maybe encroached on what was "mine." Do you know what they did? They wouldn't give it up. They faded and dropped out of the race. And it will mean suffering. Do you think it isn't suffering to go with Christ? Now the compensation is there, and I'll show you that later; but on the other hand, if you go with Christ, your wife might not do it; your husband might not do it; your friends might not do it. To go with Christ, you may have to turn down a lucrative position. There are so many

things. And if you go with Christ and are confronted with those things, you will suffer their loss.

So it's one thing to count it loss; it's another thing to stand still and suffer the loss. And so, dear hearts, Paul did this; and it can mean so much. It may involve your home, your reputation, your means, your material prospects. We could go on and on. However, there must be a willingness to suffer such whether one ever has to suffer them or not, if you are to win Christ. You will have to come to that place where you are willing to do it. God knows. He may not test you by doing it, but you are going to have to be willing. I'm sure when Daniel knelt before that window toward Jerusalem, he had made up his mind he would suffer everything before he would turn away from the things of God. But he didn't have to. He was put right down to the acid test, the fiery test. That's the reason the trying of your faith is more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tried in the fire. (*1 Peter 1:7*) Christ was the only treasure Paul really wanted. I trembled to even consider it personally as I worked on this message. To lose everything? Oh my. I wouldn't personally choose suffering for anyone, and yet I know only God can enable the beggar from the dunghill to rule with the prince. It will take God for you to go with God. He will have to work in you both "to will and to do," we studied earlier. But do you realize there are times that He has to make you willing to be willing? Let us receive the vision of the unspeakable relationship that is offered to us with Christ and the unsearchable riches of eternity. What are the things of the moment if these become real to you? What are these things if that yonder is real? Do you see? You can walk away. Your heart may bleed; you may cry; you may suffer, but you will set your face to go with Him and these are the things that will count.

You'll notice how amazing it is that Paul's heavenly Host spread the feast of fat things before him in the presence of his enemies. Only as we read and grasp his prison epistles are we able to grasp something of the wealth that was his at this time. Poor? But he was making many rich. Having nothing he possessed all things. Think of this. Now that is you. We're talking about you. I hope you will understand that. This is you. Why study this if it does not apply to yourself?

He rejoiced with a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory. He is careful for nothing. A peace passing understanding fills his life. And who is going to fill their days and nights with weeping and wailing over a precarious living when they are beneficiaries of eternal life? He wouldn't, would you? If you are really the beneficiary of eternal life are you going to sit around and weep and groan and carry on over some of this hit and miss affair; this yo-yo life? You'll fret but not if you are aware of Him. Who would fret their days away if they've lost the vagrant tent lift, ready to move into the house of the Lord forever?

So why suffer the loss if necessary? It is to win Christ. Now such has come to be the only gain worthwhile in Paul's life. Nothing else is worth naming. Paul turns from the things that once furnished and filled his heart to the God of love and grace, that He might fill it with Himself. He writes to the Ephesians, "That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God." (*Ephesians 3:19*) Is that possible? Well, of course it's possible, or it never would have been written. He will pull down His barns and build bigger barns.

Do you realize it doesn't take a very big heart for the devil to fill? All you have to do is be selfish, mean, and cantankerous and set your heart on temporal things to the extent that you would steal and cheat for them and do most anything. But, when we turn to God like in *Psalms 119:32*. "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." You see, we've got to get it big when we get it full of God. You can get it full of God.

Oh, that we push back the confining walls and open our lives to more comprehensive living -- a life that enjoys the rich and the free presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't care who won't have anything to do with you, you can go home tonight and lie down in the arms of Jesus, and He will be with you all night. He is the best locksmith and watchman and caretaker. We can trust Him.

Now note: "that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Note that phrase "mine own righteousness." My own righteousness will never take me without the camp to the bridegroom. I will stay in the camp where others have their own righteousness. Yet the true center of all things is outside the camp. That's where Christ the bridegroom is.

Paul's burning desire was to be found in that center. His roots were there, drawing his all from Christ and his redeeming heart. I know of no more deadly trap than that of self-righteousness. It is so impoverishing. "Mine own righteousness." You might say, "Well a child of God doesn't have that." The Apostle Paul indicates they do. "Having not mine own righteousness." Let's look at it again. "That I may win Him, and be found in Him, having not mine own righteousness." It's utterly amazing the people who are otherwise wonderful people who trust their own righteousness, and you'll find it out if the right test is put on them. It's the last thing that you and I will cast on the dung hill. It's artificial, a counterfeit and manufactured garment, designed and inspired by Satan. It in no way can be compared to the lily that grows among thorns. Self-righteousness, the Bible says, is filthy rags. (*Isaiah 64:6*) Such is put on. God's is grown out and on. It's akin to the lilies of the field. Jesus said, "Behold the lily how it grows. It doesn't toil. It doesn't spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these." (*Matthew 6:28*) Let Christ put His righteousness on you. It's on you provisionally when you take Him. "God hath made Him to be sin for you . . ." (*II Corinthians 5:21*)

If you ever really understand justification, nothing can shake you, nothing. The inevitable result of redeeming grace is the righteousness of God which is by faith. It isn't by works, it never was; it never will be. "We are what we are by the grace of God." (*I Corinthians 15:10*) Paul said, "I labored more abundantly than ye all. Yet not I but the grace of God which was present with me." You can't do a thing without God's strength, and God cannot give you His strength except by His grace. Do you understand that? Now you can get up here and sing like a nightingale, but if God doesn't give you the ability, it will just go down flatter than flat. When we preach and when we testify and when we speak and when we sing, let's do it to God, and look to Him and say, "Lord, I want to play it with your inspiration. I want to sing with your ability." Jesus came to this world, and the Divine took on humanity like you and me. And His brilliance got in a human brain. His strength got in a human frame. I'm sure He wasn't a muscle man. He wasn't a great big guy. I'm sure that David wasn't. But what happened? It was God that got into David. God got into Samson. God was in Christ, and He could still the winds of the storms.

So Paul rejects the insufficient and filthy robe of "mine own righteousness." By faith he puts on the splendid, glistening, and incorruptible garment of God's own sacrificial character. He departed from the values of human effort and became the workmanship of God. "We are His workmanship," he told the Ephesians, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (*Ephesians 2:10*) This is the finished creation of abounding grace. And may it be accomplished in every one of your precious hearts.

Now we are coming to that race course in this tenth verse. "That I might know Him." This is the vision or the goal of not just Paul's life, but I hope will be yours and mine. "That I may know him." At this time the Apostle Paul certainly knew an awful lot. He had written the book of *Romans*, *Thessalonians I and II*, *Corinthians I and II* and the book of *Galatians*. He knew quite a bit at this time, didn't he? So he can't be talking about getting acquainted with Jesus. He's talking about something else. This is the knowledge of an advanced and mature kind.

Today, think of it. We have had men graduate from universities and colleges because they were there on an athletic scholarship, and they got out and couldn't read and write. You understand, Paul would finish with honors. He didn't want to slip through on some scholarship. He wanted to graduate cum laud. Paul won't settle for the mere rudiments of the gospel, and yet the mere rudiments are priceless. The bare outlines of spiritual attainments do not satisfy Paul. He must pass from grade to grade, from glory to glory, even to the grace and love-likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

How much love is there in your life? That's how much God is in your life. How gracious are you in dealing with others? That's how much Christ is ruling in your life. Think about it. Are you going to be like Him? The Bible says, "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." (*I John 3:2*) Isn't that a marvel? You and I may be on the streets of glory before morning, and then we'll be like Him. Now nobody in this world is offering you anything like that, are they? So you mustn't trade this away. This is money in the bank. It's real to faith. Don't try to put it in your head. Ask God to make it real to your heart. That's the only way it will do you any good.

So many are saved today who never go on with God. In fact, they can be taught against going on with God, and they'll tell you that we have a cult here or something like that. And thus the vision, "That I might know Him," with its values are not desired. Saints grow old in years but are still occupied with the values of childhood. We've all seen boys who never became men and men who always stayed boys. I was raised in a home where I had to grow up and take responsibilities, and I became a man quick. When I was four and five years old, I had my chores. As I grew up six and seven and eight and nine and ten...by the time I was twelve, I was in the fields working with any man. The child that is robbed of that is robbed. We have a generation that we won't let them work until after they are sixteen. Learn to take a hold of God. As the Bible puts it, "Wherein you ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you." (*Hebrews 5:12*)

Paul said, "That ye be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love ye may grow up in Him in all things." (*Ephesians 4:15*) Isn't that a marvel? Now He didn't say if you have a college education this could happen, or if you have an I.Q. of 190 you can do this. The I.Q., the college education, the gold spoon in your mouth...that has nothing to do with this, precious hearts. You will find that God knew what He was choosing when He picked you out. His objective was -- I have done everything I can to win you, now I want you to win Me. I've known many carried away from knowing Him because their conceptions never grew any bigger, their sympathies never any richer. Their love and grace was confined to me and mine. Oh, "I can show a lot of love and grace to that no good scamp, but I'm not supposed to do it any place else." Prayers of that kind have no grasp or range. They're simply pitiable specimens of arrested growth.

But Paul wanted to know Christ, and I hope you do too. That is, he wanted to walk with

Him, loving as He loves, being gracious as He is gracious. He wanted to embrace Him in every possible way. He had been made to him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (*I Corinthians 1:30*) And he would fill his mind and his brain and his life with all of these, graduating from grade to grade even unto the likeness of the Lord. So every lesson awakens new wonder and intensifies his quest to win Him. And it will for you. In *Ephesians 1:18-19*, Paul prayed that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened that they might know this power which God exercised when He raised His Son from the dead. (I've illustrated it like that for years and years.) Let's think of it like this. You've got a problem? You're supposed to take it to God, aren't you? That's what it says, doesn't it? Go to God. Now I know that problem you have is a far, far, greater opposition than raising His Son from the dead, don't you think so? Yes, you do think so, don't you? That's the reason you don't get an answer, so you take it to someone else to solve; or it goes unsolved. God wants you to know His power, that's the reason you may get in a test. That's the reason some affliction may overtake you. That's the reason you may find yourself in a financial bind or something. God is wanting you to find out the power that He is able to exercise in your life, even the power which He exercised on that day when Christ lay in the tomb. Every power, every principality, every force in this universe but Godly force was against Christ getting up. On the very tick of the moment as it was beginning to dawn, three days and three nights were over. There He went!

The world has its facts, and you have the facts. Do you know the facts of His resurrection? The facts are that He was in the tomb three days and three nights. The facts are that at the beginning, as at the dawning, of the first day of the week, He got up from that grave. And the facts are that He was seen of many for forty days, and the facts are that upwards of 500 were out there and saw Him taken into heaven. The facts are that Stephen before he died saw Him at the right hand of God. Those are facts. They are all facts. But Paul didn't want to just know the facts, he wanted to know the power of the facts, the realities of the facts. Is there anything that can defeat you if you trust God? Fire can't burn you if he doesn't want it to burn you. I dread to think about being thrown in a furnace. I don't like to even burn a little tip on my finger. Now if He'd grab me and want to throw me in a lion's den, I expect the hair would stand up on my neck, unless God wanted me to. And if God wanted me to, when that moment came He'd take care of it. Now He might let the lions eat me. Some have been eaten of beasts, so who am I? Some have been sawn asunder. So who am I? We're expendable. God can do with you and me as he pleases anytime He gets ready. But I'm going to tell you, you're the apple of His eye; and all things do work together for your good if you love Him. So maybe you know the facts and know nothing of the power. This applies to many Christians tonight.

Paul tells us in *Romans 8* we're heirs and joint heirs if so be that we suffer together with Him. In this first chapter of *Philippians*, verse 29, he says, "It is given us in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Then in *II Timothy 2:12* he says that, "If we suffer, we shall reign with Him....If we deny Him, He will have to deny us." You see, we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Can you imagine? He has designed your down sitting, your uprising, your thought afar. He knows all about it. Now would He order a step for you that was going to hurt you? If you think that, you have no slight idea how he loves you. Oh, you say, but He did let me get hurt. Why? For your good. Nothing has ever happened to you, if you know the Lord, that hasn't been for your good. Don't wait until you get to heaven to believe it. Believe it now, and you'll glorify God. You will make Him happy. You will gladden

His heart. "To be made conformable unto His death." Only recently have I learned the true meaning of that.

Philippians Study 13

No you realize that by far the vast majority of God's precious people know nothing about this message of the fullness of the grace of God? So I urge you to draw near. There is only one way that God will draw near to you and you'll begin to know; you'll begin to feel it; you'll begin to have it in a way that it won't just be in your head, it will be in your heart. Any of you can learn to quote this short portion. You can commit it to memory easily. And yet until it drops down into the eyes of your soul, it will never, never divulge it's rich and unmatched meaning to your life. And the marvel of it is, every one of you are candidates. There isn't a respect of persons with God. There may be many differences among us here as to education, as to talent, as to many things of the natural. All of that doesn't mean one thing to God.

Your wisdom is foolishness to Him. Your strength is nothing but weakness. Your strength will simply get in His way and your way. One of the most difficult things in all of the world that a Christian must come face to face with is "ceasing from man whose breath is in his nostrils." (*Isaiah 2:22*) That is you. Do you see? I have to cease from this fellow, myself. This is man. This is Adam. "He called their name Adam." (*Genesis 5:2*) Reading *Philippians 3:1-9*, Paul had just been telling the Philippians (and, of course, the message goes down through the ages to us as well) that we should never put our confidence in man. Never put your confidence in the flesh. Don't put your valuables where they will be stolen or burned. He had said to them, "If anyone has anything they think they can glory or boast about, I more." And then he sets forth his seven-fold pedigree which brings him in to almost every aristocracy that is of the flesh.

You have to read between the lines right here. He said, "Something happened to me to cause me to completely revise the balance sheet of my life. The things that I once put over in the positive side of my ledger, the things that I once added up as gains, the things that I once gave my life for, I suddenly saw not only were worthless, they were detrimental to me. They were the things that were standing between me and the blessings of God. So I counted them all loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. And then I decided that there was a prize. That not only had Jesus done a lot for me -- He became my savior; He became my baptizer; He became my healer; He became my keeper; He became my protector; He was my shield; my buckler; my high tower; He became my food; He became all of the needs that I'd ever have -- then on top of that I came to realize that I could be married to Him as a woman is married to a man. I saw that in the eternities to come, He is going to have a bride, and she must be like Him. And I'm not following Him just for the crown, for the streets of gold, for all of these things that people seem to treasure, but I just want to win Him. I want to be found in Him, having not mine own righteousness which is of the law."

Paul had the righteousness which was of the law. He had it to the extent that he says just before that, "concerning the law, blameless." Can you imagine that? There was only one other person that could say that and tell the truth, and that person was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was blameless. But no one blamed Paul. The Sanhedrin didn't blame him. The high priests didn't blame him. The people didn't blame him. They looked on this man as one who had achieved. But he said, "When I saw that I could win Him, I started in a race, then (that person that counted all things loss that he might win Him,) I suffered the loss of all things."

Do you realize that the Apostle Paul was stripped down to nobody and nothing? People who should have loved him, who should have been willing to die for him, who should have

been willing to do anything for him, deserted him. So with this in mind, let's look at *Philippians 3:10-14*.

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." There are four great lessons that he must learn and that must be practical in his life, four great tests if he is to win Christ. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend (this means lay a hold) that for which also I am apprehended (or laid a hold of) of Christ Jesus."

Let's pause here for one minute. If you're a child of God and you are sitting in this meeting, God has laid a hold of you for this. It is as simple as that. It will have to be your negligence or your rejection if you don't have it. This is for you. He has laid a hold of you.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Note that phrase in verse 13, "This one thing I do." This simply shows that you and I have to have priorities. What is yours? In your Christian relationship and fellowship, what is your priority? This "one" thing I do. Note in verse 12, "Not as though I had already attained." You think of the change that an unclouded view can make in the honest life. Paul once valued and coveted temporal and natural treasures, and he had them. He boasted in his abilities to achieve them, regarding himself as we have said, blameless. Now he has discarded them as refuse, and he has thrown them on the rubbish heap.

During the time of his Pharisee days when he was dead in trespasses and sins, Paul was blind, just like you and I were. And yet like the blind man that Jesus touched who said, "I see men walking as trees," (*Mark 8:24*) he could see a little but he couldn't see clearly. So Paul began to see dimly on that road to Damascus. (I'm talking about spiritual sight.) Then God led him into Arabia, and there he tells us that God revealed to him that gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. Aren't you glad you were a Gentile from that standpoint?

He came back seeing clearly and afar. He could see away down yonder. There were no clouds over his eyes now. But Paul isn't satisfied to just see for himself, and aren't you glad? Aren't you glad that someone was generous enough and loving enough and tender enough and maybe sacrificial enough to tell you the truth? He wants others to see. He writes to the Ephesians of his burden of prayer in that first chapter: that they might see and know God's great plan of their life, which is in this age.

Peter in his second epistle and the first chapter spoke of spiritual graces to be added to the believer. This is what he said, "He that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar." Are you blind tonight? Oh, I know, maybe you have 20/20 vision. My eyes in the natural are getting dim, but thank God I have 20/20 vision in my heart.

So Paul, like you and I, in the days of dim vision before the glory of God and the unsearchable riches of Christ became real to him and to us, clung to the shabby and filthy garments of self-righteousness. Anything inferior may appear valuable in the twilight or in semi-darkness.

I remember some years ago -- there was a fellow that I had some business dealings with. He had a diamond on his finger that must have been in the neighborhood of 7-8 karats. I told him that was quite a ring he had there. He agreed. Then I asked him if he would mind if I looked at it. Now, when he found out I wanted to look at it closer, he said, "It doesn't amount to much." He handed me that ring, and with my naked eye I could see big holes in it. You see, when I took my magnifying glass out and looked at it, it was almost like you could fall into the

cavern. So he had a ring that when it came to close inspection in a good light didn't appear like much. There's a lot of people that strut around like peacocks, and they are a fine feathered bird until they come face to face with reality. Suddenly all those things that they would boast about and claim as gains become nothings. Again let me say, your gains can in fact become detrimental to you. Anything that you are really trusting right now apart from Jesus Christ is untrustworthy. That includes you or anyone else or anything else. I saw on the news a poor woman sitting there in one of these banks that's been broke for 10-11 months. People don't know when they will get their money, and when they do it will only be 90% at best. You can't trust banks. You think you can, but you can't. You can't trust the government. You think you can, but you can't. Trust God. Learn to trust God. The Bible says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (*Psalm 119:105*) When you begin to go into this book and God opens your eyes, you'll begin to find out that you're rich and don't know it or you're poor and don't realize it. It all depends upon where your faith is. If you have your faith in this book, you are rich. "In just a little while, he that shall come, will come." (*Hebrews 10:37*) He's not going to tarry. Oh, but you say, he's tarried so long. Aren't you glad he did? You wouldn't be where you are if he hadn't tarried? What if the storm would have hit you 30 years ago? What if he would have come 30 years ago? Could you sit here and rejoice in what you have now?

So until Christ and the word of God becomes real to us, we can be turned aside in so many ways. Thus before Christ and the truth dawned on Paul (and, of course, yours and my eyes), Paul was a great guy in his own eyes. He was somebody, I reckon. He was a success, but now his deficiencies both inwardly and outwardly were realized. Once he was in the twilight of the Pharisee's ideal, living in the light of man's values with secret faults lurking hidden in the chamber of his heart, even as a deadly germ may lurk in the bloodstream of an individual. Some people never realize until too late that they have a germ in them. They are on the wrong road. I know a man whose wife had just a little bit of a mole. It began to hurt a little. The doctor told her she had cancer. They tried to remove it, but they couldn't. That dear man told us that in nine weeks his wife was a corpse. She might have been able to take care of that cancer if she would have corrected it soon enough. Dear-hearts, Paul gets his eyes open. He calls himself the "chief of sinners." (*I Timothy 1:15*) Now that the word has made manifest his heart, he no longer trusts in his own abilities.

Note verse 12: "Not as though I had already attained." Only God's word can show life in its true colors. So many saints go about in masquerading virtues which one day will be revealed as presumptuous sins. Once that proud and self-sufficient Pharisee, now Paul speaks humbly and quietly in self-distrust. There are no pretensions. There is no self-conceit. Verse 12: "Not as though I had already attained." Think of that. One time he had a gung ho, get-out-of-my-way, I'll-throw-you-in-prison, I'll-so-and-so attitude, but not now. Oh, no. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect."

As God enables you as you study, you get a lot of thoughts on this. I thought he was saying, like a bee. I've gathered some honey, but continents and galaxies and universes of blossom await me. Look out yonder. Do you have that kind of a vision? "That in the ages to come, he might shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace to usward which believe." (*Ephesians 2:7*) That's all you have to do is just believe. You say, "Well, Brother Hill, I can't believe." Do you mean after all this time someone that never failed and never told a lie has made this promise to you and you can't believe it? You might say, "I can trust him, but I can't trust me." I hope you believe that. That's what we are trying to get at.

Paul is just like a fruit tree whose fruit will be ripe in its season. He has yet to mature; and,

dear ones, you think what possibilities await us. Think of it. No wonder Paul said, "unspeakable." And yet I assure you, the best is yet to come.

Unspeakable? How can I tell you what I'm talking about. You can only know it, and you can know it. He is so anxious to draw you to His heart. He's so anxious to give you His best. He's so anxious to share the kingdom with you. He's so anxious to have you sit on the throne with Him. He's so anxious to get your eyes open and lead you in to that which, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the hearts of men." (*I Corinthians 2:9*)

Note verse 12: "I follow after . . ." (I haven't attained, but I'm following after.) Friends, to follow the shepherd can bring us to circumstances that can scream, "Go back, go back." You haven't ever experienced anything like that, have you? Just go on, you'll soon hit it. But when the ideal shines before us we learn to "count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations." (*James 1:2*) Which of us can come close to Paul's temptations? And yet he has in no way despaired of the ideal. It did not turn him aside. Jesus spoke of those in this hour who would forsake the ideal. They begin to smite their fellow servant. They begin to devour one another. Their love would wax cold. They would say, "my Lord delays his coming." Lawlessness would abound. Satan offers so little vain glory to get some of God's children to strive and cheat and steal, and they would even kill if they thought they could get by with it.

Self-righteousness can inspire and hatch the vilest, lowest things that are in the human heart; and they are in the human heart. Don't you get the idea that you're a little different from all of Adam's other kids. You're just like Adam, and old Agag was one of Adam's; Shenikerab was one of Adam's; Esau was one of Adam's; Judas was one of Adam's; and you and I are one of Adam's. So if you're going to cling to something, don't cling to Adam. If you get this straight, you're on a good road.

So Paul hasn't become heady or high-minded. He isn't setting himself as a judge of God's people. Did you notice he even apologized for speaking disrespectfully of that corrupt dirty, rotten high priest? If you don't believe it, read *Acts 23*. People say, "Well, I'm not afraid to touch God's anointed." Paul said, "I'm sorry. I wish not that thou was God's high priest." That high priest must have shown up without his attire. He must not have had his robes on. You know, Paul didn't lie; and he said, "I wish not that thou was God's high priest (I'm wrong, I'm wrong)."

So though the distance waned between the time of Paul's conversion and that time when the glorious hope would be realized at the journey's end, the sufferings of those intervening years don't move him. He doesn't sit down like you and me and moan and groan and weep and complain over the loss of a few little things. He pursues the prize with all the God-given intensity of an old coon hound when he's hit a hot trail. Some of you don't know what I'm talking about. You never lived. Get a good, kind of foggy night. Those old coons would be running then, and those dogs could really smell them on a damp night. They will start out and begin to bark. They're picking up a trail. They'll bark a little more and a little more, and directly the music would start. You talk about stirring your blood. "He's got him treed. I know he's got him treed." You'd get up there and way up yonder on a limb out over a creek would be the coon. My brother would say, "Climb up there and get him out. You can do it." I'd get up there and climb out, and I'd begin to shake that limb and directly here went that big coon right down into the water. You talk about a fight. By the time I got down there the coon had split old Queen's ear and split her lip, but she drowned him out there in that water. It was one of the biggest coons I have ever seen. Now let's read this again.

Now he doesn't sit down and moan and groan and weep and complain, but he pursues the

prize with all the intensity of a coon hound that has hit the hot trail. Just one thing -- get that coon up a tree. Now remember, this is the speech of an old man; and the years haven't been good to Paul. Did he retire in a beautiful villa over by the Aegean Sea, (you know he had one, right?) Was he surrounded by friends and servants and by the many who owed him their very life? No, instead of that, they had deserted him. He was in a prison. He was in a dungeon. But you can't dampen Paul. He told us he had all things and abounded. He had need of nothing. Jesus was his everything. Even Timothy at this time had begun to get cold toward Paul, and his enthusiasm was fading. Yet like Moses at 120, Paul's eye had not dimmed nor his natural strength abated. He's saying even as Caleb: "I'm as strong as I was the day Moses sent me to spy out the land. Therefore, give me this mountain. I'm well able to take it." That mountain was Hebron. Do you know what that means? The mountain of love. Isn't that wonderful? That is what we are after.

So Paul has that magnificent force and is as keen as ever, as uncompromising as ever, following that blessed hope that the Lord had apprehended him for. Yes, he laid a hold of that for which the Lord had laid a hold on him. I trust you will too.

So verse 13: "I count not myself to apprehended:" I don't think I have won it yet he is saying. Though he is near the harvest and the home-going Paul realizes the need of a few more days of ripening. A premature picking of fruit is a loss rather than a gain. Sister Hill bought some peaches that she thought looked good, and she wanted me to have some. She brought them home, and on the outside they were a little soft and at the centers they were so hard. That fruit was picked, and it was a loss to pick that fruit. And it was a loss to the people that bought it. You learn not to do that. Such was the folly of the Pharisee who stood in the high place and had need of nothing. Paul has learned not to trust in false security or glory in a blameless life. He had written in *I Corinthians 4:4*, "I know nothing against myself yet am I not hereby justified."

Now let's look at this, "One thing I do." Note how he gathers everything together in concentrated and undivided purpose. This doesn't mean that Paul had no other interests. He had the care of all the churches. "Timothy, I am mindful of your tears." (*II Timothy 1:4*) Paul remained the pastor. He remained the man that looked out for them. Now what does he mean then, "This one thing I do." Are all of his activities confined to just one task? It's like this. Everything that Paul did, he had that day in mind. I'm going to meet Christ. I want to please Him. I'm going to be with Him. I know He loves this person, I'm going to testify to them. Well, you might have to go out of your way. "That's alright," Paul would say. "I'm willing to spend and be spent to win someone to Christ." He'd tell them the truth. He said, "You know how I was among you. How I kept back nothing that was profitable to you." (*Acts 20:20*) He didn't stick around there two or three years and know about the security of the believer but keep it from them lest he offend them, or that he believed in ranks in the resurrection or bridal truth. He kept nothing back from them about what God says in order to keep a crowd going. Precious hearts, this was the supreme desire and priority of his life. "This one thing I do."

He labored more abundantly and sacrificed more than probably any other human being that ever lived other than Christ. Anything and everything had no value if it stood in the way of his winning Christ as his bridegroom. Winning Christ was to him a dazzling splendor; and though we know he never neglected any call or any duty that the Lord would place upon him, still he puts the spotlight of his life on winning Christ. His aim was to win Him. His task was to win Him. The one prize of his life was to win Him. All else must pay tribute to that sovereignty. Like thousands of tributaries that converge on the mighty Mississippi River as it

goes to its glorious ultimate in the Gulf of Mexico, so all of Paul's hopes, all of his dreams, all of his aspirations, all of his efforts, all of the things that possessed him, found their fulfillment in winning Christ as his bridegroom. "This one thing...this one thing...this one thing." Do you understand what we're saying?

So this concentration that reveals the secret of the overcoming life for you and for me was Paul's. Such live for one thing and only one thing. Too often we try to put the emphasis on salvation. I remember how C. C. Ford said, "Brother Hill, I'm willing to give up that Bride so I can sacrifice and see souls saved." How stupid. That's like a man coming in here and telling his wife that he's willing to give her up so he can have his grandchildren. Do you see what we're talking about?

We take bridal truth up, and then we put it down. You see, we think we have plenty of time, but this is our day. Now is the accepted time. Like the Shulamite, we keep Him standing at our door until we have taken care of what we judge to be more urgent business. Oh, she said, "I've retired. I've put my clothes off. How can I put them on again?" (*Song of Solomon 5:3-5*) He is standing there knocking. How much does she think of Him? Not much. But before it was over, she went outside the camp.

But for Paul no business could take the place of winning Christ. Any friendship, any duty, any goal or whatever must take a back seat to winning Christ as his bridegroom. If he were plying his trade at tent making, his soul was yonder in the heavens panting for God like the hart pants for the waterbrook. (*Psalms 42:1*) In everything his one holy purpose was to win Christ and be clothed in the holy glory robes of Christ's righteousness, not that which was of the law.

Verse 13: "Forgetting those things which are behind." What will Paul forget? Will he forget his sins or remember them? Do you know you do an insult to God to try to remember your sins when God has forgotten them? "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (*1 John 1:9*) If you're determined to remember them you're saying he didn't take care of them. Isn't that tragic? Yes, like God forgets them, He wants us to forget. We dare not remember them. It is good to remember the ditch from which we were digged. That's another thing.

Paul will forget all those glories of the flesh. It's kind of hard to forget some things. So many acquire some moral victory, however, and then they sit down by it and hug it, treasure it, boast about it, glory in it, dote upon it. Like the Pharisee, they stand in the market place to be seen of men. Thus they become a prisoner of the very thing they boast in. Did you ever see someone become a prisoner of their own self-righteousness? Did you ever see someone become a prisoner of liquor? Did you ever see someone become a prisoner of their pride? I could go on and on. Dear ones, this is what it's all about. We all should know the peril of resting on our oars and drifting. Such always go backward. The only way to go with the Lord is to be like David. "I will take the cup of salvation and drink more abundantly." (*Psalms 116:13*) Again in this 13th verse: "Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." Is there anything worth sitting down and moping over in yesterday? No. But there is something ahead of you. We must never try to rest upon past attainments or triumphs or get down and mope in the failures.

We must ever seek to embrace more of the unsearchable riches so freely given us and the fact that He has blessed every child of God with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ. Is there anyone reading this, if you're a Christian, that has been left out of one little single blessing? How rich are you? You'll be clipping your securities 60 trillion years from now, and

they'll just be getting started. Rich? "He hath blessed you." Read it that way, that's you. So keep the goal and the prize in your eye never allowing the side attractions to draw you from the race. You may stumble; you may fall, but get up with your face toward God.

Often when weary and ready to faint, remember the prize because it will add zest to your feet. When you get down and you get blue, remember Old Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress. Old Giant Despair got him over there in Doubting Castle, and every morning he would beat him with a crabapple cudgel. One morning the sun shone through a knothole that was in the cudgel, and it shone in Pilgrim's face; and suddenly he said, "What do I here?...What am I doing here? Why am I moping? Why am I complaining? Why am I sitting here letting Despair beat me with his crabapple cudgel every morning? I don't belong here. I'm a child of God. I've been set free. Everything is out yonder ahead of me, and here I'm lying here in this dungeon."

Here you are now. To what height does God call you and me? Do you know? How high has He called you? What does the Bible declare to be my possibility? To what glorious destiny does the Great Shepherd of the sheep lead me? Oh, may that be my goal and my prize.

Read now *Philippians 3:7-14*, That's almost too good to talk about and I'm convinced with the old Indian -- it's better "felt" than "telt".

Philippians Study 14

Remember Christ is the everything. In chapter 1, He's your life. In chapter 2, He's your example. In chapter 3, He's your prize. Then in chapter 4, He's your strength. No wonder God has everything wrapped up in His Son. One day you'll find that out. Precious hearts, we want Christ to be the very center and circumference of our meeting. We have nothing else to promote. We refuse to promote anything else. The devil hates it, and he gets a lot of people to cooperate with him. Remember, they can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. In other words, everything that's ever happened, God makes it work for the truth. It may not look like it to you at this time, but that day will come when God will be justified in all his sayings.

Please read the entire third chapter of *Philippians* to begin this portion of study. In verses 15 and 16, we have the rule of faith. Remember, the just live by faith. That's the only way you'll ever live pleasing in the sight of God. You can't live by your sight. You can't live by circumstances. You can't live by the way it seems. You can't yield to many, many feelings that you may have. You learn to live by faith, and you learn that the opposition out there is not anything for the Lord.

The children of Israel went out with God. They had Pharaoh and his hosts over them controlling them. They were subjected to the worst kind of slavery, and they were so helpless they dared not try to oppose their masters. But God took them out through an impossible way. Everything that the children of Israel did had to be by faith. It was Israel plus God. It was Abraham plus God. It was David plus God. The little that Saul accomplished, it was Saul plus God. It's Paul plus God, and it's you plus God. It won't be you plus Brother so-and-so, or Sister so-and-so, plus your wife, plus your husband. You will learn that you have to walk with God alone.

So we come to the rule of faith and perfection here. Notice how he said, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" haven't attained yet. You must understand that. Even Paul has declared back in verse 12, "Not as though I am already perfect." So he isn't talking about that perfection of holy attainment. He's talking about something else. This is the maturity of adults. They are full grown.

I was looking at my grandson David. He has such a good physique. He has reached maturity; he's reached manhood, but there are a lot of things he hasn't reached. Those who enter that time of growth are those that put away toys. The mature believer is no longer "tossed to and fro or carried about by every wind of doctrine." (*Ephesians 4:14*)

You come to that place where you are established. The thought is that you know what you are doing. You know where you are going. You have the goal in sight. You have the purpose at heart. You have the plan of God as to your rule, your leadership. This is the passage from a letter to the spirit; from the husk to the kernel; from a cold rule to a living principle; from the rudiments of mere ordinance to the expanding liberties of faith.

So it is not an attainment of perfection but attaining to the spiritual mood or the posture that leads to perfection. You have to be in the truth if you expect to be perfect. You have to worship like God says. He seeketh such to worship Him. "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." (*John 4:23*) You're not going to be in that group of the bride of Christ unless you learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Well you say, "How can I find

that out?" "He that would do of his will shall know of the doctrine." (*John 7:17*) This explains why some people never know. God knows they don't want to do his will.

This is coming into the path that leads into the perfect day, to the best that God has. I personally thought of this. Over the years I've had an unusual sense of direction. I could go into a city that I'd never been in and just know my directions. I could go up here in the mountains and walk around and know my directions. One day I was in the mountains deer hunting in the snow north of Glenwood Springs. There were maybe six inches of snow on the ground where I was walking. I came upon a fresh deer trail, and I thought I'd follow that trail. I just kept my eyes on the trail and followed and directly I saw some tracks that looked like my tracks. Suddenly I realized I had wandered around and lost my directions. Well, I retraced and realized exactly where I was as I got back and crossed my path again.

This is what being "thus minded" is. It's like a safe for which we have a combination. I have a safe in my basement. My daughter and I have the combination to it. We could open it in probably 30 seconds. Now I don't suppose there is anyone reading this that could open it for quite some time. You may blow it or take a sledge hammer and try and open it or whatever. My daughter and I wouldn't have any trouble opening that safe tonight; but if I called any of my other children and told them to go open that safe, they couldn't do it. They can't open that safe, but it's so simple if you have the combination.

To walk with God is not hard. To have God's best is not hard. You have to know the truth and, "The truth will make you free." (*John 8:32*) You walk with the truth because God does it all. Israel never had it hard. Why God, knocked old Pharaoh down and drowned him in the sea and parted the sea. He killed all the first born and hailed him out and put frogs in his bread, made his cattle die. God just simply did it all. Their only trouble was their unbelief. When they went into the land of Canaan, it was the easiest thing, though it was at the hardest time. Approximately 40 years before that time the river Jordan wasn't flooding, because Caleb, Joshua, and ten others went across. There was no problem. Then 40 years later, God took them across when it was a flood.

So the rule of faith is the combination. You can have the combination. Christ is the combination. He is "The way, the truth, and the life." (*John 14:6*) Did you ever know how Paul said, "We know." How can you know? There's no way I can explain to you or you can explain to yourself how you can have "peace that passes understanding" and how it will "keep your heart and minds." (*Philippians 4:7*) I can't tell you that. You can't either; but we know, don't we? I don't know why some things happen, but I do know they work for good to them that love the Lord. (*Romans 8:28*.) It's that simple.

So many are confused in the rudimentary stage of spiritual life. They are like the Shulamite. They are trying to find him in the broad ways. They have yet to find the way of perfect assurance where the ransomed go with the songs of everlasting joy on their heads. So many play with error, ritual, etc., and then they wonder why they don't know. So they'll criticize you and say, "You think you know." Simply because you don't know, doesn't mean that I don't know. Simply because you don't know doesn't mean you can't know, because the word of God can give you a perfect assurance. Paul speaks of full assurance -- "the full assurance of faith." (*Hebrews 10:22*) Now what do you think about that? Did he know what he was talking about? I'm confident that he did and especially in as much as the Holy Spirit inspired him to say what he was saying.

These folk that are confused do not worship in spirit and in truth. It has to be both ways. They may do many things. They can be like the church at Ephesus and have many meritorious

things that they can say. Or again, they may be like the Pharisee and boast of their righteousness, thinking that by their own goodness they can impress God. Yet we can count our merits, or we can sing God's love and grace. Which one do want to do? Do you want to sit around and count how good you are? Or do you want to sing about the grace and the love of God that is for you? And, "If God be for you who can be against you?" (*Romans 8:31*)

We can boast of our efforts, or we can walk by faith. We can seek a self-satisfaction, persuading ourselves we've reached the moral summit, while the pristine heights are beyond us, hidden away in the mists of confusion, or whatever. Only the road of the spirit and truth will lead us to that perfection. "Not as though we had already attained, neither are already perfect." Paul had not attained yet. He was not perfect yet, and neither are you and I. I'll assure you, if you look around you won't find anyone else that is, though they might pretend to be.

This road has to be walked in humility. It's sad to see some learn some truth and then they walk proudly and arrogantly and think thus they will win Christ. Oh no, no. "Let this mind be in you." So, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect." We're full grown. We're men and women now. We're adults and have put away childish things. We have left the rudimentary things of the gospel. We are not involved in keeping and doing and don'ting. We are somebody, and we're headed for something. So "as many as are perfect (or full grown), be thus minded." Learn the facts. That is, when our feet have been placed in the right path, then let us embrace the mind of Christ like Paul and others who have embraced Christ's mind. This mind is a mind that forgets the past. "Forgetting the things which are behind." You see, this is the mind we need. Christ forgot the past. He came to this world and He only admitted who He was when they pressed Him. Isn't that right? They said, "Are you the Son of God?" He said, "Thou sayest." They said, "You claim to be the Son of God." Do you see how that humble mind was in Him? Watch Him get down and wash the disciples feet, an act that was so humiliating that Peter said, "You won't wash my feet." John the Baptist said he wasn't worthy to unloose the latches on His shoes, because he realized who He was. Jesus said, "Peter, if I don't wash your feet..." Peter said, "Well if that be the case, then just wash me all over. Don't stop at my feet." But Jesus told him, "He that is cleansed need not to be washed save his feet." (*John 13:5-10*) These are in the path.

So again, this mind will make you forget the past, be it the failure or the victory, and press toward the mark for the prize. Like David may we experience God's salvation that is new every morning. God has something new for you tomorrow. Don't you know that? I don't care how wonderful He's been to you today? I've enjoyed Him today. I've fed my soul in the rich clover fields of God's grace. How marvelous. But I'm like the children of Israel who got to the twelve palms and the twelve wells of water. This was a wonderful, wonderful place; but that wasn't the stopping place. They were headed for Canaan.

So you and I can be high and blessed and so overwhelmed with the grace of God. But that is not the stopping place. There is something better tomorrow. It gets better. The path of the righteous shines more and more toward the day of perfection. Paul said, "Changed from glory to glory even unto the likeness of the Lord." (*II Corinthians 3:18*) So, "We press toward the mark for the prize."

As David we cannot live in yesterday's victories or defeats and experience the ever new glories of today. The mature Christian looks forward to each future day with its rich appointed surprises. Now it may turn up in a letter edged in black, but don't be afraid to open the mail. You might be surprised what is in there. And that's how you learn to give thanks in all things,

knowing it is the "will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (*I Thessalonians 5:18*) The mature Christian always looks forward to the rich, appointed surprises. Every new circumstance contains more and more spiritual wealth, and every new step in the way is ordained of a wise, loving, and gracious Father to bring us into Christ's fullness as verse 21 says, "like Him." Did you ever dream you could be like Him? John, when he saw the Revelation, fell down and was going to worship one of those mighty beings that was showing him around. The man said, "John, see that you don't do it. I'm just one of your fellow servants. I came from the human race just like you."

"Now let us therefore be thus minded." Do you understand that only the Holy Spirit can bring us in and reveal the hidden treasures of the mysteries of God. A proud mind will never arrive at the understanding. God sees the proud afar. Oh, dear hearts, pour contempt upon your pride. Don't let pride get into you. He sees the proud afar. "God resists the proud and gives grace unto the humble." (*I Peter 5:5*) Remember, "Thus minded." The mind was in Christ -- down, down, down. The mind was in Paul -- down, down, down. The mind was in Timothy. The mind was in Epaphroditus. The mind must be in you and me. That's the mind of Christ.

Thus minded we walk in thrilling expectancy, knowing every step is foreordained. Do you believe that? You see long centuries, millenniums, eternal ages back yonder, "God ordained good works that we should walk in them." (*Ephesians 2:10*) You might not think that looks good to you. Do you think it looked good to Moses when God told him to go down there and deliver Israel? Then He told him his weapon was going to be that old shepherd staff? That didn't look good, did it? If David would have listened to Saul, do you think he would have gone out and faced Goliath?

Again, the rule of faith is the just must live by faith. (*Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38*.) When did God say He was going to leave you? When did He say He was going to fail you? He said, "Now, Israel and Moses, I want you to know something." You'll find that marvelous promise in Deuteronomy, that law book. "Moses, you're going to go down the road there, and oh what you are going to face -- rivers, mountains, deserts, and whatever -- but I created all of them. I know every grain of sand. I know every bush, every lizard, I know everything. I'm omniscient; I'm omnipotent; and I'm omnipresent. I am the Almighty God. I'm the strong-breasted one. Now look, Moses, I want you to know I will not leave you. I'll not fail you." (*Deuteronomy 31:8*)

What has He said to you and me? It's by faith, not by what you see, not by what it looks like, not by what it seems like, not by what it smells like or tastes like or sounds like. The five senses can be the biggest crook in your life. Now they're wonderful, but they can surely be detrimental. So dear ones, walk with God. Think of two shores on the Red Sea. There were two sides to it. The side where you stand over here and are afraid and the side over there where you dance and sing. There are always two sides to everything. The desert had two sides to it. The Jordan had two sides. Jericho had two sides and Joseph's prison. We could go on and on. There is two sides to every circumstance that faces you and me. Will we reach the other side? There were two sides to that furnace. When they slammed the door on the inside, it looked like certain death; but outside their fortune was made. They were famous. Can you imagine? They were set free. There are always two sides to this thing. It'll look like an awful thing. Isn't it amazing. "While we look not at the things that are seen but the things that are unseen." (*II Corinthians 4:18*) Yonder is the "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." (*Hebrews 11:10*) That's what Abraham was after, but we seek one too. That

holy city that came down from God out of heaven prepared "as a bride adorned for her husband." (*Revelation 21:2*) So, precious hearts, faith sees and thus learns to rejoice in tribulations also. This alone enriches us in the grace and truth that is in Christ Jesus. Notice he said, "And if in anything." If this is not the way you think about it and you're getting mixed up, if ye be otherwise minded (if you don't have this mind in you), God shall reveal even this unto you. He's saying that if a Christian will embrace the heavenly calling and look to the heights of the calling and see God's gracious plan that inspires worship in spirit and truth, by faith they need not fear that they will lose their way. They may stumble in the way. They may even fall temporarily. Yet a Christian who is fundamentally right, whose purpose is to press toward the mark, will never wander hopelessly into the swamps to which Christian pathways can move. On every side -- that's the way it is.

Now if we make a mistake, God will graciously put it right. So many need to know that this is a fact. Do you realize that there are a lot of Christians that never find this out? Paul in *Romans 6:1* said, "Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid." Often Christian failings may be governed by the Lord for His own holy ends. Don't you know that? A lot of people don't believe that. God will permit a lot of things. He permitted the devil to get into Job, take everything he had but a wife that told him to curse God and die. And moreover I think he must have broken out with leprosy for he sat in the ash heap scraping the pus from the sores with a piece of broken pottery. Yet before it was over and because it was over and because he went through it, Elihu began to take the scene. And after Elihu talked a little while, then God began to be heard. And after he talked a little while, Job came to the place you and I need to come to: "I used to hear about you, but now mine eye seeth you." (*Job 42:5*) "Wherefore, (I see you for myself), I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Isn't that a wonderful place to come to? Do you know what happened? God turned right around and gave him twice as much as he ever had in his lifetime. How can we ever measure what is going to be ours when this whole thing is over? We're on the way.

So at this place and time in Christian pilgrimage God does not treat us as babes who must be commanded and controlled, but as sons possessed of certain endowments, which if disciplined will make us strong and able to discern. It is His perfect will to bring us to holiness and power, to glorious forcefulness of character. However, this can never be if He carries us like dead logs without moral judgment or choice. We're not puppets on a string but redeemed men and women who can run after Christ, can wrestle with powers and principalities, and can fight the good fight of faith as we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But if in this glorious and yet strenuous race we stumble in judgment, God will not permit us to stray into disaster and contempt, but will tenderly bend our faltering steps into the way. Yes, God shall reveal even this unto you. So we have already attained His love, faithfulness and guidance. We have put away childish things. We're no longer concerned with days and meats, etc. So let us walk by the same things, the rule of faith. Let us mind the same things. Let this mind be in you. Let Christ have His way. Let His word be a light to the pathway and a lamp to the feet. So we must remember, by the rule of faith our victories will be complete.

Faith wins new battles. It conquers new territories and preserves the spoils of the old. We must not deliberately leave the pathway and turn to byways again. However, having begun in the spirit we must find out we can't be made perfect by the flesh -- be it moral flesh or immoral flesh. We're what we are and we're where we are by "grace through faith." (*Ephesians 2:8*) Is that right? Do you believe that? Shall we go aside for the empty things? What good would a

Sabbath do you? What good would refraining from pork do you? What good does doing this way and doing that way and the length of your hair do you? You don't tithe because you have to. You do it because it belongs to God. You don't want to rob God.

Verses 17-19: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Now the saints of that day were just like you and me. Yet one example was theirs to imitate, and that is all we have tonight. The word follow is conditioned by *I Corinthians 11:1* where Paul said, "Be ye followers of me as I follow Christ." Now some people say they are following Christ. You can't do that. Years ago someone wrote "In His Footsteps." He was one of those fellows you're going to imitate. You see, you follow Paul as he followed Christ. Do you realize that Christ in this life was always a kingdom preacher and teacher. He only mentioned the church one time. "Upon this rock will I build my church." (*Matthew 16:18*) It was a hidden thing until Paul came.

There is no perilous self-conceit in Paul's counsel but simply the holy assurance of knowing one is on the well marked road leading to the prize. You can "mark them," he said, "even as ye have us for an example." With this exhortation, it seems strange a Christian would seek out failure for their example. Follow Paul and those that walk with him. Don't look for the biggest failure that you can find. Get them out of your eyes. They'll do you damage. And yet most try to excuse their own failure by someone else's. It's like the pot calling the kettle black.

Now we appropriate that which we contemplate, and the eyes are more than organs of discernment -- they're spiritually channels of reception. Our vision becomes our possessions. "Without a vision, the people perish." (*Proverbs 29:18*) An artist studies the masters. He doesn't just start out and be an artist. No, you try and take in what someone else learned. So it is well that we fix our hearts eyes on Paul and his gospel.

Note, "For many walk." He said, "I'm crying about it." I can only know a little of Paul's pain as he writes this. He has given his life for the things of Christ, in reality for other's good, and now the leaven has worked it's way into many lives corrupting them -- both the leaven of practice and the leaven of doctrine. It seems to be the delight of some to frame indictments of their brethren, to gossip about their frailties when it is the glory of God to conceal a matter. (*Proverbs 25:2*) If possible such would add a burden rather than bear one another's burden and so "fulfil the law of Christ." (*Galatians 6:2*)

Speech can be inflammatory. Gossip is as a spicy entertainment to some. They gloat over a scandal rather than weep, so their speech becomes inflammatory rather than remedial. They spread contagion rather than isolate it. You know what you think about this AIDS business. We had a woman taken off the streets lately. Isolate her; get rid of her; she has AIDS; she will just spread it. Such are enemies of the cross of Christ. Such are exercising a fenceless liberty in the sacred name of redeeming love and grace. They even claim they are magnifying the grace of God doing what they do. And thus they "glory in their shame." That's exactly what it will add up to; shame.

"Who mind earthly things." What are these kind of people after? A little self-glory, a little temporal something, a little gold down here. Precious hearts, I hope you all will love me, but it doesn't matter whether you do or don't; that won't stop me. All of the efforts that you could ever put out to stop me will not stop me. Do you see such are mundane and groveling. They wear a spiritual label but are devoid of Christian love and grace. Their life has no upward look.

They have no spiritual ideals. Their life is simply one without wings. They're of the earth, earthy; but our citizenship is in heaven.

Now the truth should possess you and I. Do you know who you are? Are you sure you know who you are? Do you know you "have passed from death to life?" (*I John 3:14*) Do you know, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory?" (*Colossians 3:4*) Do you know you have been "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son?" (*Colossians 1:13*) Do you know, "Now are we the sons of God?" (*I John 3:2*) Do you know these things?

Oh, precious hearts, let the truth possess us. Can you imagine the thrill that must have been in the mind of Paul as he makes this absolute claim: "Our citizenship is in heaven." He was a stranger and a pilgrim in the world here then, wasn't he? Just like you and me. Once in Jerusalem when the Roman centurion would scourge Paul (you'll find this in the book of *Acts 22:25-30*) he claimed his Roman citizenship and it kept him from the beating; but what a privilege to know we're citizens of heaven. I'm a citizen of heaven, are you? We should never be ashamed of it.

Carry the fact that you are a citizen of heaven with pride. Some are proud they are of certain blood. There are people who are proud they are white; people who are proud they are black; people that are proud they're yellow; people that are proud of one thing and another. So that's wonderful, but here is the thing to be proud of whether you're black, white, red, yellow, whatever; poor or rich, educated, uneducated, live in the mansion on the hill or the hut in the valley.

Why, it isn't always so good to live on the hill. When I was in Hong Kong, we saw some of those little shacks on the hill that just about washed away in the flood. That's the way it is with some of these mansions that are just shacks. They are all just a temporal place. Oh, dear ones, we should be proud of our high connections. Here Paul's lips are open with hallowed boasting of that kingdom of the free born. Do you remember how he said, "I was born free." (*Acts 22:28*) That was the kingdom Paul ever recognized and we should rejoice in. To think my name is found over there with God's children in that state of everlasting glory!

In the midst of human clamor, may we listen to the high calling and not be swayed by the noise of the dissenters. The devil will do everything he can to get you to forget it, but don't forget it! (*Philippians 3:20*) "From whence we look." Think of the pioneer again who went out and then returned to get his loved ones. "Who shall change (or fashion) our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, whereby He is able . . ." Is He able? He that makes the desert blossom like a rose. He that makes the waters break out in the wilderness. He that pours out the rivers and gives them their direction. He that says the heart of the king is in His hands. He that moved Daniel to say, "God puts up whom He will and puts down whom He will." Even the wickedness of men He puts in a place of authority when He wants to. I'm wondering what He has in store for America in the next few weeks. What do you think? Do you think we deserve another day of grace?

No. Well, we didn't deserve the last one, but He gave it to us anyway. So we must have suitable attire to go into His presence. *I Thessalonians 4:16-17* says "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air." And here He's going to change our vile body that it will be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. History tells us that Josephine was just a girl of fourteen years; (I believe she was Hungarian.) She was a beautiful young girl;

only 14. Napoleon wanted to marry her. When they came to the border between the two countries, she had to change all her clothes. Now you can imagine how well they had her dressed. But before she could come into France and marry Napoleon, she went into a building on the border and she had to take off all her clothes and walk across the border. There they put her in all the beautiful robes that Napoleon could put on her, the jewels and whatever. I think that is a little bit about what it will be like. You see, I don't care how you're dressed here. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He'll change that body and it will be like His own glorious body. You say, "How?" I don't know how, I just know He is able. (*Philippians 3:21*) "Whereby He is able." Do you think He is able? I don't think he'd have any trouble changing this body if one day He took a few molecules of dust and molded them and there went Adam. I think He could easily fix us up a body, don't you?

Philippians Study 15

The thought in the 4th chapter of *Philippians* is Christ above you, the power of life. "Therefore," (*Philippians 4:1*) reaches back into all that has been said up to this time. It's like going to school. You don't learn from the sixth grade until you've gone through the first. People think they can just step in and become great, solid, knowing saints without facing the lessons that lead up to a certain place.

The Bible proves beyond any doubt that the Lord is above us. He's in the heavens tonight, there is no question about it. In *Acts 1:9-11* we read, "When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, 'Ye men of Galilee why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.'" Then note in *Acts 7:55* when Stephen is about to depart this world as they stoned him. It says, "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Then in *Revelation 1:9-18*, we get a picture of the church in this church age. There the Lord Jesus Christ is seen as the great lampstand walker. He is walking in the midst of the church. He is seen there walking in the midst of the lampstands in the heavens. You must understand that, in reality, as far as God is concerned if you're born again you are seated in the heavens tonight. You may never accept it; you may never fully lay a hold of it until this life is over, but that is where God sees you. That's where He is walking in the midst of the candles.

There are many scriptures along this line, but I am seeking to bring to you a fact that is to your eternal good as you embrace it. In *Hebrews 9:24* we read, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." So there is no question where He is now in relation to our present experience with Him in this fourth chapter. Now He was somewhere else in chapter 1, and we'll get to that later. That doesn't mean He wasn't in the heavens, but He was also in us. Then in chapter 2, He's in the heavens, but He's also back of us - back yonder in the abyss of eternities past -- planning and purposing. He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. It's awesome when you begin to realize what it is all about.

The Bible clearly teaches He is in the heavens. Why is He there? He is there for you to appear in the presence of God for you. That is why He's there. He came for you. He died for you. He arose for you. He has revealed Himself for you, and He is up there now to see that it succeeds. Isn't that a marvelous thing? There He is, the Bible tells us, a very present help in the time of need. Paul in *Ephesians 3:20* gives us that great panoramic view of the purpose and the plan of God as it includes you and I. I'm a beggar on the dunghill. This puts me on the throne of a prince. How can it be? "Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think according to the power which worketh in us." Let me repeat again and again and again and again: if you miss this, it will be your fault. Don't tell me you can't. I know you can.

Now on top of that, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound (not just barely skimp by, but abound) unto every good work." (*II Corinthians 9:8*) Do you see how we're backed? That is what I want to leave you with before we get into a verse-by-verse study of this fourth chapter. That's what it's all about.

So this power is limitless, and it has pleased the Father to build everything in his Son. God doesn't have a plan in Michael or Buddha or some other thing. God's entire plan is in his Son. Everything is in his Son. *Colossians 1:19* says, "In Him all fullness dwells." So if you want to be complete, it will be in Him. And you can be. Surely every believer has an all-sufficiency. Every one of us has an all-sufficiency. The tragedy is the vast majority of God's precious people never find it out. They're never taught these things.

So He is the sphere of our life, both inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly, it's a spiritual thing; outwardly it's a practical thing. The one is the root -- inward; outward -- the fruit. It's as simple as that. So note the "all's" that you will see in this chapter. In the sixth and seventh verse as he speaks of prayer he said, "Don't be anxious about anything; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." So here is all prayer and all understanding. Then in the 13th verse he comes up against this statement, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Did you know that? Now that doesn't mean you're going to go out here tomorrow and show how great you are and pick up one of the buildings downtown and walk away like Sampson did. Now Sampson could do that if God told him to and so could you. But God hasn't told you to do that and he certainly didn't tell Sampson to do that. So all strength is supplied to do what He tells you to do.

Then in the 19th verse, "All of your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." So we have all prayer and all understanding and all strength, and all is supplied in Christ Jesus -- every need, all needs. Do you have a need? God has supplied it in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you learn to go to Him, really go to Him, you're not looking two ways. That's the tragedy. So many of God's precious people find themselves facing a problem and instead of really waiting it out with God and letting "patience have her perfect work" (*James 1:4*), they turn to a substitute; and thus they are defeated.

As believers, think of it like this: In chapter 1:1 we live in Him. In chapter 1:26 we glory in Him. In chapter 2:1 we have our consolation in Him. In chapter 3:3 we are to rejoice in Him. In chapter 3:14 He is the prize of our high calling. In chapter 3:1 for practical living we are to rejoice in Him. In chapter 4:1 we are to stand fast in Him, and in 4:3 we're to be of the same mind in Him. These are precious nuggets as you begin to study the word of God and see how God has supplied and met the every need of the believer.

So He is our sufficiency. Wouldn't you say that? Do you need something? He said, "My God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." You say you can't? He said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." You say, "But oh, I'm so downcast and sad." He said, "Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice." We could go on and on and on. It is all there. Everything is there for you and me. It doesn't matter if we are one or one million, the strength is always the same. Don't you realize that?

Now it's wonderful to have friends and others. I'd rather see one million know the truth as see one know the truth. But your strength is no more with one million if you be in the will of God than it is with one. God wants us to see this and understand this. You must understand as Jonathan said in *I Samuel 14:6*, "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." What difference does it make to Him? He's going to do it anyway.

How did you get saved? Did you do it? Did I do it? Did someone else do it? God might have given me some seed to go out and sow, and He might have given another fellow a watering can to go out and water the seed; but He had to give the increase. Do you see? Who is it that saves men? Who is it that fills men with the Holy Spirit? Who is it that "builds us up and gives

us an inheritance?" (*Acts 20:32*) It's Him that does it, and He is so pleased when you come to that place that your confidence is in Him. That's the reason I started taking just one offering. Some folk threatened us and said they'd starve us out. That's like telling Israel when they went into the wilderness they'd starve them out in a day, and they're just bound to die of thirst. Why a flinty rock gushed a river! The flinty rock is the driest of rock, if you don't know. That's the reason God said a "flinty" rock. So a river gushed out of that rock, and wherever the children of Israel went the river was there. Now sometimes they lost sight of it and thought they were in trouble; and they sang and dug with their staffs, and the water gushed up. It was there all the time. They were just walking on their blessing and refreshing. It was under them all the time. God's promises undergird you all the time. It makes you like David so you can "run through a troop and leap over a wall." (*Psalms 18:29*)

Our sufficiency is always of Him and thus, "The just shall live by faith." (*Romans 1:17*) And, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." (*Hebrews 11:6*) God is pleased to have you and I to believe this; to know what He says about us. We look away from the circumstances. Oh, they can boil up around us, and it can be a lion's den; it can be a fiery furnace; we can be surrounded by the enemy; we're afraid like Elisha's servant. Elisha said (*see II Kings 6:17*), "Open the young man's eyes and let him see." Elisha was just as confident as he could be. God opened the young man's eyes, and he saw the hillsides full of the chariots of God. God never deserts His people. It's a shame for you to think so.

We can be surrounded with circumstances that are adverse. You must be. Don't you know that? You'll never know the deliverance and power of God, the sweetness of God, the greatness of God, the grace of God, and the love of God until you're just surrounded and it looks like there is no way out. He'll do that. He's being good to you and me to do that. "If we suffer with Him we reign with Him." (*II Timothy 2:12*) You'll never know Him until you know how He can take you out of the tight places and circumstances. And He can leave you in them and supply your need right there. He isn't limited to circumstances. What is the matter with you and me?

Do you remember when Jesus was here in the world and when He told them who He was? They would have taken Him and cast Him over the hill (*see Luke 4:29-30*). Did you read that and find out that He just walked out and they never knew where He went? It says in the Bible that no man dared ask Him how did He get over there. He could make you think a little bit. I hope He does make you think. He's had me thinking a long time. It's awful good.

So our mind begins to reason as we see the circumstances. Our problem is we begin to measure ourselves by ourselves. We begin to measure the problem by our own strength. I don't care how strong you are, if it's the devil against you, he'll beat you. You learn to do it in Christ. All of us have that privilege. Thus our minds can defeat us by putting things in a false perspective. It will blind us to God's word and His ability to keep it to us. When you get in that real severe hot test, is His word still true? It is still true whether you believe it or not. When it looks like the heavens are brass and everybody has forsaken you and you're alone and everybody is against you, do you still know that He is with you? You'll never know those things until you face them. That's what we see in verses 6-7. As we appropriate Him, His very peace passing understanding settles into our hearts and becomes a guard over us. What a wonderful thing the God of peace guarding you. Can anything better than that guard you? You're the apple of His eye. (*Zechariah 2:8*)

So here in chapter 4, we'll see the truth concerning the believer. How it reaches such a glorious climax. It's like four great waves. In the first wave, Christ in you. In the second,

Christ laid the foundation which is back of us. It's not a come lately thing. In the eternities past He saw you. That doesn't mean you couldn't have done something about it. It just means He knew what you were going to do about it. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate ..." (*Romans 8:29*) In other words, He did put a circle around (or predestinated) you. Before you were in your mother's womb or your father's loins -- long, long, long, long before that -- he said, "He's mine." The day came when He called you. He gave you the faith to answer, and you answered. And He justified you. Now it's just a matter of a minute or so or the blink of an eye until He'll glorify you. Do you see? Some people think that's true "if." It's true regardless.

So the first great wave is Christ in us. The second great wave is Christ back of us. The third great wave is Christ before us. Then, the last crashing wave is Christ above us to bring it all to pass. I don't know how it could get any better than that in this world. It's going to get better when we get there, of course.

So the truth of chapter 4 comes like a great wave as it crashes upon us in abundant fullness. In us, back of us, before us and now above us, Christ the strength of my life. So you don't want to trust that muscle or that brain. Can you imagine the conniving people think they get by with? Don't you believe it. Payday is someday.

The most wonderful Man who was no less God, is God's Man above all. He's been exalted now. He has a name which is above every name now. He's heir of all things. He loved me. He gave Himself for me. *Romans 5:6* says, "When we were yet without strength in due time He died for the ungodly." He's my Savior. He's my Redeemer. He's my surety. He's my advocate. I could go on and on. He wants me to be a joint heir with Him. He's made it possible that I can heir everything, the same as He heirs it all. On top of that, I can claim Him as my bridegroom. He who now sits at God's right hand in that place of divine acceptance and power backs me. He knows all about me, and yet He loves me as no one ever has or ever can or ever will.

How can we grasp what He had? A sun that was shining over 50 billion light years ago just recently showed up on the telescopes. What an amazing thing. Why, this little solar system is just a little dot in a vast Pacific Ocean. Don't you know that? This was Him. He created it. He's the Creator. Now what He had and what He was He laid aside to come to shame and poverty and to the jeers and sneers and the shame and reproach, the lies, etc. They're still trying to make a rat out of Him. That was all for me. Don't you know that? "Well," you say, "he did it for me." I'd say "yes, Amen" to that. That's what I want you to know, but He did it all for me whether you ever accept it or not. I can have it all, and you can have it all. That's the marvel of it. There's no competition in Christ. The competition is with the devil. Are you going to go with God or aren't you? *Romans 8:32*: "He that spared not his own Son but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."

Here you and I are, heirs together of the promises of God. Is there any question that He loves you? Is there any question that He's going to keep loving you? Is there any question that He's going to forsake you down the road somewhere? Is there any question that He knows your downsetting, your uprising, your thought afar? And knowing all about you, He loves you and says, "I'm for you. Let me back you. Let me be your life. Let me be your strength. I gave myself for you." How can I question that He loves me and wants the best for me?

So the question comes, "Can He?" Isn't that foolish at this point? Some people are still saying, "Can He?" Look with me to that moment on the cross in *John 19:30*. He cries, "It is

finished!" Then three days later it was proven beyond a doubt who He was and what He'd accomplished when God raised Him from the dead. Triumphant He arose from the dead, and He went up to God; and then after that He was seen on this earth by various ones for forty days. "Being seen of many," the Bible says. Every miracle since that day has been done in His name. He's alive. The fact that you are there shows He is alive. Here is the victory of the ages, and He wants to share it with you. It was not accomplished by just anybody. This is what a Man did, inspired of the Holy Ghost, by the power of the Holy Ghost -- Victor over principalities and powers and dominions. In *Matthew* he said, "All authority (or power) is mine in heaven and earth." (*Matthew 28:18*)

This can mean but one thing. He is for you. There He is right at this very moment. He's looking down at you just like you were the only thing that there was, loving you like you will never, never, never fully grasp. True to you, He's for you. And if so, and it is so, there is no excuse for you and me, is there? How precious that it is ever Paul's delight to lead us in faith to the lofty spiritual imminence commanding the unspeakable outlook of our inheritance in Christ. The book of *Philippians* does this.

Go up on the Trail Ridge Road, and there will be a sign there that will say you can see eight states, I believe. That means you can look out and look out and look out until your eyes no longer see. Now you could just see that far with the naked eye, but if you get a powerful telescope that magnifies and draws and zooms in, then you can travel down through there. Now the Holy Spirit will help you see this. "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him. But God reveals them to us by his Spirit." (*I Corinthians 2:14*) Do you believe this? I pray God you will. Remember: Only one life twill soon be past. Only that done for Christ will last.

Philippians Study 16

We will enter into the climax of this wonderful book. Let's think of it like this before we read it. This is like a will. Someone has left you millions and millions of dollars, and you're reading about it. If I could read you a document that would tell you how you had just inherited a million dollars or had just been elevated to some great and leading position in the world that would make you rich and famous and honorable all of your lifetime, you would be on tiptoe. If I were reading that kind of a will and you thought you were going to be remembered in it, I can tell just exactly how you'd react. But here I'm reading from a will that's more real than any will that you could ever read. No one could ever bestow on you anything close to this. It can be like a dream to you, or it can be real. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (*Hebrews 11:1*) This faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. As you learn to take a hold of God these things will become real to you.

This first verse which stands at the head of chapter 4 is so vitally important. "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." If I were to title this I would call it "The Fadeless Crown," and all that would go with it. You're to realize that if you win Christ you're going to own everything. There are none of us, more than likely, that will ever be heirs to a tremendous will of that kind. If you could you would, wouldn't you? I'm going to tell you what we're reading here, it will be your fault if you don't appropriate it.

Any true parent cares for the welfare and future of their child. So Paul would lead and inspire God's child to the best. God wants you to have the best, and I want you to have the best. It's a shame to waste youth as we see the people doing. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could put the wisdom of someone who has learned some of life in some of the youth's minds. Oh, the things that they would escape that would be harmful and the things they would gain. Any mature adult seeks to give mature advice to the young. Now God not only tells you what He has planned for you, He backs you. As we give our children a vision and encouragement to fulfill their vision, so we read in this book, "God works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Now Paul, as you look at the third chapter, has just led his readers through the loftiest spiritual imminence possible, a height which commands the awesome outlook over their inheritance in Christ. He started in the first chapter and told how it all begins with Christ in you. Then he showed how this was not just a will-o'-the-wisp happenstance and accident; but back in the abyss of the eternities, God had Christ as the basis for it all. Then in the third chapter he tells us how we can win Christ. I don't care if you're young or old, black or white, rich or poor, educated or uneducated -- that is you. God has put this where any man, woman, boy, or girl can have it. Because, "It is by grace through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." All of it is.

Think of the vision that God gave others of previous ages. Abraham had such a vision there in Ur of the Chaldeas, an idol worshiper no doubt. God somehow appeared to him and showed him "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker was God." (*Hebrews 11:16*) He told him of a land and an inheritance, and Abram was so impressed that he got up and left. Now he had his problems just like you'll have. He tried to take his father with him, and that didn't work. He stayed in Haran, a burnt, parched, blackened place, a fruitless place, until his

"old man" died. His old man kept him in Haran. Then he went on, and he took carnal Lot with him, which only proved to be a grief to him and brought him to fight battles, etc. But all things were to work together for good. Finally he brings him into the heights of his promise.

The same was true of Jacob. Jacob fled from Esau and he had a vision of a ladder that reaches to heaven. God marvelously blessed and brought him to the place that he became a prince with God. Then think of Moses and David, and we could go on and on. In the third chapter of the book of *Ephesians*, Paul tells us that God gave him a revelation, a gospel, a dispensation. He gave him knowledge of promises that were not made known to them back yonder. Theirs was wonderful. Anything God does for you will satisfy you, but God is offering you and me something that He never offered to Abraham, to Job, to Isaac, David, Elijah, Elisha. He didn't offer them what He is offering us. Do you realize that you can enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ whereby you will own everything? You will rule and reign with Him forever. You can have it all. I can have it all. I'll have it all, and I won't take a thing from you. You can have it all, and you won't take a thing from me. You say, "That's not me." Well, it's not you if you don't want to believe it. Just believe God.

How did you get righteous? Do you realize that you are righteous to the extent that you could go into heaven tonight and not be the least bit ashamed? You have the righteousness of God. Do you understand that? Sure you do. How did you get it? "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." (*Titus 3:5*)

Look back through the Bible. How did they cross the Red Sea? How did they get out from under the tyrant's heel? How did Abraham have a son? How did David kill Goliath? How did that little shepherd boy come from the sheepcote to the highest throne Israel has ever seen up until now? How did he do that? Was it by power? Was it by might? Or was it, "By my Spirit saith the Lord." (*Zechariah 4:6*) Why did God preserve and record all of that? Oh, how ignorant we are determined to be, how obstinate and unbelieving. It's as you believe God that He works in you.

So Paul with his revelation finds his greatest delight in guiding saints into the heavenly calling and in heavenly places in Christ. As we say, chapter 3 describes the goal -- the prize. You can labor for words, but there are no words that can ever really express what it would be to be a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

You may be a good swimmer. Let's say we chain 100 pounds of weight and take you right up to the lip of Niagara Falls and drop you. What chance would you have of coming out of there alive. You'd have more of a chance coming out of there alive then you'll have winning Christ with your own abilities. You can do nothing. "Without me ye can do nothing." (*John 15:5*) Oh, that God's precious people could see this. To win Christ, to achieve Him.

With this vision Paul challenges the saints with a sure means of success. That is what chapter 4 is all about. He was in us in chapter 1, behind us in chapter 2, before us in chapter 3, and He is above us in chapter 4. He's sitting there with a name above every name. Paul said he prayed "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling... what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward which believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." (*Ephesians 1:18,19,& 26*)

Precious hearts, the power that God exercised when He raised His Son from the dead is yours. If the devil was ever against a person, it was Christ. Christ was helpless, wasn't he? He was dead. How strong was He? He was dead. How much strength does a corpse have? Think about it. On top of that, the devil had every force that he could ever muster determined to

keep Jesus in that grave. But when the moment dawned toward the third day, God just lifted Him up. Now God is trying to say to you, "That power that I used, that I exercised that I manifested that resurrection morning, I am able to exercise in you. I'll tell you what you're going to have to do. You're going to have to be weak, because when you are weak that's when I am strong."

Now that doesn't mean failure, that means weak. You're trusting Him, not yourself or something of this world. Notice he said, "Therefore my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." Paul's therefores and wherefores, if you will note them as you read his epistles, are always spoken on the heights. He has reached some pinnacle of something. If you go over Trail Ridge Road, at different places there will be height to look at one thing; and you go a little farther, you get a view of something else. Here the Apostle Paul has just brought us to the height of the expectation of the child of God. So according to the power that worketh in us, He's going to accomplish this.

Note: when the soul is basking in the spiritual paradise, overwhelmed by contemplated glory, then Paul quietly brings one of his "therefores." This reminds those he's leading or guiding of the manner of life such privileged men and women can know and live. Here Paul is leading Christians amid the unspeakable treasures of their heavenly citizenship. Who are you? What do you own? How rich are you? Who is back of you? These are all things that come to bear on what we are talking about -- treasures that make the heart glow with expectation. Once your eyes are open to the ultimate glory, your heart will glow. With this holy wonder before them, Paul makes his tender appeal, "Therefore." Now that you can win Christ, now that Christ offers Himself to you, now that the best of eternity is being offered to you -- "therefore." Note, he doesn't demand or threaten them if they do or don't, but seeks to covet the order of the contemplated vision and convert it to a sacred flame of unquenchable resolve.

Note the gracious manner in which Paul makes his appeal to those people -- "my brethren, beloved and longed for." What sweet, gentle, generous, loving, tender words. First notice "brother," equal. We are born of the same parents, and that makes us equal. Paul never looked down on one of his brothers. Take a man that would seem to teach you, and he will look down on you and try to make you feel little, etc. He's a fake. That is a fake. The more you go with God the more humble you'll become, because that is Christ like. He says, "my brother" (born of the same parents, children and heirs).

Now there are many who claim to preach Paul's gospel who never speak it in love. Paul's gospel is the gospel of grace, and Paul like his Savior was always gracious. His manner of addressing the saints was always like that of the gentle Jesus -- thoroughly good and always clothed in the delicate layers of courtesy. We may speak the truth, but the way we speak it could be resented rather than esteemed. You've seen that, haven't you? You've seen people that might know the truth and get it in their head, but when they tell it they offend people. Courtesy is not just an art nor is it an artifice. Try as we will, we cannot put it on for it is not a work, it is a fruit. Some people put on. You know when somebody loves you. You can feel it. You can know it. Courtesy is natural, not artificial. It is not made, it grows. Graciousness is but the outward appearance of the inner grace that is in a life. You can call it "Grace and Glory." You can call it "Rivers of Grace." You can call it "Abundant Grace Fellowship." You can call it "Grace Full-Gospel Fellowship." But it isn't what you call it, it's how you act it.

Now to be really courteous we must dwell in the presence of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. We must feed with Him as He spreads a feast even in the presence of our enemies. It's

possible to pray hours on end to study and be brilliant in your mind, but until the self-sufficiency goes out of you, until you cease from strife, until you no longer seek self-glory, until you no longer show an attitude of pride, etc., you'll find that God will not work with you and in some instances will even resist you. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Of course, you can humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. You can take the wrong. "Shall we not receive both good and evil from the hand of the Lord?" (*Job 2:10*)

You see, we are getting ready to rule and reign. Can He ever make a mistake? I don't think He can. It will look like a mistake. How will you act? That will determine what you really are. Do you understand that? "The trial of your faith is more precious than gold that perishes." (*1 Peter 1:7*)

Note these words, "my beloved." These are not idle conventional words or just a common familiar address. When I was over in England, I had a waitress wait on me; and she said, "Alright, love." I thought she was trying to flirt with me. They call everybody "love." Now you know, that is just a word. There was no emotion involved there at all. There might even be a little bit of hate there. But when Paul used these words -- "my beloved" -- it was spirit and life. He meant it. People know when you mean it. It was a vehicle of affectionate energy. It carried Paul himself right into their hearts.

Now Paul could afford to be generous in his love simply because his bank account was God himself. God is love. Will God for a moment refuse to put love in your heart when He tells you to love all the saints? God loves the world. So when we love someone we long for them. So those were loved by Paul. He loved those people. Any true pastor loves His people. He wants God's best for them. Holy longing always seeks the good of others. If I love you, I'm going to want your best. Why do good parents love their children? Why don't they forsake their children when they put them through a lot of trouble, etc.? It's because they are their parents. That says an awful lot; they have the love of a mother and a father.

Love will carry you through when nothing else will. It never drags or puts off to another time to do what it needs to do. Every sacred desire tries to lift and better that one on whom it rests. Such desires have hands, feet, etc. So we long for those we love. Is that right? Sure, you long for them. My daughter has a granddaughter in California. She longs to see her. You'd be amazed what she and her husband do for their children and grandchildren. Why do they do these things? They love them.

It's easy to do for what you love. "My beloved, my longed for, my joy." Many try to find their satisfaction and joy in the defeat of someone else. They would like to see God knock them in the head. Why, you know someone is going to be defeated if they take the wrong road, but you hope they won't. If you love God, you love people, and you don't like to see them destroyed. I'm well aware if you go out here and take a can of gasoline and pour it all over your house and throw a match on it you are going to burn it down. You have to know that. Can someone take fire into the bosom and not get burned? (*Proverbs 6:27*) You have to know that.

There is no question what the ultimate outcome of some things will be. It's just a matter of what's going to happen to me. How will I react? Paul found his joy in the triumph of others. If we truly love them and our desires rest upon them, then their every spiritual accomplishment will add to our delight.

Paul had seen men and women at Philippi move out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son. He had seen them go from the most horrible kinds of bondage to freedom. Think of the young woman who had a familiar spirit that followed Paul and Silas.

We see such rescued from the burning desert waste of the human race to the well-watered hills and valleys of a Christian character, from the groaning and moaning like that of burdened beasts ready to fall under the load to songs of jubilee as they walked in the light of Paul's teaching. Oh what it did for those Philippian saints, and what it did for them it will do for you! You can rest in it. He heard their gladsome cries of wonder as discovery after discovery came to them in the ever increasing realms of grace. You have put your feet in the richest of wealth. Go ahead with it.

Thus their songs enriched Paul's songs; their wonder deepened Paul's wonder; their joy became his joy. "Joy and crown." What a list of things. "My brethren, dearly beloved, longed for, my joy and crown. So stand fast in the Lord." This is not the royal and priestly crown that you read of in some places of the Bible. It is a little different. It's that crown worn by the triumphant athlete. This crown speaks of honor, of victory, of merriment, happiness. Thus their spiritual maturity made Paul merry of heart as he shared their triumphs. Paul in chapter 2 shows his estimate of the fading glories that he had so much of, especially if they might stand in the way of winning Christ. Here we see a crown that will never fade away, whose beauty and value can only brighten in the ages to come. Can you imagine? A famous queen once said, "My kingdom for a moment of time." I recently ran into a party that is getting old, and they don't want to get old. They talked to me, and I said, "Every age has it's own particular beauty." How beautiful a new fallen snow can be. Did you ever read "Snowbound?" I have a picture of Whittier's house. It's a beautiful thing.

All seasons have their beauty. I've had my springtime, my summertime, my fall, and no doubt I'm in the winter-time of life, at least mighty close to it. I trust the harvest will be in the barn. You're not worried if you have plenty of food and plenty of fuel. You can be snow bound for quite awhile. It's alright. It's one of those good seasons. In fact, some of the best times I had as a kid growing up was in the winter-time when I didn't have to go out in the field and work. I kind of looked forward to it. I'd take a novel and sneak some cigarettes upstairs and lie up there and read all night long. It was kind of fun.

Paul shared their triumph. It was his joy. Here we see a crown that will never fade. Can you imagine? After a billion years and a trillion years, we'll appreciate the crown more than we did in the beginning. We will learn it's value a little more, it's meaning a little more. You see, eternity is not just going to be a dead-end street. "In the ages to come he will shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace toward us." (*Ephesians 2:7*) Isn't that amazing?

So, "Stand fast in the Lord," he says. This is the appeal to which all the love, all the grace, all the courtesy, all the revelation has been leading. If all this contemplated glory of heavenly citizenship would be ours, then we must put our feet in the pathway that leads to it and walk with God. Then like Enoch, one day we'll be not because God will take us. (*Genesis 5:24*)

We must not allow temporal possessions to seduce us. We mustn't chase a will-o'-the-wisp or become enamored with one or allow it to be our fascination. That is, we must let Paul's vision be ours. We must put our thoughts on the Lord. We must believe what He says to and of us. Do you believe what you are reading? Do you believe that this is you we're talking about? Do you believe He means this for you and I'm just the mouthpiece? I'm simply the attorney reading his will to you and explaining to you who you are, what you are, what you can be, what you will be if you'll just look to Him.

Later in this chapter Paul will say, "My God shall supply all your need." That isn't just the food on your table. Maybe you need a little grace. Maybe you need some love. Maybe you need some revelation. Maybe you need power. Maybe you need something of this nature.

"My God shall supply all your need." He's going to supply every need that you will have to reach this coveted place, this unspeakable place. Think of it.

Allow no circumstance to dictate to us or move us. Simply let all within us praise the Lord. "All that is within me praise his holy name," the psalmist said. (*Psalm 103:1*) Isn't that the way you like it?

Philippians Study 17

Now we will look at chapter 4, verses 2-4. We are going slow, but these truths are so vitally important to the overcoming life. I'm thoroughly convinced that at least some of you reading this will be in the Bride of Christ. These are the things that will prepare you for that.

In chapter 1, Christ is seen as the "life" of life. Without Him you have no life. You may be living, but you don't have a life. Then in chapter 2, He is seen as that firm and unquestionable foundation in the background of the believer's faith. We don't build on something soft like a mushroom growth. From the eternities past this was the plan of the Triune God. Then we found in chapter 3, Christ is not only the Life, the foundation, not only the all and all, He has set himself up as the prize of the high calling of God. He is the coming Bridegroom of the church. This is a relationship that can only be hinted at with that relationship of man and woman.

Then we come to this 4th chapter which shows that Christ is the One who enables. He is the strength. God has in Him given us everything that we need to meet this wonderful, wonderful qualification. He calls us, and He qualifies us. There are some things that only the individual can understand as we find this 4th chapter showing Christ backing us. We just studied the incorruptible crown. It was as the saints stood fast in the Lord.

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

The thing that is uppermost in our thoughts here is the ministry of conciliation. No one can go very far with God and not see the divisions that the devil seeks to put among God's people. Now there are divine divisions, and God Himself through a separation to Himself and a yielding to the word of God brings this about. We know that the word of God is, "Quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (*Hebrews 4:12*)

Anyone that goes with God has to make up his or her mind that they will walk with God. It's wonderful to see a couple united or a family united in going with God. In such a case, you make up your mind, every one of them has made his or her own individual choice to walk with God. We can't say to each other, "I'll walk with God if you'll walk with God." We must say, "I'm going with God. I hope you do. I'll pray for you. I'll help you any way I can, but I am going with God." You'll never walk with God unless it is that way.

In that assembly that apparently had so much, it seems almost impossible to realize that there was a dissenting spirit and that it could gain any foothold among them. *James 3:5* tells us about the tongue. What a little member it is and yet what a tremendous destructive force it can be. Of course, it can also be God's great force for good. It's how you use your tongue.

Here we have two women. The greater someone's influence is, the more damage they can do with that influence. It's a sad thing that we can use our influence for such great harm as well as good. How wonderful it would be if we would always just use it for good. If you go back to *Acts 16*, you'll find where this little assembly had its beginning. It was started by a

women's prayer meeting down by the riverside. There they held sweet communion with the Lord. These two women were probably mentioned in verse 2, a part of that little prayer band that sought God and God answered. They were united in sweet harmony as they sought the Lord and his purpose. God rewarded their hunger by sending them the ministry of one of the greatest men that the ages have ever produced.

The age of law had its Moses. The age of the prophets had its Elijah and Elisha and others. The time of the kings had David. There have been tremendous individuals and persons, but of all the ages, this is the greatest age up to now. This is the age when God is doing something that the word of God tells us He kept from dispensations and generations that are gone by. Back in the past, angels and men longed to look into what you and I have a perfect opening to. God just simply has thrown wide the doors and says, "It's grace. You come boldly to me to obtain mercy (you'll need it) and find grace to help in the time of need." (*Hebrews 4:16*)

Which of you has not or will not need to tap on the God who is rich in mercy. If you go with God, you'll find out that this is true. You'll also find out that without that mercy you won't go very far. Then He said, "Now the door that is opened to you is one of grace. You come boldly to me to obtain mercy and find grace to help in your needy time." You may not need in many senses of the word "need," but there isn't one of us that doesn't need the strength of heaven to reach the goal and the prize that God is offering us at this time. If you get to the place that you're not needy, you're in a bad shape.

So God sent them the Apostle Paul with a ministry of His plan for this age. Euodias and Synthche united in such a sweet bond; and the friendship that would seem to be unbreakable, a fellowship that was seemingly insoluble, came to a place of misunderstanding. Who or what it was that brought this seed of discontent the word of God doesn't tell us. That's like the word of God; that shows it is the word of God. Then it can fit any situation. What is it that brings division and strife and separation and jealousy and backbiting and whispering? All of these tend to divide God's precious people and get their eyes on the wrong thing. So often I marvel how a small bit of dirt can give root to a weed or to a spirit of division and estrangement from the things of God. Do you realize that you are just as much in opposition to God when you don't endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as if you disobey Him in another way? Can't you see that? You see, if you're to have God's best you need to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. I can't force anyone to have fellowship with me, and they must not try to keep unity with me or I with them; but when I seek to keep the unity of the Spirit, and he seeks to keep the unity of the Spirit, we'll be as one. Do you see how simple that is? It is Christ that does the bonding. It is the Holy Spirit that brings it about.

So Paul seeks a reconciliation between these two women. You'll note the Holy Spirit doesn't move Paul to list any details of their variance. Again I point out -- this shows the wisdom of the word of God as it was written by Paul. Now if there had just been a natural man that wrote this letter he would have voiced what it was. But again the word of God always fits everything, and that's the reason it is written like it is.

No good purpose was ever served by the exercise of carnal imagination. "Love thinketh no evil." You'd be utterly amazed what goes through some people's minds. They're like a vulture. I read something in an article the other day about a vulture that I never realized before. Do you realize in some senses it is one of the cleanest birds there are? When it isn't out looking for something dead to feed on, it is preening its feathers and cleaning itself. After a bath in an old dead carcass, it goes, if possible, and gets a bunch of water and washes itself and sits for hours and preens its feathers.

Do you know there are saints like that? That is a fact. To look at them you'd think they were so clean. All you have to do is find out what their food is. When a poisonous suspicion arises in the heart, it is because the fires of piety are burning low. It is like a foul air that possesses a room when the windows are closed. When our spirits become foul, it's obvious the windows toward God, the Infinite, are closed. When fellowship is broken, communion with God is blocked.

These two were not communing with God. I don't know whose fault it was. Paul did not say. It is my business to do my best to keep the unity of the Spirit regardless of what you do. Christians can never be intimate with the Lord when they are seeking to break the unity of the Spirit. While it is wise not to know many details of events, we may be assured that Euodias and Syntyche had relaxed their devotion toward the Lord. Think of those two dear women down by the river praying, "Oh, God we want your best. Send the gospel our way." Then over yonder the angel appears to Paul in the night in the form of a man and says, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." And he goes, and this marvelous assembly has its beginning when he meets with these women down by the river. Oh the prospects. Oh the future for them. Then one of them or both of them harbor a little bit of dirt, and the devil sows his seed. There you are. Oh the things I've seen. How the enemy seeks and watches for us to sleep. As Jesus answered them when they asked, "Whence came the tares?" He said, "While men slept an enemy hath done this." (*Matthew 13:25*) So when we go to sleep, the devil sows his tares in our fields of eternal grain.

As we neglect prayer and study and the things of this nature, the old man takes over. We don't need to become deeply carnal or immoral to act in pride, whisper, backbite, act in strife, seek for vain glory. These are oftentimes commended. We like to see someone show their weaknesses or failures in the flesh, and how open are our ears for this kind of thing. How proud are we that we are above such things. Dear hearts He sees the proud afar. So the flesh in any form cannot please God. Only the Spirit can produce the fruit that one day God will gather as the harvest. The fruit of the Spirit is nine-fold.

Here Paul graciously puts his finger on the secret alienation and he says, "I beseech." This is a most tender warning. He doesn't come to them like Moses. Did you ever wonder what happened to that man with the woman that was caught in the very act of adultery? I wonder what they did about him. They didn't drag him.

Paul here tenderly urges them to recover the unity which like a tare can only widen unless its repaired. Note he said, "That they be of the same mind in the Lord." Do you remember the word mind how we saw it throughout this epistle? Let this mind be in you; the mind that was in Timothy; the mind that was in Paul, etc. Now here, it said, "Be of the same mind in the Lord."

In Him we have the only profitable place unity can ever be found. I say, profitable place. I'm talking about eternity. You can build up a lot of things. You can get the Masons together and the Odd Fellows together. You just think of what the Masons do. We have these burn hospitals and things, and I'm not against those things, please understand. The Knights of Columbus have their unity, etc. Go to the Vatican, and you'll see the tremendous thing that they have been able to put together; but, precious hearts, all of that comes to nothing. Only what is done for Christ will last.

So in Christ is the only profitable place that unity can be found. You can unite for and with any other purpose or person, and you'll find it only a temporary and a patchwork expedient. I think of how Gamaliel was wise. When they came to him he said, "Now listen, if it's not of

God, it will come to nothing. If it is of God you can't overthrow it." If this be true, then the real and lasting can only be in the Lord. "Be of one mind in the Lord." Oh we can get united and accomplish quite a few things if we can get enough members to support us. But only in the Lord will it last. Do you see where you need to put your efforts? Oh the wonders that are accomplished in Him. I was thinking how the Lord picked me up, that little old farm boy back yonder, and here I am now near the harvest time. What a wonder it will be.

Paul knows only a gracious approach can enable the fellow workers to bring Euodias and Syntche together into that blessed union again. They had it once. Think of the joy that would bring. It's like the anointing oil (that the psalmist said was poured on the head of Aaron and ran down on his garments) when brethren dwell together in unity. Note he says, "I entreat thee also true yokefellow, help these women which labored with me in the gospel." I have to think how tragic the result when those who could help use their influence to hinder.

Again note -- the Holy Spirit doesn't see fit to name who the true yokefellow was. As you read the word of God, you realize how it's a divine mind that inspired this. The Holy Spirit doesn't see fit to name him, simply because the fruitful matter is anyone can be a true yokefellow with Paul. Are you working with Paul? If you're not preaching the gospel of Paul, you are not working with him. You may be working for God, but to work with God you must follow His plan. Now back yonder in the kingdom age to work with God was a different thing than it is tonight. If you are a co-worker together with God tonight, you have to follow His blueprint. Paul alone has the blueprint. If you don't cooperate with the gospel according to Paul, you'll work for God and He'll bless you and reward you for working for Him, but you'll not divide the inheritance with Him. That's what you want isn't it? Don't you want to be a co-heir together with Christ?

At Philippi there were those who would give their efforts to heal rather than to tear, to mend rather than to break. I thought of land eroding. I thought of when I was a kid on the farm. Back in those days you'd see so much of it like this; just a little ditch starting down through there when it would rain hard. Then there would be little streams pick up. Then if you go out in the midwest, you'll see some little "hollers," we called them, and sometimes you could almost put a building in them. One day they got there as just a little rivulet.

Note the words fellow laborers. How suggestive. Countless bitter divisions that have divided and defeated God's people throughout the age might well have been arrested if Paul's counsel had been prayerfully and lovingly followed. How small or how big things are doesn't matter to God. God takes care of something that we think is big just as easy as He does something that is small.

Look back into the time when Israel went into the land of Canaan. They came up to Jericho, and the entire nation marched like God said around Jericho. Then the next step was Ai, just a little worthless nothing, just a little old hamlet up there. They said, "Why we don't need to send the whole nation up there. We'll just send a handful." They went up there, and a lot of them got killed. They were counting the wrong thing.

It isn't how many of us are there, it's who is there. There were a goodly number of rods used in the day of the Korah opposition and they all were laid up but the next morning only Aaron's was budding and producing. It isn't how big you are, how many you are, how intelligent you are, how influential you are. It isn't this building or another building. It is the God who sees fit to put His presence there. We learn to count God. So how big this was or how small it was, was nothing. The problem with us always is -- will we put things in God's hands and leave them there?

Think of the city of Samaria compassed about until they were eating their children. They were shut up of Benhadad, King of the Syrians and his host. That night there were three lepers outside the camp. They said, "What do we here? If we stay here we're going to die. If we go down there to the Syrian camp all they can do is kill us and we'll die. But let's see what God will do. Let's see what might happen." And when those three lepers started walking down toward that camp, God multiplied their foot falls until it sounded like a mighty army coming down on them. They woke up and were scared and fled their tents and provisions. They left their wealth, their warfare, their weapons, everything. (*II Kings 7:6-16*) Who did that for Israel? The same Person that I am trusting. I hope you are too. You just need to be encouraged to trust Him. Don't back away. Put your confidence in God. He is the Victor. You say, "Oh Lord give us the victory." Well if you have Him you have the victory. Do you realize that? Christ is the victory.

I remember a brother years ago who got a little splinter in his finger. He never thought too much about it. By ten o'clock that night, he was walking the floor. By 11 o'clock he was trying to get a doctor. It ended up that he lost that finger and his hand. It set up a situation in his body, and they finally had to cut off both legs. Isn't that amazing? Just a little splinter set that up. Let something like that get in the body of Christ and watch what it can do.

Are we ambassadors of Christ or helpers of the devil's plan to divide and conquer? It's our blessed calling and ability to help those women to be of the same mind. Note all could have a part in this so important work. Paul realized every part of the body is important and he says, "With others of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life."

The devil can do nothing of himself. Do you realize he has to get someone that's like us to join him if he's going to carry out his program of wreck and ruin? But he is able to get many to subscribe to his program. He has some powerful wreckers on his work force, and God has some magnificent workers who are peacemakers on his. Do you realize that in *Matthew 5*, which tells us of the beatitudes it says, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall see God." Are you a peacemaker, or are you a troublemaker?

We don't need great gifts to have far-sighted piety and modesty of restraint which contributes to bringing the discordant to unity again. It is amazing what the simple, little people can do if God be in them. You see, God can use a dry rod. Can He use you? Sure He can.

Now the verse 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always." Let me remind us that Paul is now an old man and one who life seemingly has only been given lemons, and yet he must have been a master lemonade maker. Here this old man, without social security or any of the benefits of retirement, is in lush pasture. There was nothing to make him happy. Can't he see his environment? What could he look at? What could he see? What could he hear? What could he feel? What could he taste? What could he smell? Can you imagine that orthodox Jew living in that dungeon with filth where there was neither ingress or egress? Think of it. Environment? Today when you put them in jail you have to have private beds and private TV's, etc.

Such circumstances would compare with the worst. Yet Paul sings like a mockingbird on a fair dewy morning. How his song has sounded. Not just then, but down through the stifling airs of this age. Of course that kind of song will be the kind that will sound out forever. That is the kind of a song that will be sung up yonder. What are we going to sing about up there? One of the themes is, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every tongue, and

people, and nation." (*Revelation 5:9*) We're going to sing about what He's done for us. We're going to sing about what He means to us.

What has He done for you? Are you going to wait until heaven to find out what He has done for you? You see, you can sing about it right now. He has blessed you with all spiritual blessings right now. That's what this is all about. That's what faith is. Oh, dear hearts, this is the forever thing.

Old age is usually associated with everything but a sunny, exuberant spirit. It's more apt to sing a song of minors that sounds more like a broken record. To such there are no lights shining brightly and beckoning them on home. Think of the lights that are there, but their way of life has blinded them to it. God is no respecter of persons. Everything is there for you just the same as it was for Paul.

Now, my sister is a wonderful woman, and I say this kindly, but she has lived an indifferent life. This is not a bad life. It is a good life, an honorable life, a respected life. She's an excellent mother, a wonderful wife, a great housekeeper, a worker. She's worked by the side of her husband for years. When he went to the fields, she went to the fields. In it all, she never practiced "seeing" God. Now she is desperate. Do you know what the devil will usually say to someone like that? "Now you wouldn't be so ungrateful as to turn to Him now? What has over taken you is your punishment." No, this does not describe my Father. It may be Moses' description of Him. (I don't mean that Moses didn't see Him good, but I'm talking about the law.)

The lights are there for all of us, but if you won't listen to God, if you rebel, if you go against Him, the day will come when you can't hear Him; you can't see Him; you destroy your ability. Such a life is like that of a tale that is told. Radiant mornings have passed away for such people, and their tune depresses those who hear them. Their evening hymn is not one to die by. Did you ever hear them?

Here we have an old man whose vespers have not a hint of anything that is minor. Hard circumstances have not made him hard. Apart from God we would look at him as a failure, wouldn't we? If we don't know the word of God and what it says, Paul was the biggest failure. He said "of all men most miserable," of himself. Yet such has not soured him into a cynic. While he faces execution, all the recognized authorities have judged him worthy of death. He has been forsaken of so many. He has given his life for people who now look on him as a matter of contempt. They have deserted him. All in Asia have forsaken him. He looks up and treasures the sweetness of that fadeless day that is so close.

Paul's sufferings instead of being grounds for complaint are his grounds for boasting. His sufferings are but the birth pangs of a coming day. The circumstances imprison his body, and yet his soul and spirit are soaring away with his lovely Lord in the things that are forever. Having nothing, he possesses all things. He doesn't even have a coat. He wants a coat. Nothing, however, can rob him of all that is worthwhile. He has given his life for that which is unseen, and he is just about to cash in. Isn't that a marvel? It just thrills my heart to think about it.

Rome may separate him from many things, and yet nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord. The presence of Christ, who can take it away from him? You can lock him in a prison, you can do what you want to him; but the word of God is, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (*Matthew 28:20*) Do you see he can walk through walls? What are prison bars to him? What is the dark night to him? He is there. He that walks on the water is with you in your storms. It doesn't matter, precious hearts,

you can trust Him. Faith is what makes all of this real. It is real -- but will it be real to you? -- is the idea. There are those things that men in Rome can do to him, but that doesn't bother him. He's going to lose them all anyway. Fair weather friends have deserted this dear man, and yet he has all things and abounds, he tells us at the close of this chapter.

Thus the dungeon is ablaze with a light that doesn't come with electricity or kerosene or whale oil or something of that kind. He is walking in the light that is forever. His heart is filled with sunny optimism. Out of it's abundance he shouts to his readers, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice."

Philippians Study 18

There is so much that needs to be left in our hearts in detail when we come to this first seven verses in the book of *Philippians*. Remember, Christ is the everything of your life. I hope you will find Him to be that. The Bible presents Him as your everything.

As we study this portion, it ought to be a test on our lives. Are these things true to our lives? In this fifth verse, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand," we have the grace of forbearance. This is a positive companion of joy in the Lord. Remember, he had just said, "Rejoice in the Lord, always." Rejoice in Him always. Of course, there is that companion to the rejoicing, and that is the grace of forbearance. That is the meaning of this word moderation. Believers whose spirit is clothed in sunny assurance, who live above circumstances, are never harsh or morose to their fellow Christian. You cannot be harsh to a brother and be what God wants you to be. That doesn't mean you have to agree with him. But you can do it lovingly and tenderly if possible.

When spiritual joy is absent, one's center is not on the Bible. Life can become painfully rigorous when this is true. It's very sadness is prone to make life hard and insensitive. Think of it. Cold hearts are thoughtless and obstinate. It is only the warm heart that is thoughtful and tender and generous. Pessimists are always lacking in delicacy, and their touch is a harsh touch; but spiritual joy is based and springs from one's relationship and their wealth in Christ.

Think of it. Where does joy come from? Does it come from how you might treat me or what experience I might have in my business? Or who might upset me today? It's like this. Your car, your home, your relationships in this world, the everything that you might have in this world can go astray. They can blow up on you. So naturally if your joy were based in those things, it would be conditional. But you'll find that the Lord Jesus Christ in the very shadows of the cross said, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth." (*John 14:27*) The world gives you joy, and five minutes later takes it back. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Now this is the healthy mature Christian that is like that. How can this be?

How can I always be joyful? Note what he said, "Rejoice in the Lord, always." What? The possibility and reality of this is always there. How can it be? What can disturb my relationship with Christ? What can take away the fact that I have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ? There is nothing that can take that away. The fact remains: Christ died for me. That is an unchanging fact. He arose, and He lives for me ever to make intercession for me. Nothing can change that. I've been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Him. Nothing can change that. I can refuse to lay a hold of it. I can refuse to partake of it. I can dilly dally around and not become a part of that, but it won't change it.

Now if I am in that frame of mind then I will know the meaning of a joy that cannot be taken away. I will know a joy that doesn't quit. It doesn't matter. So our joy is based and it springs from our relationship and our wealth in the Lord Jesus Christ. This brings exquisiteness and power to understand our brother. Here he is. He may not live up to what he's been blessed with, but it is true of him. He has blessed every one of you that are born again. We might not have fellowship with one another for many, many reasons, but I'll understand my brother when these things are a reality.

So Christians who know the truth and rejoice, in the certainties of Christ are keen to feel the other fellows needs. I can feel your need. I shouldn't try to put another weight on you, but

I should take your burden and thus show the grace of forbearance. Brother Foster many years ago put it like this: "Every home should have two bears in it -- bear and forebear." That is true. We need to bear with one another, and we need to forebear. Now that means you bear before you bear. I can look at my brother and realize he is capable of anything, and I love him just the same. I bear with him just the same. Then if something happens, I forebear. I have borne him before I had to bear him. Do you understand? That can only be when you fully understand your relationship with God.

So the fruit of gentleness is of great worth. It is shown to us throughout the Bible. Though often misinterpreted, gentleness is never the issue of weakness. People think they have to be weak if they are gentle, but rather this gentleness shows a strength. Think of a surgeon. Do you want a weak surgeon to work on your eye and take a cataract from it?

I have a very good friend in this city who is an outstanding eye surgeon, Dr. Lahey. He had an automobile wreck. A girl ran a stop sign going about 50 miles an hour and hit him broadside. It banged him up pretty good, and his hand is a little shaky since that. When my son-in-law needed eye surgery, Dr. Lahey turned him over to one of the men that works under him. He said, "Brother Hill, there is no way I would try to do surgery on an eye again. I am too shaky; and if I thought that I had ruined someone's eye, I couldn't get over it."

So, dear hearts, gentleness is never the issue of weakness, but it is the issue of strength. Weakness can be clumsy. It can hurt rather than help. It simply lacks the resources to be gentle. Weakness shows the life isn't abiding in Him. Can a spiritual life be weak if it abides in Him? What about it? You see, that is where our strength is. It is in the Lord. So resources in the natural are insufficient. If I simply try to live a Christian life by my own efforts I am insufficient. I can't.

There are so many, many ways that you fail. You don't have to go out here and rob a bank to fail. You can just not believe God. You can be fearful. You can whine and cry and try to bring pity to yourself. Go around and complain about how bad you feel. That gives people the impression that after all Christ doesn't mean much to you.

So in character the effeminate never make gentle soldiers. A soldier, to be a good soldier, needs to have iron in his system. Your blood in order to be healthy needs iron. I remember when I was just a teenager in high school my mother had a tremendous breakdown. She was so anemic that her blood would hardly color a white piece of cloth. In those days they didn't have concentrated iron, and they made her eat raw liver to put iron in her blood. In about 3 months her blood began to get red, and before long she was back to normal. So blood is only healthy when there is iron in it, and soldiers are only healthy when there is iron in them.

So if we are not "strong in the Lord and the power of his might," we can easily become brutal. Instead of dealing with people gently, graciously, and tenderly, we deal with them brutally and harshly. We allow our lives to be lives of strife.

There are two characteristics of this winsome grace of forbearance and gentleness. One is gentleness, a fruit of the Spirit. A fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, which is reasonableness or gentleness of dealing. It is a fair and honest consideration for the claims of the other fellow. I might not agree with you and you might not agree with me, but unless we are in defiance of the scripture, there ought to be consideration for the other person. It's amazing the things that people will fall out over and especially Christians. The one who doesn't insist on personal rights is this kind of person.

There are those that want an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. This is not Christ's way. He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said (by Moses) an eye for an eye and a tooth for a

tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also twain." (*Matthew 5:39*) This is that grace of forbearance and that gentleness. So sometimes my highest right is not to claim my personal rights. Forgetting this, the noblest exercise of the soul can be neglected. God wants this to be in your life. Jesus had a perfect right to be equal with his Father, we read earlier in this epistle. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." That was his right, but He made himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant. So the noblest exercise is neglected by so many of God's precious people. If we would be like Christ and be mature believers, often our sweetest and richest right is surrendering some of our rights. To be and act as Christ, we cannot strive or seek for vain glory. Christ said, "Put away your sword, Peter. Don't you know I could call for twelve legions of angels. Just put up your sword. Pilot you could do nothing if it were not given thee of my Father." Why, He could blink his eye and crush us all. Can't you see that?

You see, there is something that God wants in you and me that will be like Him. We have the Christ life. It is the strong life, and God wants it to overcome. I've watched saints who could have been magnanimous prove their insufficiency in Christ. Saints who would ever magnify their rights to the obscuring and subjecting of other's rights. These simply are not Christ like, and they will never be Christ like as long as this is a fact.

The second characteristic is forbearance, and it includes the element of kindness. It is possible for one to recognize and yield to another person's rights but be churlish and unpleasant about it.

I may yield the field and yet the very spirit of yielding turns it to a fallow field. I remember one instance of a party that they had to give way to a certain individual and give up a certain thing, and they made sure the thing they had to give up was destroyed before they gave it up. That is anything but Christ like. I may yield a field and leave it a well-watered garden instead of a briar patch. That is the way you learn to do it. That is the Christ way.

Think of Jesus. He said, "No man taketh my life from me. You can't take my life from me. I lay it down and I will take it up again." (*John 10:18*) Do you realize you are as well protected as He is? Think about it a moment. Are you? Where is your life hid? With Christ in God? People that take shelter down on the coast in a bad hurricane are as safe as their shelter. Are you as safe as Jesus? Of course you are. But you don't believe it, and that's the problem. You find yourself in Pilot's judgment hall or out there with them taking you prisoner or something like that, and you just throw it all aside. Suddenly you forget who and what you are.

Think of this. In the very shadow of the cross, Jesus said, "My peace, my joy." And Paul here says, "Rejoice . . . and again I say, Rejoice." Such joy in the heart always puts a shine on your face. Do you notice Stephen as they stoned him to death? What did his face look like? It shone like an angel's. This is reality for you and me. This is not just something that we are reading about. This is something that can be a reality. The strength of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ provides this for us.

Note that phrase, "The Lord is at hand." You make up your mind He is at hand. The coming of the Lord could take place now any minute. Know your Bible, and you won't have to be in darkness if you will just study this Book. It should strike terror to the unsaved that Jesus is coming, and He is coming. I just have to believe this is the generation that He is coming. But of that hour, no one knew at that time, not even the Son. You must remember, He was speaking as a man. As God, Jesus knows exactly when He is coming. You and I don't, but we can live in the reality of it. So it should strike terror to the natural man's heart, and yet to the child of

God this news should be the sweetest and the best news that could ever fall on their ears. Jesus is coming again.

How precious to think all shadows will be forever passed. It should give courage to heart and firmness to our step that I could meet Jesus before this day is out, before the midnight. Get up in the morning expecting it tomorrow. I remember one of the last things dear Brother Copley ever said to me, "Brother Hill, do you think He might come today?" He lived in that expectancy and died in that expectancy, so he never wasted his time. The Lord is going to come for you in your lifetime be it short or long. You are going to have to meet Him. Don't you realize that and at the end of the journey...God. You will be face to face.

Now in the sixth verse, "Be careful (or anxious) for nothing." Do you realize this is one of the most exacting ideals that there are? Anxious? Have you been anxious today? Were you anxious when the car quit running? Were you anxious when you got rear ended? Were you anxious when the money wasn't there? Were you anxious when your friends deserted you? Think about it. Anxious for how much? Do you suppose it really means that? I'm sure it does. Do you understand harassing cares should never control a believer's life?

Job was hedged about. The devil couldn't do one thing without the permission of God. Why did God record that and put it in the book? Because He wants you to know that you're hedged about. You are as safe as Christ. "Your life is hid with Christ in God," and "Nothing shall in any wise shall fall on thee to hurt thee." "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." (*Colossians 3:3, Luke 10:19, Romans 8:28, II Corinthians 9:8*) Do you believe that? "He is able to make all grace abound toward you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound unto every good work." Dear hearts, listen to me. God wants you to come into the reality of this and to bring you into the reality of this, He may allow the devil to turn his big 16-inch guns on you. He wants you to find out how really safe you are. Thirteen years in that Egyptian prison -- can you imagine what that must have been to that tender man Joseph? But it didn't shake him. It only made him a more devoted Christian.

So, worry is to us as dross is to gold. It reduces it's purity. Worry is as iron to steel, making it weak. When they have great stress points in the airplanes wings, sometimes they break off. There was a little fault there. There was a weakness in the metals. So the counsel here is unconditional. It doesn't say, "If." This is unconditional.

Now that doesn't mean you won't be tempted to be anxious. I don't want to leave that thought with you, because you'd be in hot water. You are going to be tempted, but how do you settle with it? This covers every period and sphere of the believer's life -- morning, noon, night, at work, at play, wherever, whenever, however. This is that which covers your life. Anxiety reveals our unbelief and, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (*Hebrews 11:6*) Mistrust is little faith. Such live in the dungeon that we know as Doubting Castle. If I truly believe God will supply, I won't be anxious, be it for money, holiness, strength, wisdom, comforts, friends. I could go on down the line and on down the line. These are the reasons for failure. Anxious for nothing? "My God shall supply all your need." (*Philippians 4:19*) Our problem is many times we don't just want our needs supplied, we want our "wants." Now God is wise enough to keep some things from us because they might ruin us. He is careful.

Think of a little baby with her mother. Maybe I should let her mother borrow my pistol. She ought to take the safety off and let that baby play with it. She wouldn't do that, would she? You wouldn't give your little boy a straight razor to play with. Would you give a child a rattle snake to fondle? No. God loves you, and He loves you like you'll never fully understand. You

are His child; and if you want the best for your child, that is just a drop in the ocean of what He wants for you. Think of the length He went to, to see that you have Christ.

The Bible clearly teaches that anxiety is a ruinous thing. Take a fine precision watch. Would you want to take the covers off and throw it in salt water and leave it for six months? Even one drop of that water left in there could ruin it. Take a hot iron and put it to plastic, and what do you have? This is what anxiety does to you and me, even when employed in the highest relationships in service in the Lord. No matter what it is, the moment I become anxious I hinder the working of God in my life.

Instead of becoming strong, it makes me weak. The channels from God to me and my needs can be opened and become wider and deeper only as I believe God, not when I am afraid. God's resources can come to me in no other way. The more I trust Him, the more I please Him and the more I shall share with Him for eternity.

Look at the Old Testament worthies of faith in *Hebrews 11*. They believed Him in extreme circumstances. Can you imagine those that complained and murmured and refused to go into the land of Canaan when the spies came back from searching out the land? Can you imagine their children that they accused God of bringing them out into the wilderness to kill them; 40 years later those children walked across that Jordan at flood stage on dry ground.

Can you imagine them saying to one another, "Oh how easy this was when we believed God." So it is. "They quenched the violence of flame. Out of weakness they were made strong. They put to flight the armies of the aliens." (*Hebrews 11:34*)

How did they do all this? How did David slay Goliath? How did Joshua triumph over Amalek. Again and again and again God demonstrated, "Believe me, I can do anything and I want to do everything for you and in your life." So, precious hearts, anxiety closes the sluice gates for us and our need. Thus the anxious Christian chokes the very channel in which the power of God must flow to the need. It is a little wonder so little is accomplished. I am thoroughly convinced if anxiety were cast from more assemblies Jesus would do many things that He can't do because of our unbelief. Remember, "He could do not many mighty works because of their unbelief." There is no telling what would happen if great grace would come on us and we would believe the Lord. Jesus would do many things He is unable to do now. God's rivers are just as full tonight as they ever were. Our petty cares alone close them.

Now how can anxiety be gone from us? The answer is clearly stated, "... by prayer." This word in the Greek doesn't refer so much to petitions but to the mood of the petitioner, especially the frame of mind. That is, we can be in a prayerful attitude and never make one single request. All real prayer begins not with words but with moods. It is thus the soul becomes reverent and receptive. Wait. Learn to wait on the Lord until the presence of God is there. If you wait, He will come. He'll be there, and you'll know He's there. After all, prayer is receiving. It is openness to God and His purpose and His will. That is what prayer is. Do I want His will? Do I want His purpose?

Remember how Paul said, "Pray without ceasing." Now most of you couldn't do that because you have work to do. I wonder why he said that. Can any of you get on your knees and pray all the time? You have things you have to do. So what is this praying without ceasing? This is that mood, that attitude, that being in the presence of God. Notice, "with supplication." Here the intimacy of silence breaks into the intimacy of speech. I begin to ask. But why ask if He is not there? You wait for the mood. You get receptive. You get in the place where you are willing and ready to receive and then you ask.

We worry about so many things and often make mistakes by talking them over with those

we consider our friends. "I've got to tell somebody." Oh no you don't. Yes, you may have to tell somebody, but make sure you tell Him. Where can you find a Friend like Jesus? One who will not only listen to you but One who has all of the know how and the ability to answer your prayer and solve your problem. Who do you think Brother Hill takes his problems to? I learned a long time ago not to take my problem to someone else but to Him. He supplies the need. The song writer said, "Take it to the Lord in prayer."

So many say, "But wait, wait." Don't allow worry and well-dressed unbelief of this nature limit your asking. Well, what if He doesn't want that? (That is just well-dressed unbelief.) Note, "In everything, by prayer and supplication." This states the amazing range of our privileged asking. How much can I ask? Everything. Do you believe that? Bless your hearts. No matter the nature of the problem, we can address ourselves to the solution in anxiety and lonely application or we can go to Him.

How can I solve the problem that makes me anxious? So I must not go to me. I go to Him. One time Jerusalem was compassed about by the Assyrians (*II Kings 18 & 19*), and Hezekiah was holding out. The King of Assyria wrote him a note and sent it to him. One of the prophets had told how they would eat plenty in a certain time and one fellow laughed and said it wasn't possible. So the prophet said, "You'll see it but you won't eat it." Of course they trampled him to death when they got all that food.

Hezekiah took that letter and said, "Well this is God's responsibility." He took it to the temple and laid it before God and turned around and walked out. Is your battle worth fighting? If it is, God will fight it. God will enable you. Somehow, someway, He will enable you. You don't have to try to figure it out. I've figured out a lot of times how God was going to do it. He didn't do it that way. He would just do it His way.

God never runs out of patterns. Do you understand that? The God who makes billions and trillions of stars, to say nothing of pine needles and leaves and things like that, never any two of them are alike, is He going to just use one pattern for you and me?

Finally, "with thanksgiving." "Be anxious for nothing but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." So we must not omit this element of thanksgiving from God's recipe for the cure of our anxiety. Like David we must realize the Lord is my shepherd. Who is it that is shepherding me? He who swung the universes on nothing. He has undertaken a little fellow like me and my little problem. He who holds the winds in His fists.

I wonder if He can take care of my problem. Do you think He can? Why, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." (*Proverbs 21:1*) Don't you realize that thing that came your way was not an accident? Nothing got out of control. God was in control all the time. Let Him have His way. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

How can we possibly know Him and entertain anxiety. How can we know Him and yet not be filled with thanksgiving. The very air you breathe He provides. Not only that, but He provides the ability to breathe it. One day you will find it out. You may not realize it and you may go through life and refuse to recognize just who He is in your life, but one day you will find out who kept your heart beating, who kept you from the stroke, who kept you and kept you and kept you. Learn to grow up before Him like a stall fed calf. (*Malachi 4:2*) You never will until you believe Him like He wants you to believe Him.

Philippians Study 19

I don't care who you are. I don't care what your circumstances are. I don't care how weak or how inadequate or what the world may think of you or even what God's people may think of you, the truth that is in the book of *Philippians* is for you. There isn't one of you reading this that couldn't have God's best. Every one of God's children is a candidate for this. Remember in the *Corinthians* where the Apostle Paul made a statement that covers God's precious people. He said "I have espoused you to one husband" which was Christ. Then he added something: "But I fear lest, by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (*II Corinthians 11:2,3*) The way of the overcoming Christian is so simple and so little a part of your effort that you're apt to be enticed by subtlety that it's by your might or by your power that you attain to such things. Now it is by might and it is by power, but it's a might and a power that is so far superior to anything that man has ever been or ever will be that there is only one way you can have it operate in your life and that is by faith in the Son of God.

Back in chapter 1, the Apostle Paul told us there is only one way to have life. You have a physical life; but there is only one Life, and Christ is the center of that Life. You must understand that only Christ can give you Life. All of the form and ceremony, all of the good works, all that you could possibly do will not give you life. Christ must be received. You must know Him personally. "You must be born again." (*John 3:3 & 3:7*) This is the life of believers. That is chapter 1 -- Christ the Life of Life.

In chapter 2, you must realize that this is not something that was done in a corner. God didn't face an emergency when He sent his Son suddenly into the garden to rescue Adam and the race. This was something that was conceived in the eternal plan of God. You are not an accident. You are something that was known of God long before this world had its sick spell and before it was seen in the darkness. There is no way for the finite mind to grasp the reality that back yonder in a dateless past when we were sinners and ungodly (and God saw us as such) Christ was as the Lamb slain for us.

In the third chapter, we saw not only could Christ undergird us, not only was He our life, but also He could be the Prize of our lives. We could choose to believe Him. There will be a relationship between Christ and the church people like that of a worthy husband and a worthy wife. Christ will have a bride, but she is not the church. The bride is made up of those that are willing to be separated by the Word of God. When doctors take an appendix out of someone or a heart or something of that nature, they have something real sharp to do it with. "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (*Hebrews 4:12*) So the word of God separates us. To be just merely separated and say I'm a Baptist or I'm a Presbyterian is a separation of man. But if you go with God you will find that you will be separated from people that are very, very precious to you. You'll have to go with God. The Word of God will bring that separation about. The truth that you embrace will place you wherever you are going to be.

Now in verse 6 we read, "Be careful for nothing." I don't believe you'll find a more exacting exhortation anywhere. You are to be anxious for nothing, even for souls. You are to be lovingly concerned, yes. Never anxious; never anxious for money, for health, for friends, for home, no matter what. Now this is the word of God. We're talking about people that are going

to win Christ as their personal bridegroom. They will be careful for nothing. That's quite a statement.

God never just gives a command. It's like saying, "Cross the Red Sea, but you figure out how you're going to do it. Live forty years in a wilderness, but you figure out how to accomplish it." No, any exhortation that God ever gives He immediately gives us the solution. How not to be anxious is "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus." What a wonderful portion. Think about this a little bit. In nothing be anxious.

This is one of the most exacting ideals of Christian experience. Are you anxious? Let's say you go out here tomorrow and you have a horrible car wreck. Do you suddenly become very anxious? You'll be tempted. If you're not tempted, you're going to have to go on to heaven, because you shouldn't be around people like us. But what do you do? Do you allow that anxiety to burn up on you? As you seek the Lord, you will have a concern; but you will know that anxiety is not a part of it.

This can become a reality only as one sees their standing in Christ. Do you believe *Romans 8:28*? You really do? Then all things are working together for your good if you love the Lord, if you have felt this call to win Christ according to His purpose. If that has gripped your life, I don't care what comes; it will have to work together for your good.

A simple little illustration would be like this. There isn't a one of us that would like to go to a table and sit down and make a meal on salt. How sweet sugar is, but we wouldn't want to make a meal on it. Cream of tartar, egg whites, very fine confectioneries, flour, vanilla? Which one of you would like to go to a table and make a meal on any of these? Let's just suppose you went into a restaurant and on the menu was listed "Vanilla" or "Salt." Do you think you'd go back to that restaurant? But if you had a famous name for cooking the finest angel food cake in the world, people would want to eat at your table. It's when these are blended properly and cooked properly that together they produce that cake. This is the meaning of "all things."

Paul tells you about the all things of his life in *II Corinthians 11*. I'll tell you, I wouldn't want any one of them by itself, would you? How would you like to spend three days out there in a boisterous ocean by yourself afloat? How would you like to be beaten once much less again and again and again? How many jails would you like to spend your life in? How many perils? How would you like to start out across a rugged, uncivilized country, expecting a robber to jump on you any moment. It has gotten to the place that people are very reluctant to go to some of these countries like Arabia because you take your life in your hands. But the Apostle Paul went through experience after experience; and when it came time to boast, that is what he boasted of. You see, they all worked together for his good.

Now God is not going to let something come your way that won't be for your good if you're trusting Him, if you rejoice in Him and His word regardless of all circumstances. Now supposing they try to starve you. Has heaven starved you? Is the word of God just as much as it was before you ate a good meal? Supposing you sit down here and you just have everything in the world that you want; and someone else sits down here and they don't have anything they want, but one believes the word of God and one of them doesn't. Which one would you rather be? Well, you had better want to be the one who believes the Word of God because, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever." (*I John 2:17*) This is what we are seeing here.

It's only when this is a reality -- that a believer by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

commits life and it's many experiences to God -- that anxiety goes out of a life. Only when this is true, and only then, will the rare fruit result from the culture described in verse 6. This we call the sentinel of God's peace. Who is it that can guard the peace in your life? Who can keep it? Can you keep it? All the money, all the prestige, all the fame, all the popularity in the world won't do it. Watch the so-called jet set, the beautiful people.

Here Paul says, "The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That's the only way it can happen. This bulb will never light unless the electricity gets to it through those wires. So there is only one way that God's peace can get to your life and that is through Christ Jesus. So anxiety robs life of fruit just as surely as a hard freeze in the spring robs a peach tree and it's peaches.

I went out one morning three years ago, and there were little, bitsy peaches about the size of a small pea on my peach tree. They were wonderful prospects. It got down to about 24 degrees that night, and the next morning when the sun came up those little peaches just fell on the ground. Now that's what anxiety will do to your life. You don't have to go out here and kill somebody. It isn't what we do outwardly. It's what we are inwardly. What is going on in there?

However, the peace of God will be the fact of blessedness enjoyed by all who put to practice God's provision for them. If we live in the mood of prayer as verse 6 says. If our frame of mind is stayed on Him and His gracious provision for us and all He means to us instead of the circumstances that God allows to surround us that contribute to our worry, we will have His peace. Thus, taking all to Him in trustful supplication and in that communion, there is a true note of praise that must be there. You must really understand. You don't try to just say it. It bubbles out of the heart. "Why thank you, Lord. I do see this is for my good. I understand this is for my good. Thank you."

I am not the greatest in the world, but I've had a few of the mills grind me. I know whereof I speak. You see, this is when we are kept and sustained in the peace of God. Note this word peace. It pays us to understand it. It's quite a word and greatly misunderstood. Its meaning shows how wrong we usually are in our interpretation of it. Often I've heard it expressed so often in reference to the dead: hands folded, the last sleep. We'll hear someone say, "Oh, how peaceful." Or we find some secluded place maybe up in the mountains where there is a beautiful cabin by a nice lake that doesn't have a ripple on it, and you can see a clear picture in the lake just the same as you can if you look up toward the horizon. You might think this is such a peaceful place. But these and others are not fitting emblems to express the essential significance of peace.

Peace is neither the stillness of death nor the silent picture of a sheltered cabin. God speaks to Israel saying, "If you would have listened to me, then had thy peace been like that of a river." (*Isaiah 48:18*) He didn't say of a lake but a river. Why would he use such a statement? Simply because peace is life that moves with God with all the power of a river, regardless of the turns and the obstructions that may be in the way. Throw a dam across the river, and it will climb your dam and go singing on it's way. I camped in a tent where Quake Lake now is. Just about 17 months before that happened, I pitched a tent and stayed in there two nights. They had that earthquake, and that whole mountain slid down and dammed up the Madison River; and it just made another lake and went on it's way. That's the way with the peace of God. If you'll align your life up with God, nothing can stop it in its destination.

Peace is movement without friction. It's symphony. It's a great factory turning out it's product without one hindrance whatsoever. In a dungeon Paul is writing this letter. He writes

others. He writes to Timothy on the outside and said, "Don't be ashamed of me or of my chain. Timothy, I'm mindful of your tears."(*II Timothy 1:8,4*) But this man lives in the reality of heaven. He isn't in heaven, but he is seated in the heavens by faith; and all the reality of the meaning of Christ to his life is with him. You can't shut God away from a life of faith. You can throw them in a furnace. You can throw them in a lion's den. You can sever their heads. You can burn them at the stake. You can do whatever you want to do. This is the life that is triumphant over the devil and all his emissaries and any tool that he may use.

This is your life. It's your life. You can sit and mope and feel sorry for yourself. If you do you are living in circumstances not in Christ. Do you see? So peace is more than instruments that are clean and oiled and perfectly tuned and in their place. Peace is when all those instruments are playing without a discord. That is symphony. The root meaning of this word peace is join. This is when a soul is made one with God. Remember Christ prayed and He said, "Father, I would that they would be one as thou art in me." (*John 17:21*) Two people, three personalities. "I do always," he said, "those things of my Father."(*John 8:29*) There was no friction. There was no difference. There was not one trying to go this way and another go this way. Remember in the Garden, "Oh, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." (*Matthew 26:39*) Here He prays that they also be one in us. Now that is peace. That is oneness. This is communion in peace. There is no jarring there. There is no friction in the relationship, no reluctance in the conversation.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." (*John 7:17*) You don't have to be at variance with God. It's one thing for you to be at variance with me or I with you, but don't be at variance with God. God always wins. God never loses. If you want to always win, go with God and you will win. This produces a gracious and delightful freedom. Dear hearts, don't feel sorry for me. There have been several that have done me much evil recently. I was praying this afternoon, "Lord, reward them." He knows what He is doing. The Lord has never seen fit for all to forsake me. Maybe that is next who knows? I want His best, I don't care what it takes.

So peace is God in us and we in him -- living, moving, and having our being and our purpose in Him. This is the peace of God which passes understanding. Note, there are several interpretations of the phrase, and all of them will shed light on the meaning for us. Note what it says: "Passes all understanding." This is something you don't understand.

I'm going to give you a homely little illustration. Which will give you an understanding of the peach -- the brilliant laboratory report on what a peach is or to just sit down when you're real hungry and bite into a juicy peach and have to be careful where the juices go? Think about it a moment. Which will give you the best understanding? You can go into a laboratory and take it apart, or you can read all the brilliant essays about a peach. You'd need quite a bit of intellectual understanding to do that, you know. On the other hand, you might not know A from B: but if you just sat down there and ate one, you'd know more about that peach than all the laboratory reports in the world. That's what this is. Peace that passes all understanding.

Let's examine this a little. It passes all understanding, not just understanding. That is, it's a peace that transcends all power and conception. It is unthinkable. It can no more be realized by the sinner or the carnal saint than the perfume of a rare rose can be understood by a person who has no sense of smell. You wouldn't want a person who is color blind to tell you of the beauties of a garden.

You see, it takes a personal experience to know these things. Several of you have seen the Grand Canyon, but you couldn't explain it to me. "Well, it's a place a mile deep. You can spit

a mile there." But it is a lot more than that. Get down in the bottom and look up, and you will almost get a crick in your neck looking up. Do you see you wouldn't want a person that was color blind to tell you the beauty of a red rose. They can try to express it. You could use all the adjectives that you knew, but what is red to a color blind person? It is just another dark color.

So the only channel of the realization of God's peace is that you must experience it. How do I experience it? "Anxious for nothing but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let my requests be made known unto God." Isn't that simple? Then His part: "The peace of God will keep." It will guard. It will be the sentinel. It will be the bulwark. No wonder David said of the Lord, "The Lord is my buckler and my shield, a very present help in the time of trouble." (*Psalm 18:2, 46:1, 28:7*) Is He that to you? Oh, I pray God He will be. We are talking about your forever. We're talking about your eternal wealth in the glory.

So if you have never experienced God's peace, you can't even dream about it. It's beyond your knowledge. Knowledge is a good thing in its place, and yet God's peace is a higher, a deeper experience than the intellect can ever experience. Only trustful fellowship can bring to us this Peace. All knowledge and counsel by anyone can never possibly bring us to this peace. You can come to my office with some tremendous problem, and I can try to explain it to you, but the best thing I can tell you is believe God. Believe God and then leave it up to Him.

You can speak of God but not see Him. Do you understand? Job said something after he had gone through the mills and turned from the friends to Elihu (who speaks of the new creation). (Think of the book of *Job*!) Instead of seeing five persons, see one person -- Job. His three worldly friends represent propensities of the flesh, but Elihu represents the new man. The biggest part of that book goes by with Job sitting in the ashes, his three friends in the dirt, and they are trying to solve something they can't solve. Finally there is a young fellow that speaks. He hadn't been able to speak because they were older than him. They are the old creation. He was new. He said, "The breath of God made me. You've tried to tell Job something you didn't know about." When he got through talking, Job shut his mouth. Job speaks of God 49 times and himself over 700 times. Isn't that the way it is?

Who is the biggest guy in your life? You or God? How often do you talk about God? Well, here he was and he finally shut his mouth. Do you know what God did? God began to tell him who he was and what he was. Old Job said, "I used to hear about you." (I read about the peach; I got the lab report) "but now my own eye sees you. I've seen you for myself, and do you know what the result is? I abhor myself and I repent in dust and ashes. So now I'm not going to be anxious, I'm going to pray for my three friends." And God turned the captivity of Job and went ahead and gave him twice as much. That is how simple it is. You see, you're not going to work it out. God is going to work it out. He will work it out if you'll put your confidence in Him.

So, only trustful fellowship can bring this to us. All knowledge, all the intelligence report that anybody can give you won't work it out. As much as I love someone, I can't work it out for them. He can. Isn't that wonderful? He can. So God's peace is possible to every one of you. Its worth is beyond every other treasure combined that you could ever have. If you had all the riches of the earth you couldn't buy it. If you lived the most sacrificial life that anyone ever lived, you couldn't earn it. You can't gain it. If you had the world's fame, its power, its intelligence, its whatever; if you had treasures passing all mental acquisition, this would still pass your understanding. It can't be understood.

"Oh that dirty rotten low down so and so," you might say. "Do you know what she or he is?"

And they go around and talk about the peace of God. Anybody knows better than that. Everybody knows better than that except God. He has a way. His way works. He is just and He still justifies the ungodly. Do you know the awful penalty that He put on people to justify the ungodly? Read it in the Bible. You'll be amazed at some of the things.

This is the only guard that can keep the heart and mind. The thought here is that of a siege. "Shall keep." You see, you're being besieged. Did you know you are being besieged? Did you know that the devil is walking around you? He's just walking around you. We used to have an old sow hog and, I'll tell you, we couldn't keep her in the fences. She would root her way out, and you'd find a hole in the fence. She would keep getting out. We could put any kind of ring in her nose, and she would still root her way out though it would be sore and hurt.

Note, this is the only guard that can keep the heart and mind. It reminds us of Job and the hedge protecting him and you. Paul's instructions for the warrior are to stand, withstand, and stand. You see we need to realize that life is surrounded by countless enemies. You may not realize it. "Fearfully and wonderfully made," the Bible says. You get so excited about something. Why, little microscopic germs are all around you. Miracle drugs won't touch AIDS. No doubt there will be germs much worse than that turned loose. Have you ever thought of the time in the book of *Revelation* when that bottomless pit is opened and the demon forces come out of there like a horde of black locusts? (*Revelation 9:1-3*) I'm glad I won't be around.

To know God is to know He has sworn to keep us and protect us. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand but it shall not come nigh thee." (*Psalms 91:7*) You're the apple of His eye, your name is engraven in the palm of His hands. (*Isaiah 49:16, Zechariah 2:8*) God's everything is wrapped up in you. Don't you know that? He has an investment in you. It's like this universe. You know, they say this universe is expanding all the time. There is no way you can come to the limit of God. Well, when you find this out, you will get a little inkling of what you're worth to God.

So Paul spoke of these things that can be so distracting and carry us into a state of unbelief -- things without and within, tempers, fears, alarms, and such. Yet within us peace stands day and night, never sleeping. Only here is life made secure. Isn't this a most gracious picture? A little microscopic germ could take care of me, but the peace of God keeps me.

My part is prayer, just prayer. "Let your requests be made known unto God." That's all I can do. "Let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God that passes understanding will keep your hearts and your minds through Jesus Christ." When there is perfect harmony, no matter the discordant element, or strife; it is thus that little nothings, little men and women like you and me can win. Any believer may present to Satan an unbroken and invulnerable front. Oneness with God is a unity that is invincible.

Think of the people down on the coast when the hurricane came. They were just as safe as the shelter in which they took refuge. You're as safe as God. Don't you know that? Do you think He is safe? The devil threw his best at Him. The devil did everything he could do. He said, "I've got Him." He pushed that mob to crucify Him. He said, "Seal the tomb." He had the dictator of Rome under his thumb. He had the high priest and his hierarchy under his thumb. He had control of the principalities, the powers, the spiritual wickedness in high places. He marshalled every one of them against God's precious Son there at the tomb. But Jesus said, "You just tear this temple down, and after three days I'll raise it up again." In three days exactly and three nights exactly as it was dawning towards the first day of the week, what a week began.

A week that will never end for me. He got up! There was no problem. He wasn't anxious, and by God's grace neither am I.

So now where the vigilant guardianship is to be concentrated, you'll note, is in the heart and the mind. Solomon said it like this, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (*Proverbs 4:23*) So here the heart is the seat of life out of which all thoughts and purposes are born. The heart and thoughts represent both soil and the seed that makes the harvest. This is the life that will spring from the soil as the seed. The soil won't produce seed. It will just promote and bring the seed to its ultimate purpose. So both the seed and the harvest are their best when the peace of God dwells in life, if I might say it that way. Both the soil and the harvest, however, have to be guarded if the harvest is to be a bountiful harvest.

I've seen the soil become depleted. I'm an old farmer. What was once rich and full of minerals can become eroded or if it is stripped by being farmed to death, it may be unable to produce. We had a lot of virgin land when I was a kid. We'd break and cut the wood off a patch of land, and that is where we would put our tobacco. It would grow good for about two years, and then it would be spindly and wouldn't amount to much. Then they found that tobacco was about 90 per cent oxygen, so they began to use a chemical. The same land that wouldn't grow black eyed peas, when they put oxygen in the land, they could grow tobacco like they never could before even on the best land.

So I've seen the harvest defeated in many ways. You have to make sure the soil is productive. Then you must guard the life that comes out of the soil if you're to have the harvest that would be a hundred fold. So when God keeps the soil healthy and the life healthy, the harvest is a sure thing. Such is the secret of sure defense, guarded in Christ Jesus. "Keep your heart and your mind (your thought)." Who can keep me? Only Him. Who can keep my thoughts? Only Him. Oh, I have lots of thoughts, but who can keep them?

These thoughts are so familiar to Paul. The hearts and the thoughts are to be defended by an intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an alliance of the finite with the infinite made real by the trustful, lowly need of man. I must see that I need Him and then humbly trust Him. Then I will receive all mighty power, whatever is needed, against every other power and every device that Satan is able to throw at me. This is protection from the world, from the flesh, and from the devil.

Anxious for what? Anxious for nothing. I hope I've left you with a clearer understanding of the marvelous possibilities which can become realities in every one of you.

Philippians Study 20

Ur lesson now will be chapter 4, verses 8-9. Remember, you can get them in your heads, but they will slip into your hearts as you continue to meditate and read them. In this chapter Christ is seen as the power of life. Only He can really enable us to reach the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus. That simply adds up to this: You may have talents, but that is not what will bring you to this place. You may be quite intelligent, but that is not what will bring you to this place. You may have many skills and many commendable things about you. You may have those things that make you stand out in comparison to your fellow man, but those are not the things that will enable you to go with God. The sooner you find that out the sooner you will be able to go with God. "It is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord." Again and again and again we will realize that if we go on with God.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." I might say that is the only place you can always rejoice...in the Lord. Nothing ever changes there. Nothing can ever be taken from you there, no matter what the situation is. Only your own unbelief can take from you the wealth and the reason to really rejoice. You can rejoice in a new automobile or something like that, but it is simply a temporal thing. But when you come with God, you have that which is yours forever, if you take it.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful or anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." If you want to know who the keeper is, there it is.

"Finally, (not the last but finally) brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

If there ever was a portion of scripture that will reveal to us just what is in our heart, what we have here will do it. Notice, in verses 8 and 9 we have what to think about. That is, what to fill your mind with. Remember, the mind is quite a word in this book of Philippians. Then in verse 9, the emphasis is especially those things that will lead to peace. What will bring you to peacefulness?

Oh what men and women would give, and maybe even you at times, if you just had peace. Here at this time you must recognize that this old man (speaking of Paul) has suffered just about every sort of an indignity that could ever be known to the human race - -things of treachery, harsh things of life. This old man is giving advice. In Paul you find demonstrated God's ability for us all. What God did for this man, He can do for you. You will just never be called as an apostle, but you are a disciple. A disciple is a learner, and this is what he can do for you.

You must remember that Paul discarded and threw to the junk heap everything that set him apart, in a natural sense, with men. Here he is. God demonstrates what he can do in a life with this man here. Like David, he has come to that place where in the presence of his enemies a feast has been spread. He's lying down in the green pastures and by the still waters of God. Everything is a turmoil about him. Everything shouts out, "destruction!"

All the reasons in circumstances for this man to be frantic and beyond himself with fear and whatever exist, but he is rejoicing in the rich blessings of the Lord. Something, again that I remind you, is that which no one can take from you. I can't take anything from you, and you can't take anything from me that is eternal. My faith alone can claim it, and your faith alone can claim it.

How does faith come? By hearing what it is. "He has blessed you with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ." Now why don't you just reach out and get that and say, "That's mine." "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you," God said to Joshua. (*Joshua 1:3*) Now He gave everything to him provisionally but then he said, "Now you rise and walk through the land. Walk through the length of it, the breadth of it, and wherever your feet tread I have given it to you." Isn't that a wonderful thing?

Here Paul is rejoicing in the rich blessing of the Lord and life's delights are his in spite of the circumstances. He reveals in his speech the fellowship and the freedom that he has been given by God (the freedom from sin, etc.). He is in jail, but they don't have him bound. This man's soul soars away into the heavens.

Note that phrase, "Think on these things." These are the mental furnishings. Remember, earlier we said much about the mind. "Let this mind be in you." What was in the mind of Christ that can be in your mind? I think no believer can read these items with an open mind and not be challenged. Think of it. As I search for something to express it to you, you might think of a beautiful home. This home is furnished elegantly, beautifully, costly. These are the things you want in your life. You have to think of what is in other lives. These are the things you want to think about.

A lot of people in the later years of their life become disagreeable. They seem to think unpalatable things or to practice criticism of everyone with whom they don't agree. As I thought along these lines, I recalled a woman who came to my office. She was one of the most self-righteous appearing persons I had ever seen in my life. I was holding a revival in Canada at that time. She asked if she could come and talk to me. She sat down; and before she got through, everybody in Calgary must have been a dog but her. Now you can think of what she was thinking on.

Note, however, what to think about. *Proverbs 23:7* tells us, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Think of the bitter, the evil, the unclean thoughts that can fill our minds and determine our actions. Here is a man who has every reason to be bitter. Think of what people have done to this man. Yet after a lifetime sacrificing to give God's message of love to their lives with a path that's been filled with menace and turbulence, bristling with hostilities (and who the more he loved, the less he was loved by those he loved), he has under God kept himself wholesome and unbittered. Are you bitter about anybody? If you don't let God take care of that, it will bring you down to a defeat that only eternity can measure.

God may allow you to encounter some of the most awful things. Why? Bless your hearts. Going through things that are hard to take, these are really the valuable things in life. How will they leave you? It takes great pressure and unthought of fire to take the black carbon like is in your pencil and turn it into the brilliant diamond that you would like to wear on your finger. It is amazing what God can do.

Then think of the common clay that pressure and fire turns to the beautiful, almost priceless ruby. This is the way jewels come out. The way gold comes out is through the fire, the white heat of the fire. These are the things God uses. Why did God drop these along in the earth

and show us the products of nature? Paul writes in *Romans 1* that the gospel and the knowledge of God is known by the things we see.

So here we find that the vision of Paul has kept him sweet and beautiful. Verse 8: "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." In this verse what I see of this man Paul reminds me of a priceless jewel that is displayed on a background of black velvet.

How many of you have ever been to the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., and looked at the jewel room? There on display is the Hope Diamond. You couldn't buy the Hope Diamond. It will be sold no more, as long as America is a nation able to defend herself. Yet that beautiful stone is displayed on a background of black velvet. So here is a life that is more precious than all of the wealth, materially speaking, in the universe. How is it displayed? On a background that you and I don't know too much about. We can read about this background. "In prisons oft. Thrice was I beaten of rods of the Jews. Forty stripes save one." Do you see what we are talking about?

Do you remember reading how he was called Paul "the aged?" Here in prison he is bowed, broken, and marked by his often encounters with death. Now he is facing his final trial in a pagan court that is being influenced by the so-called representatives of God. This court is headed up by the high priest and the Pharisees of the Jews.

Paul's counsel reminds me of a summer day in the dead of winter. It would be like finding a banana tree on the north ice cap, flourishing and producing perfectly healthy fruit. Here he is. Everything in the circumstances cry against tenderness, gentleness, etc. So where could it come from? You hit me; I hit you. You get my eye; I get your eye. You make me go a mile; I do my best to drag you the next five. We just don't do this naturally, so where does it come from?

Do you realize there was something a person didn't dare offer the sacrifices in the Old Testament with? That was honey. Why? Honey is a natural sweetener. There are people that are just naturally sweet, and you like that kind of people. Don't misunderstand me. You don't want to go out here and start being like an old, mangy bear. That is wrong. But don't try to pawn natural sweetness off as the fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit comes from Christ. Here the Apostle Paul is receiving what he is receiving from Christ. So he said, "Whatsoever things are lovely . . . think on these things." These are the things for you to think about. Those who claim to represent God could think of nothing else but Paul's execution. Isn't it amazing what some people think of? Though he had never hurt a one of them, they sought only his defeat. This shows the zeal that was theirs was Satanic. It had to come from somewhere and it didn't come from God. So where does it come from? Where do these things that can be so vicious and bitter come from?

So many old folk, including Christians, think on such bitter and brutal things. They seem to be sitting in a cramped and tight and hurtful place rather than in the heavens with it's broad, sun-filled spaciousness where everything is altogether lovely. Do you think you are going to run into anything in heaven that will jerk a tear out of you? Or anything that will hurt in anyway? No, no, no; but according to *Ephesians* that is where we are now. "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ." This is right now. Oh how it pleases God when we believe it.

Read *Hebrews 11*. You know what it says. I remind you that this tells us, "Without faith it

is impossible to please God." Were you any the less rich when you looked on your ruined hopes in the natural than you were before you had the ruined hopes? Not if you had your confidence in God. Again I remind you, what could do this to Paul? He by faith is in the heavens. He is as good as there. Do you realize that you are as good as in heaven tonight? Think about this.

"Whom He did foreknow, (Is that you?) He also did also predestinate . . . (Is that you?) Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called (Did He?) and whom He called, them He also justified." Some people said, "Well maybe." But He did. "Justified." If you ever understand justification, you'll never again question where you are going to spend your eternity. "Whom He justified, He also glorified." Is that you? So we are as good as glorified. We are as good as in heaven right now. It's just a matter of Him changing our position, and he will do that when He is ready. When He is ready, you and I can't stop Him. Who can boast of tomorrow? Not a one of us. We only have today, and it is almost gone.

Think of Christians who believe God. They are optimists who delight in *Romans 8:28*. The marvel is that they are growing sweeter and softer as they near that unspeakable moment when they will meet Him in the air. That is where we will all meet Him. If we go by the grave, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (*I Thessalonians 4:16-17*) That's us I'm talking about. Do you know who I am talking about here? That is us. That is you.

So even now these catch the sweet perfumes of that city foursquare. John Bunyan said as they neared the Land of Canaan that the perfumes flowed out, and they began to hear the bird's song and one thing and another. I remember a dear old saint who used to be in my church in Missouri. They thought she was a little "dingy." She was just getting a little bit feeble. She would come over to my mother's home and she'd say, "I couldn't tell everybody this, but I hear such sweet music. And the Lord just talks to me." So one day He took her home.

Far too many Christians shrivel in their minds just like they shrivel in their bodies. Watch people as they get old. They begin to wrinkle and shrivel and stoop and whatever. That is something that should be, but the mind should get younger and sweeter and better and more filled with Him and pleasing to Him as life goes on.

Paul had grown up in the strictest ways of the Pharisees. His habits were so severe with his rigid exclusiveness. He had a self-righteousness for which he would kill. Now by the grace of God he has embraced the power of his resurrection; and the chains and the prison bars that once held him have been broken, and he is growing old joyfully. Isn't that wonderful? I don't know how old you will get, but I trust God you will do it joyfully. Well, you ought not wait until you get old. Rejoice now.

Note, we begin with "whatsoever things are true." What do you suppose this means? Recently we have gone through a most severe testing. My daughter spoke with one of the persons who thought themselves to be an elder. I have stood by and supported and helped this party in so many ways when everyone else had rejected them and let them go. His answer to her was, "I must stand with the truth."

Paul here isn't speaking of truth as it is used in a court of law. This truth is something that is sweet and precious, gentle, forgiving. Do you realize that truth in itself isn't always a beautiful thing, and yet to be true is always beautiful?

The Pharisees dragged a woman to Jesus. There was no question about the truth. Moses according to that truth said, "Stone her." But she was standing before the man that was true. It makes a big difference. "Whatsoever things are true." True to what? True to God. What

kind of God is your Father? Sure He gave them the law of Moses. Moses went down and broke the tablets of the law before he ever got to read it to them. He found them in idolatry. There was only one thing that would suffice for Israel, for you, for me, for anyone; and that is the sacrifice. God gave the sacrifice. Do you see that?

There was no doubt as to the truth with that woman; she had to be stoned. Yet he who was "the way, the truth, and the life, said, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." Didn't he believe the truth? Of course, he believed the truth. He knew it better than they knew it. But Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, bind up the broken, heal the wounded, give strength to the wayward, to lift up the fallen. God so loved that He gave. Did He know who He was giving it for? Of course he did. "How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."

So he is true to God. You find me one person that can throw the stone. Find me one. This will only bring you to lies, cheating, stealing, sowing discord, and self-seeking glory. Do you realize what I am saying? I hope you do. You'll never have God's best until you do. I don't hesitate to say that. When does God stop loving you? Never. I'm glad you know that. So do we correspond with God? How many times did He say you and I should forgive in one day? "Seventy times seven." Oh, how badly we need forgiveness. Can you imagine burning a bridge we have to cross? You had better find out what the truth is and what is being true.

You see, dear hearts, an unclean story may be accurate but it can never be "true." It is true only when it in substance is in the likeness of God himself. Jesus said, "I do always those things of my Father. He who has seen me has seen the Father." Oh, but He is so holy and so righteous. You need to know a little more about Him than that. "That I may know Him." He is rich in mercy, long suffering, not willing that any perish, seeking that all come to repentance. Do you know what it is that brings us to repentance? It is the goodness of God. So what should we think about? There are so many, many terrible things to think about. "Whatsoever is true," is what we should think about and what heads up the list.

Then honest or honorable is next on the list. Think of dishonorable things all about us, yet will we think of them and do we let them occupy our minds? Don't let your minds be occupied with such things. Don't do that. There is something else to put in your mind that is sweet. That is like someone that is offered a good, tender steak who would rather go out and eat some old, rotten horse meat.

Remember *Psalms 1*. It is a good Psalm. It speaks of the righteous man and says, "He delights in the law of the Lord and in it he meditates day and night." He doesn't meditate about the dishonorable, the unclean, the vile, the impure. He doesn't fill his mind with that. There is too much for you and I to think about. Let's think about Jesus. Let's think about the grace of God. Let's think about the love of God. Let's think about the mercy of God. Let these things fill your mind. You'll never be able to react to things unless these are the things you think about.

Now God's people do some pretty terrible things. You wouldn't dare call them honorable. Certainly they are not worthy of reverence. This word honorable suggests gravity, seemliness, dignity. There is a stateliness about the word that makes us think of the things of Calvary and of the empty tomb. Think of Plymouth Rock. I've stood there several times. There is a sense of stateliness about it. Think back, and there is something that kind of grips you if you know something about how this country had it's beginning. Independence Hall and places like that do the same thing. So, this is whatever makes the character resemble the Lord.

So many have been accepted and yet are they honorable? No, they are not honorable. Is

it honorable to go out here and kill someone? Well, let's smite him with our tongue. Is that honorable? Think about it. That's what they said of Jeremiah. Those devils were afraid to meet him head on, but they said, "Let's smite him with our tongue."

"Whatsoever things are just." Justice can be such a cold, harsh, heartless, Shylock kind of a thing. Do you know anything about Shakespeare's Shylock? He was a Jew and a moneylender. There are Gentiles that are moneylenders, too. Of course he wanted to get rid of this fellow, and he loaned him money; and the mortgage was that he would be allowed to take a pound of flesh from that fellow any place he wanted to if he didn't pay him back. The day came and he couldn't pay him back. He took him to court and they said, "Yes, he had signed the contract and he would have to pay."

He was going to cut a pound of flesh off next to his heart. But the judge said this, "Remember it's a pound. If you take an ounce less, or if you get an ounce more, we will take it from you." That eliminated the deal. Shakespeare saw some things that are pretty true, didn't he? You think you're going to get your pound of flesh somewhere? You had better watch out, because he that sits in the judge's seat will take it from you. Oh, God help us.

It can be only superficial exactitude, and yet to be just in the sight of God is to be right with Him. Who is just? Think of it like this. What does the Bible say? Does it say something like this? "Who is just and the justifier of him who believes on Jesus." Do you realize that death was promised for the person that would justify the wicked? But God is just and justifies him. "Now whatsoever things are just." That's whatsoever represents God. How does he act?

There are a lot of people who think they know a lot about the Bible who know very little about God. Paul said, "That I may know Him." Now God wants you to know His word, and that is the way you find out; but I'm going to tell you this. There are a lot of people who can seem to be great Bible authorities who obviously do not know God. To be just is to always act in that which satisfies God.

"Whatsoever things are pure." This is more than just. This thought is stainless and unblemished. May God enable us as Christians to bring our state to our standing. Yet such isn't possible of the fleshly nature, only "that whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (*I John 3:9*) Nothing else can be stainless. I can stain you. You can stain me. I don't care where you go. I don't care how great you think you are. Only as the new man under the power of the Holy Spirit and the word is in control of life can we be pure.

"Whatsoever things are lovely." This word means the amiable and lovable. Calvin said that it meant "morally agreeable and pleasant action of the Christian." So many are disagreeable. Their face is like a dark cloud of doom which looks at you with hate and contempt. You can see there is no love or tenderness there.

Then, "Whatsoever is of good report." Again, not that which is well reported. Something happened quite awhile ago. I knew about it for three weeks, and a certain person called me and had some good news about that bad news. "Brother Hill, did you hear?" I told them I'd known that for weeks. "Well, why didn't you tell me?" Well, "whatsoever is of good report." It wasn't of good report, so I didn't report it. How prone we are to forget that we are the bearers of good news.

Let me read *Isaiah 52:7*, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" That is what we need to be occupied with. Virtually everybody we come in contact with either needs to be saved or needs to know the

truth that you know. Don't you realize how rich you are and that God has freely bestowed on you the valuables of the eternities? If it ever grips you like it ought to, you will feel like you are indebted to every man.

So we are to report good news, not bad. Good news edifies. It enriches. It is gracious. It is winsome. It is the kind of news that the telling of will win Christ. He gave His life for good news. Do you realize for three years Judas sat in the midst of the disciples? He didn't know that it was the devil he had chosen. One night at the very last, Jesus reveals it. He had given him the money bag. At the very last, he said, "Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?" (*John 6:70*) He had kept it so completely from them that they said, "Is it I? Is it I?" He said, "He that dipped his hand with me in the sop."

While they were taking the Lord's supper, the devil entered into Judas. The Lord handed him the sop; this was his own familiar friend. "Mine own familiar friend." At that supper your best friend would be sitting next to you and you would hand him the sop. Jesus handed him the sop, and then he said, "That which thou doest, do it quickly." (Let's get this dirty business over with.)

Then lest there be something else for the wonderful thing that we call the mind, something that is not mentioned here in this list that Paul gives, some rare and beautiful and Christ-like thing, the Apostle adds: "If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." Think on these things, you Philippian saints. Don't let somebody get you tangled up in thinking on some of these ugly things. Let them think you are a dummy if they want to. They will find out one day who is wise and who isn't. So this includes whatsoever is commendable. Mark the thing that is commendable. Embrace such things. Cultivate such things in your mind. Delight yourself in these things. Think on such things. Fasten the eyes of your soul on them.

In a way, we are like the chameleon. We so often become like those we associate with. I'll tell you, you had better learn to check your hospitality to those who are out of harmony with the things of God. You can't be real friendly with someone like that and not be contaminated. Let us seek the lovely, the beautiful things. What are our appetites? What are we hungry for? What do we long for? I'm talking about the appetite of the soul. This is what you put in the soul.

Note the verse 9: "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." So here Paul passes from saying to doing. This is the result of scriptural thinking. You can't do until you think right. The pattern that you put in the loom of your mind and your soul will be the pattern that will work out in the tapestry that you are working on.

I have a piece of tapestry that a brother in Christ bought me in Turkey. It is just a little rug about 2.5 feet by 4 feet long. They sell in this country for \$7,000. It is pure silk. Either a young woman 12-14 years old with small hands or a woman with very small hands weaves it because it has 1,200 knots to a meter. Think of that. It is estimated that someone worked on that anywhere from 15-20 months. Well, you are working on a tapestry. What is the loom that is in your soul? Don't be surprised what will come out of it if you put the right thing in it. The purpose of God and the plan of God will come out of it.

So whatsoever be the errors or whatsoever be the soundness, life is weaving a pattern for you. The Holy Spirit can only use what you are willing to put in it. Paul could say he practiced verse 8. I've often spoken of the seed catalog that Sister Hill's grandfather used to pour over in the winter months. He never could get my name straight, and he would call me Julius. He'd say, "Julius, I want you to look and see what I'm going to put in my garden next spring." He

would show me those beautiful strawberries. They would advertise and say, "What you see in our catalog you can have in your garden."

So, I am assured of the truth of my message. I know what I am giving you people. I know. I am not guessing. I'm not hoping so. I'm not hoping somehow that I stumbled onto the truth. "He that would do his will shall know the doctrine." I know the commitment I made to God. I've made mistakes. You'll make mistakes. I'm sure Paul made mistakes. But as Paul said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." (*Acts 26:19*) I know the God of peace is with me now. I know that. I am not guessing.

I was driving my car through a snow storm. It was out here in the plains in an awful snow storm. I guess I should have quit driving, but I didn't. The conditions were all about me. The car slipped around, the wheels spun on the ice a little bit every once in awhile; but thank God the trouble on the outside never did get in the motor, so I made it through. What is in the motor? As long as it is all around you, it isn't going to bother you. Just don't let it get in the motor.

Philippians Study 21

Philippians 4:10-13, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

As I begin the study of this portion of scripture, I would point you to the secret of contentment. The child of God will be content unquestionably throughout the ages of eternity. There couldn't be anything lacking or anything wanting once you and I go to heaven. There the least of us will be happy in his or her own achievement. Christ will make everybody happy and content.

Heaven will not be a place of distress or discontentment. We will be satisfied. A baby knows no more than its mother's breast, and it is satisfied as long as it doesn't have a little colic or something. It isn't reaching out for anything else. Then in a few years the child will find contentment with a little doll or tricycle. It isn't reaching out for more yet. That's the way it will be in heaven. No one will be unhappy up there. You're not going to look at someone else and say, "Oh, if I would have just had that." You will be satisfied with the growth and development that is yours. We'll all have a full cup. The difference will be the size of the cup.

In this life, however, there can be a tremendous amount of the contentment that you will have over yonder. The few things that make us discontented here will no longer be a part of us there, of course. God wants us to be as the Apostle Paul. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

First of all, I would have you notice that the Apostle Paul was a perfect gentleman. You'll note the delicate courtesy in his letter here and in all of his epistles. This doesn't mean that he was less masculine or robust because he was courteous. Like the president that we had years ago, Teddy Roosevelt, his model was an iron fist with a velvet glove. This is true of the child of God. There will be those things that you cannot back away from, but always be tender and courteous.

We mentioned earlier, "whatsoever things are true," not "whatsoever things are the truth." The truth can bring about great heartache and great judgment at times. The woman taken in the very act of adultery was dragged to Christ; and the truth was evident, but he was true. That is the difference.

You will notice that Paul never appeared to be effeminate in order to be gentle. You wouldn't have called him a sissy. Like they sang of David that great warrior, "He slew his ten thousands." (*I Samuel 18:7*) But David said, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." (*II Samuel 22:36*) So this is one of the great marks of the overcoming life. It is marvelous to be gentle when you want to be brutal. It's marvelous to be kind when you would like to kick someone in the teeth. These desires manifest the two natures, and one of them will control.

Here with Paul, Christ's gentleness was like a garment of strength to him. Note how gracious his reference is to their care of him, how sweetly he recalls their ministry to his needs. Have you ever noticed how some saints are so indignant if they think a minister might have something that is of a prosperous nature? These are the same ones that don't object if their doctor, their attorney, their banker, or someone like that becomes rich.

Here the Apostle Paul lifts up their deeds and their kindness to him until God's everlasting glory shines on it. Have you ever driven down the highway and the sun would make some of the little pebbles in the highway glisten like a diamond. You just think, how could a common pebble glisten like that? Well, all it's doing is simply reflecting the same light that a diamond reflects. That's all that makes a diamond as beautiful as it is. It knows how to catch and reflect the light that may be around, the different prisms. Here is where the most common, little, insignificant deeds are done for Christ.

Do you remember how Christ said, "A cold cup of water given in the name of a prophet shall have a prophet's reward?" (*Mark 9:41*) We'll never be prophets, but do we try to refresh the prophet? Do you understand that is how you have the prophet's reward? God doesn't give all of us great public ministries, but every one of us has the same chance if we devote ourselves wholeheartedly to a good ministry as the person who has the ministry. We'll have the same reward as that ministry. God doesn't reward you for how great a thing you did. He rewards you for doing the will of God. Remember the widow with her two mites. Jesus himself said, "She cast in more than they all." (*Mark 12:42-44*) What a marvelous thing.

Here Paul lifts their deeds until God's everlasting glory shines on them. What an honor it was to be able to minister to the Apostle Paul. Think of this time when all in Asia had forsaken him. Timothy was a little bit cow-towing. You can imagine the pressure that was on. That is when you find out what people really are -- when they stand up to the test. How many stood with Christ when He was being crucified? Peter was that man that was going to be such a blessing in the time to come. In the hall when it looked like all the tides had turned against Christ, he cursed and said, "I don't know Him. I just don't know Him. You've got me wrong." It's pretty hard at such times to stand up with the thing that could be right.

Now there are many things that you and I can't do, and yet the widow woman did what she could. Isn't that a marvelous statement in the word of God. She did what she could. You may be overlooked for someone with a big bank account by some preachers, but by the grace of God, you will never be overlooked by this one. I think I know what is really valuable. What will stand the test of eternity? So the widow with her little bit of oil and meal who contributed the last of it to Elijah was rewarded with the barrel of meal that never wasted and the cruse never failed. (*I Kings 17:14*)

In *II Timothy 1:16* Paul said, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." That's where it really counts. I'm sure Onesiphorus never realized what he was doing. Yet this would be recorded in one of the greatest letters that was ever penned by a child of God.

Note that the greatest of apostles who did so much to encourage and teach others needed a little refreshing once in awhile too. This is something we should never forget. Often the best suffer the greatest impoverishment and pain in the realm of human kindness. How negligent we are to do the thing that could often be so refreshing to someone else. Carry a good cup of water around with you. There may be a lot of people that need it badly.

The Philippians never forgot Paul's blessing to their lives. He had at a great cost brought them the gospel. They never forgot it. Paul was graciously thankful to see this operate in their lives. Note how he was quick to say, "I'm content with the Lord's will in the midst of whatever it is. I've learned to be full. I've learned to be hungry. I appreciate what you have done, but I want you to know that I don't have to depend on you but on God." That is really what he is saying.

Paul is as you and I can be. It is so precious to get together and have good fellowship and

a good time together, but we can be independent of every circumstance. This is where the real strength of heaven lies. Paul was independent of everything. Remember in Pilot's hall, Jesus never once showed any fear of what was coming. Before Pilot He makes it clear to him that he could do nothing to Him if it wasn't God's will. Do you really believe that, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them that are called according to His purpose?" (*Romans 8:28*) This is where the real test is. If you do, you won't try to quarrel with Him when He lays a pathway before you that seems to go between the ravenous lions. In every surrounding, whether fair or unfavorable, God wants us to trust Him even as Paul did. Circumstances never became the master of this man even as they didn't his Savior. He believed God ordained and arranged the events of his life. He believed that *Romans 8:28* was a fact. So whether life passed through sun or shade, all was well and all was good.

You and I have the history of Israel and others that proves that their most trying times revealed God's richest blessings. What could Israel say if they hadn't gone through a Red Sea? That was the power of everything that was to follow. God demonstrated in the passage of the Red Sea what He could do. Paul tells us as he prays in Ephesians 1, "The power that God wants you to know was according to the power which He exercised when He raised Christ from the dead." Try and bring a problem to God greater than that problem. Try to bring to Israel a problem greater than He demonstrated when He brought them through the Red Sea on dry ground and then drowned Pharaoh and his host in that same sea. So don't be afraid of the shame. It could be necessary. Like we mentioned in the case of Lazarus, he was sick but Jesus tarried. The fern needed to sit in the shade a little longer. If you put ferns out in the sunshine, they die.

Note verse 11: "I have learned." Have you learned this? It's not going to be an overnight affair with you. We're just not constituted that way. We grow and mature just like in the natural a child does. So he says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am in," showing that the state can fluctuate. Now the standing never changes, the state does. It can blow hot and cold. You can be high this minute and low the next. You can be like you are on top of the mountain, and suddenly a blast of fury can hit you and you be as old snuffy Smith used to say, "lower down than a mole."

So Paul makes us aware of this. He triumphs as he rests in the Lord. Remember, long ago God reported how Job said, "He knows the way I take." (*Job 23:10*) He knows the way I take, I don't. I can't tell you what is five minutes from now, but He knows. I can't tell you what is in tomorrow, but He can. I can't tell you what is a month from now, but He knows all about it because known unto Him are all His works since the foundation of the world. So you can safely trust God. Take a teacher for instance. I suspect they outline their program ahead of time. They know what they are going to do as far as the teaching is concerned. They don't know what the students are going to do, because they aren't omniscient. But God is, and God fixes it up. So Paul makes us aware of the secret of this contentment, and it is the sure fellowship that he has with the Lord, an intimacy that has brought him rejoicing through the most trying experiences. "In whatsoever state I am." Now state doesn't mean Colorado or Kansas or Missouri. He's talking of that time when the state (or circumstance) is everything but conducive to rejoicing. How God does this is a marvel to me.

Paul has experienced the richness of the feast that God can spread in the presence of his enemies, even though it be in the wilderness. David said in *Psalms 23*, "He spreads a feast for

me in the presence of mine enemies." Paul has come to look on the storm clouds as necessary to the ultimate harvest. Isn't that the way it is?

I was raised just a little bit north of Kansas City where you find some of the richest farm land in the world. This summer they found out what it was to not have storm clouds. They are as necessary to a good harvest as the sun is necessary to a good harvest. He no longer resents the day that dawns with gloomy prospects. It is a little bit exciting to look forward. How is God going to bring this out? How is He going to do it? You can look forward to it. I wonder how He is going to bring the gold lining out of this deal. Do you do it that way? If you know that all things work together for good, you do it that way. If you really believe He loves you with an unfailing love, if you really believe that you are the apple of His eye, if you really believe that He who gave you his Son couldn't withhold anything from you, then that is the way you will look at it.

How slow of heart you and I are to believe. Did you ever think of that? We can hear it again and again and again, and we can read it and read it and read it. What about it? Jesus said to them, and He might well say of us at times, "Oh slow of heart to believe. Can't you see my Father delights to give you the kingdom." (*Luke 24:25 & 12:32*)

Now we regard the storm clouds to be against us, don't we? Yet, if God be for us can storm clouds be against us? Can circumstances be against us? Who can be against us? So how can we be peacefully contented when clouds lower and darkness steals up to our door? It is by knowing Him. The Lord says, "Israel knew my acts. Moses knew me. He knew my ways. He knew I wasn't going to let anything happen to him that was going to be detrimental to him. He knew that I'd watch over him and care for him. He knew that nothing could get to him that I didn't want to get to him."

You see, we are contented when all is sunshine and roses; and yet when the bitter chill comes, do we murmur and complain? We're talking about the power of God. This chapter is about the power of God. In the previous chapter, we talked about Christ the prize of life. If you want the prize of life, you're going to have to know the power of life. Is our life independent of seasons? Paul's life, hidden with Christ in God, was independent of all the seasonable changes. "I have learned in whatsoever state I'm in therewith to be content. I have learned both how to be abased and how to abound." You will learn it. Won't you? You have the best teacher in the universe; and you have the most tender, gentle, loving Shepherd in the universe. That Great Shepherd of the sheep is yours. "The Lord is my Shepherd." It is wonderful to think He is someone else's Shepherd, but that isn't going to do me any good. I have to believe He is my Shepherd. Claim Him, and don't be afraid to do that.

So Paul had learned to accept and look for the gracious purpose in all the leadings of the gentle Savior. For in all there was the mighty dynamic. Do you know what the dynamic is? It's there in the 13th verse, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Do you think it really means that? Don't you think this could have been a typographical mistake? I have to decide: Is this book mistaken or am I mistaken?

"I can do." Isn't that a wonderful thing? I can do. Can you? Sure you can through Christ who strengthens you. The only question is, will you let Him be your strength? He wants to be. He died to become your strength. He arose from the dead to demonstrate that strength for you. Do you see, it seems almost foolish for us not to embrace it, doesn't it?

So here we ask: who is it that makes the claim, "I can do?" Who is this fellow? Is he bragging, or do you suppose he is telling the truth? You aren't bragging when you tell the truth. Do you remember how Ahab dealt with Benhadad? He threatened Ahab, and this was one of the good

things Ahab said: "Let not him boast who putteth on his amour as him that taketh it off."(*I Kings 20:11*) Then Ahab just beat the socks off him. You learn to do that.

So it is. We have the quality of Paul's testimony conditioned by his life. He proves he can do all things. He tasted of seemingly every bitter cup that there was to taste from. Read the 11th chapter of II Corinthians, plus many other things, and try to put yourself in the position of that godly man. Now if we were born with a gold spoon in our mouth and life had been like a balmy day winding through a lotus land of ease, then our testimony of trials would be worthless. Yet what sort of life is behind Paul's statement "I can do all things." What beasts had he fought? He said, "I fought with beasts at Ephesus."

Watch him go into Philippi. He didn't have to tell them what happened there. They knew how he was beaten and thrown in the stocks. His hands and feet made fast; and at midnight he and Silas sang, and God tore that jail apart and set him free, etc. They knew there what had happened. Think of the times God enabled Paul to, as it were, run through troops and leap over walls and meet the bears and lions and Goliaths. Has his own familiar friend lifted up his heel against him? Of course he had. Has he ever known what it was to receive a Judas kiss? Of course he had. "Alexander the Coppersmith hath done me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works..." (*II Timothy 4:14*) The Lord will take care of him. "Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world." (*II Timothy 4:10*) "Timothy, fight the good fight. I'm mindful of your tears. Don't throw in the sponge. Continue on. The truth is what is going to triumph. The day will come when you will be glad that you stood with the word of God."

So Paul's is a thrilling story. I confess as I study this I have to realize there is no way I would cherish going through what he went through, though I know at the end of it was the best any human could ever have. I just haven't gone that far. We have it soft, and I like it I must confess. I'd rather go home and go to sleep in my water bed than to go to one of these motels and lie down on one of those bare rock-like table beds that they have.

Paul has encountered tremendous obstacles, and all enemies lie conquered in the dust at his feet. "I am now ready to be offered. The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. My enemies are all down." (*II Timothy 4:6*) So he has come forth more than a conqueror. Here near the end of his tempestuous journey, he jubilantly writes, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And if he can, you and I can. Do you believe that? I know it!

What has he done? It seems very little as we see him now. All in Asia have forsaken him. (*II Timothy 1:15*) His ministry looks like it has come to nought. Demas forsook him. We could go on and on, but such isn't necessarily the measure of life. You must understand that. Some of the evangelists of today are seemingly doing tremendous things. They write their magazines, etc., and they report meetings over in India where 300,000 attended and they will talk about 50-60,000 getting saved in one meeting. That is wonderful. Don't misunderstand me. But that is just a little segment of what the power of God is.

It isn't what God does with you, it is what can He do in you? When you come to the end of this life, how much will you be Christ-like? How much of a transformation will He have made possible to your life? You see, I am not going to be measured by the way men count success. I will be measured by the way God counts it. Paul at this moment in a penitentiary, forsaken said, "Timothy do thy diligence to come before winter. The old cloak I left at Troas, bring it." (*II Timothy 4:13*)

Can you imagine that old coat? What would the world give for it today if they could find it? You can imagine how in that dark, ever chilling dungeon an old discarded coat that Paul

had thrown aside would warm him. That old beaten, physically broken man could be comforted with that old coat to just wrap around him. But, "I can do all things." It gives you a little picture of what the natural circumstances were.

Here he is writing this joy book. Isn't that a marvel? Can you see it? Is it real to you? Do you reach out that God will embrace your life to this extent? Note how Paul has discarded old prejudices. They were once like a skin on him, and now these things that could have bound him and did bind him and render him valueless in the sight of God like a prison he has by the power of God laid them aside. They are no longer there, especially these things of a religious nature that can do just one thing -- produce self-righteousness. You'd be amazed how many of God's precious people work on self-righteousness. Don't you think that's an insult to God when He's given me His very own righteousness? And you think you have to improve on it?

Paul had been a Pharisee. He has been a man of culture. We read previously about his seven claims to fame. Yet under God he had realized the worthlessness and, in fact, the detriment of it all and had discarded them and threw them on the trash heap as dung that he might win Christ. This indicates that if you pursue those things you can't win Him. Can you see that? If you have some money, enjoy it. If you have a nice home, enjoy it. If you can afford some shoes, buy them, but don't let these things be the center of your life.

Paul had been a Pharisee of the Pharisee's. He said, "It's all no good." You think of the petty things that can rule you and I, filling us with hate. What a tragedy when one of God's children promotes hate in the lives of God's precious people. Paul was constrained of love. He said, "Let them beat me. Let them lock me up. Let them do what they will. The love of Christ constrains me. I am a debtor to all men. Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

Do you see what this is? This is something that has to transform you in your heart. You'd be amazed the school you have to go to get transformed. Now not only had God's power changed Paul but you must realize it had enabled him to go forth preaching and experiencing that power as it changed others. That's the wonderful thing. If I went through this life to be transformed myself, that is unspeakably wonderful. But when I watch you and see the gospel taking hold of you and watch you overcome these things that are natural to us all, they're inherent to us all and yet they are the propensities of the flesh, I know it is God who is enabling us. Isn't that wonderful?

Did you ever see two people who were so opposed to one another they would kill. Then suddenly the love of God would sweep over them, and they would love one another like long, lost brothers. Watch God bring Esau and Jacob together. There is no greater energy needed than that which will make you love your enemies and do good to them that spitefully use you.

Paul's greatest enemies were the Jews. You do know that, don't you? They had no answer for his message, so they went about to kill the messenger. But Paul said, "I am now ready to be offered." God didn't let them kill him until it was time. God didn't let them kill Christ until it was time. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." (*Galatians 4:4*) Isn't that amazing? "My time is not yet." (*John 7:6*) They tried to throw him over the brow of the hill, and he went out through their midst and disappeared like magic. (*Luke 4:29-30*) But when it came time, they found Him. They came out with staves and whatever. He wasn't going to resist them. "Peter put up your sword. I could call for 12 legions of angels." (*Matthew 26:53*) I suspect they camp around about you too. Don't you think so? I know they do. "He hath given his angels charge concerning thee," (*Matthew 4:6*) not just Jesus.

Paul went forth with the Lord. Nothing else, just trusting the Lord. That was all he needed.

He was never trying to build on another man's foundation. He never coveted a vineyard that he himself hadn't planted. It's hard to imagine the hardships this man faced again and again and again. I don't know where there was time for the sweetness that he must have had, to endure all that he endured. But, "I can do." Did you ever read that little fairy tale of "Little Toot"? One train said, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." But he couldn't. Little Toot faced that hill and he said, "I know I can, I know I can, I know I can." And he did.

Note this, "I can do all things through Christ." It is through Him who strengthens me. Think of it like this. At the end of this life there was a person, Christ, over there and me over here. He has accomplished everything. He wants me to accomplish everything that is for me. He has a path of works which he ordained before the world came into existence. He chose it that I walk in it. He is over there to strengthen me. "I can do." "Oh, but Lord look at the circumstances," we might say. That is when I have looked away from Him. "I can do all things through Christ." Paul is like that tree planted by the river of water, drawing his all from the Christ. No wonder his leaf did not wither and his fruit was sure. May it be so with you and I.

Philippians Study 22

Reading from *Philippians 4:14-19*: "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Paul has just made the statement in the twelfth and thirteenth verses that he had been instructed in all things to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Then he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We think of the mighty miracles that this man accomplished outwardly, and they were many -- the raising from the dead, the mighty healings, the mighty deliverances. But the greatest deliverance that any person can know is the deliverance that was Paul's from the old life to the new life.

You come to realize as you go with God what a marvelous character this man was. How much like Christ he was. Of course, this is something that is possible for us all. We mustn't look on Paul as having attained to his spiritual stature beyond anything that you and I could attain, because his need was every bit as great yet no greater than yours and mine. The power of God which backed him is everything that will back you.

You have the truth. The truth will accomplish in your life what it did in Paul. Now, you will never be the Apostle Paul. We are not talking about that. We are talking about your development and maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is amazing to see so-called mature and elder saints give way to some of the things that they do and continue on, especially that which is of a self-righteous nature.

Notice in the fourteenth verse Paul says, "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction." Paul always exalts the conception of fellowship which was his. There was no spiritual privilege to which he so frequently returned as that of fellowship. Again and again and again he refers to the fellowship that we have with one another and with God. As such, the Apostle Paul regards himself as the center of a vast correspondence that radiated out from him in almost every direction. It is like a telephone exchange. We have the big centers where all the lines go in and go out. In fact, it has come to the place now that you can sit at your phone and directly call almost any place in the world. This is the way the Apostle Paul regarded himself.

Notice how he deals through Christ and the Holy Spirit. He is first of all in constant communion with God. The Apostle Paul prays and invites and encourages us to pray without ceasing. Thus aspiration and inspiration pass back and forth between God and himself. You might wonder where the Apostle Paul got the energy. You wonder where he got his directions. You wonder about the life that was his. He was in constant contact with God, and God sent His purpose and His message and His strength and His own life into the Apostle Paul. Then beyond that, there is that fellowship with humanity as he enters their lives in thought and feeling. The Apostle Paul's message goes out to you and me. What he had to say is what has made the impact on my life that has brought it to where it is. It will do the same for you.

Let me point out just one instance. Paul especially communed with the darker side of things,

both in man and in the Lord. Remember the statement that he makes back in the earlier part of the book, "That I might know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings." You see he wanted to communicate with God, and he is telling the saints of his own personal feelings along this line. This makes us know that Paul wasn't content to simply enjoy the easy way.

You take the majority of God's precious people in America. They know next to nothing about the meaning of the cross. They take the way of compromise. Almost without exception, the popular preachers today are those that get into the pulpits and refuse to discuss doctrine. This is a very weak "man" doctrine. You see, if you don't give people sound doctrine, then you are teaching them unsound doctrine; and it is only the sound doctrine that will establish your life. It will make you enemies. You may be able to slide along and slip along and prosper and maybe have a little help or something of that nature. But think of what you lose. This Bible and especially the revelation of the Apostle Paul brings to you and me our everlasting wealth. Why, "better is a doorkeeper," in heaven than the finest there is in this life.

So the Apostle Paul wasn't content to enjoy the easy way. In *Philippians 1:29* he says, "It was given us not only to believe on Christ but also to suffer with Him." In other words, he makes it as though to suffer with Christ is even a greater blessing than just simply believing on Him. Of course, that is true in a sense. You might have a little baby. That baby is yours; It has your life. It has your protection and everything that you can provide for it. Maybe it was a privilege to be born into that home; but the greater privilege, if the home is everything it ought to be, is to grow up in that home and mature in that home. That's what this is like.

So Paul saw the future. He realized, and he did everything he could to teach you and I, that to suffer with Him meant to reign with Him. So he embraced the pang and the chill and the loneliness as he went without the camp. You must remember that along about this time everybody had forsaken him. Very few had anything to do with him. That's that great man Paul, and if you'd bring him to Denver today, it would be the same way. Do you realize that Paul could not hardly get into a pulpit in the city of Denver today? They just don't want what he teaches.

In *Acts 21:20* you will find how James was up in Jerusalem as the Apostle Paul went there the last time and was taken prisoner and ultimately went to Rome. He tried to get Paul to compromise and he said, "Now, you see how many Jews believe and all are zealous of the law." This is the man that sanctioned the ministry of Paul back in *Acts 14* and said what the purpose and plan of God was and went along with Paul. But the Apostle Paul continues on, longing to share the burdens of others and their sorrows. He weeps with those that weep. Read *II Corinthians 11*. There he will tell you who was weak and he wasn't weak, who was offended and he didn't burn. The Apostle Paul took part of the sufferings of others.

Then in *Philippians 2:27* he speaks of how God spared the life of Epaphroditus "lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." Paul was touched like Christ with the feeling of people's infirmities. He wasn't out to step on someone's neck. He was out to do his best to encourage, to strengthen, to lift, to enable. Do you realize the children of God that are out there today in defeat because no one would open their arms to them and encourage them in the time of their battle? So it's normal for Paul to commend them for their care of him. How precious that they would care for him. Too often saints can be found in the holiday crowd and yet join the mob that cries "crucify him" if it touches their ease. This was not true of the Apostle Paul.

Now he obviously was in necessity. He tells us so, and these Philippian saints had lovingly shared his burden. He found their sympathetic fellowship as he walked in the gloom. It's one thing to have people tell you how they appreciate you when the sun is shining, but what is true

fellowship if it isn't found in the down times also? You must understand that. If you go with God, if Christ rules in your life, you will have that kind of attitude.

Notice in verse 17: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." This shows Paul's unselfish spirit. He enjoys their gift but he is more mindful of their benefit because of the gift than he is of his benefit. He knows it is impossible to recompense God and not be recompensed again. He had said, "Who hath recompensed Him and he shall not be recompensed again?" (*Romans 11:35*)

Paul was like an Iowa farmer that I heard about. They gather in their towns, as farmers will, and talk. They asked this farmer, "How is it? We farm the same kind of land. We plant the same kind of seed. We do our best to tend the land. We get the same rains, the same sun, etc. How is it that you always have a better harvest than we do?" "Well," he said, "back yonder when I got saved I started scooping corn into God's bin and he started scooping it into my bin, and his shovel was the biggest."

So Paul knows believers cannot engage in any true ministry without the enriching and transfiguring benefits entering into their own lives. You can't conscientiously honor God and be stingy. That's right. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (*Philippians 2:5-6*) He went down, down, down until he got beneath the heavy load of the human race and lifted it out of the miry clay and set it on a solid rock. This is the mind of Christ; and when you run into a stingy saint, you have run into a saint that is not Christ-like nor like Paul. We learn, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (*Proverbs 11:24*) Many, many people never get excited if their doctor or their lawyer or someone like that lives in a nice home and drives a fine car, but usually the man who may most deserve the best is the one they would like to knock down to nothing. I know what I am talking about. I never let that bother me, but I do know that is how it goes.

So while Paul receives their gift, he knows the giver has received a wealth of glory beyond comprehension. They took from their earthly bank, but their heavenly account grew. So Paul is more elated by their gain than he is about their gift. He as a true pastor wants to see their progress. As they shared their earthly treasure, they increased in stature and in likeness of the Lord as well as heaven's wealth.

I remember years ago when there was a certain brother in the meeting that we pioneered at Weston, Kansas. His wife finally got him to tithe. The next day he lost his job. That was in depression times. As far as I know he never tithed again. Now you don't tithe to get. That's what these preachers today advocate. They say, "Now you just give something. I gave so much and I had a dollar in my pocket and when I looked later it was a hundred dollar bill. God changed it." Now God isn't in the counterfeiting business. You can make up your mind to that. Dear hearts, God will meet all your need. Your need might be to go hungry. God will never forsake you. He will never desert you. You don't honor God to get something from Him. You honor Him to get something for yourself in a spiritual way, the love of God that goes out to others. There is no finer attainment in this as the personal joy in seeing others blessed, seeing their growth in the Lord. You that have had children know how good you feel to see your child healthy and intelligent and growing and maturing properly. Now if that be true in the natural, how much more is it true in the spiritual?

So the Apostle Paul saw the health of these Philippians, and it gladdened his heart. However, you will have to find if you look around that such attainment is seldom found in the springtime of a Christian life. We seldom find Christians mature in their giving when they are

first saved. I never had a trial myself with being generous and liberal, so I won't say that I fully understand how other people are along that line. I do know that usually Christians in the beginning of their lives are not generous. You don't give to get, but you will get in the light of eternity, if you know what I'm saying. That is what counts.

Most of God's children never reach the rich time of mature harvest in their lives. They go through years and never make progress with God. Such comes only as a natural issue of a deep communion with the Lord. If you deeply get involved with the Lord, you will be like the Lord. You will come to be generous. We can test our communion with the Lord by our sensitiveness to our brother as well. How can we say we love God whom we've never seen, John the Apostle said, when we don't love our brother that we have seen? How can you possibly say you love God and not love his children? I don't care what the financial status or educational achievement or the color of a person or whatever, if they're born again, they have the same life that you have and as such are your brother. Are you going to segregate and separate from them when you get up in heaven? The only separation that will be up there is how much light did you walk in.

The gift, you must see, meant more to Paul than this. He feels not only the element of gratitude and enrichment of his brethren, but he also sees the relationship of their gift to God. Notice, we're talking about his being something of a central telephone exchange, so to speak. There was communion and activity between him and God and between him and the people. This ministry of man reaches God. There is a three-fold relationship in the mind of Paul: first, the wealth to himself (it meant an awful lot to him; he tells them how he appreciates it), then there was the wealth to themselves (yes, it was a tremendous wealth to them) and, most of all, there was the wealth to God.

You remember in his prayer in *Ephesians 1* that three-fold prayer that we so often refer to. The second reach of that prayer was that you might know what "His inheritance" is in the saints. Do you realize that God has a tremendous inheritance? You sit there and are His child. As such there is no way I could tell you how He loves you and your value to Him. But as you mature, as you take in the word, as you become Christ-like, as you are transformed from glory to glory, oh what it means to Him. No one could possibly say.

You can't enrich Him with gold or silver or cattle or titles or anything of this nature. All of that is just so much gravel in the teeth to Him. But you enrich Him when you become like Him. God could create billions of worlds like this one of solid gold, solid diamonds, solid pearls, solid rubies, whatever. He could create billions of oceans like the great Pacific Ocean of the finest of oil. He can do anything. But there is one thing that He can't create, "and that is Christ in you." (*Colossians 1:27*) You can only grow. You can only take it in, and it must be by choice. He won't force you. He said, "Behold the lily how it grows. Watch how it grows. It doesn't spin. It doesn't toil yet Solomon in all his glory couldn't array himself as one of these." (*Matthew 6:28-29*) He saying that there is a seed in you that, if you'll simply yield and let it mature, it will produce what one day you will wish you had.

So the wealth to himself and the wealth to them, yet most of all, the wealth to God was what Paul was concerned with. Thus Paul was sensitive in all directions. How precious that human efforts can have an impact on the divine. Isn't it amazing that I can do something to impress God, something that will have an impact on Him, something that will make Him happy, something that will satisfy Him. The things they did for Paul in love went on to God like the "sweet odor of a sweet incense." Paul says, "well pleasing to God." Isn't that amazing? Well pleasing to God, not just pleasing; but, well pleasing.

We need to remember in every act such as this there is a three- fold influence on self, on our brethren, and on God. You never know what you do. Give a cold cup of water. Do something. Try to lift the fallen. Try to support the broken reed. Try to fan to flame of the smoking flax. He won't break the bruised reed, and He will not quench the smoking flax; why should we? So, when we are sensitive to all three, I'd have to say that life is pretty well complete. When you are everything that you ought to be, personally, when you are everything you ought to be to your brother, and when you are everything that you ought to be before God, I'd say there is not much left for you in this world. You ought to go home.

While, the negligence of either implies that we break the holy Trinity. You can neglect God. You won't be the same to your brother or to yourself. You can neglect your brother, and you won't be the same to yourself. You just can't do that. You must recognize that the life of Christ is a giving life. It's a sacrificial life, a life that reaches out. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (*Matthew 11:28*) He would not pass up the most needy soul. "Call unto me. I'll answer you." (*Jeremiah 33:3*) Dear hearts, are we like Him? God help us to be.

Further, may I point out that the attainment of fellowship will only come with patient cultivation. May we realize such opportunities lie all along our pathway. That song, "God's jewels are lying scattered all along life's lonely way. Gather up some precious jewels by the way." You will go through this life once. How much treasure will you gather? You won't gather what you put in the bank down here. The treasure you will gather will be in the hearts and lives of men and women all along the way.

So, dear ones, we have ample opportunity. God, like Boaz in the case of Ruth, will drop handfuls of purpose in your pathway if He knows you will glean the fields. A cold cup of water? What is a cold cup of water? It's more than just a cup. It's something that refreshes. The one you refresh may be like someone in the desert. How are you? Do you try to add to someone's pressure or would you lift it? What would you do? If you saw someone struggling beneath a heavy load, what would you do? Add to the load? Most of God's precious people remind me of these turkeys that pick one another to death.

So, precious hearts, there is always that privilege of practicing brotherly love and bearing one another's burdens and considering their spiritual gains. There are some like Paul who are sensitive to the spiritual harvest of their brethren. I'd like to see you have God's best. I'll give my best to see you have God's best whether you have it or not.

I wonder what God thinks of this assembly. How do you think He feels about us? Well, we can't make an entire assembly yield to God. We can't even make one yield. So, it becomes an individual matter. What is your input? What do you put into this assembly to make it like a well-watered garden that was seen in the *Song of Solomon*? God help your life individually to be, and God help this church to be, a place where the Lord feels wanted and at home. Regardless, we as individuals can seek the pleasure of the Lord and so shall we come to drink the rivers of His pleasure, and the joy of the Lord will be our strength. God help us.

Now verse 18. Note, "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." What a marvelous statement! You see, he said, "I have all, and abound." How precious it is that Paul has practiced this. Now, in spite of every circumstance, you can't find him coming apart in any way. He is full. "I have all, and abound. I am full." You can't add anything to something that is full. This is the condition that God would want of you and me.

Now verses 19-20: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Here is a sure rule of God. "Give and it shall be given unto you . . . pressed down, shaken together." (*Luke 6:38*) I made a bunch of kraut a few weeks ago. I went in there and tapped it down and shook it together and pressed it. God said that is what he would do for you. He said, "Give . . ." and not just money. Let's don't make it just money. Let's make it our lives. Give of your kindness to others. Give of your love to others. Give of your patience to others. Give your life to others, and it shall be given you.

So the Philippians have ministered to Paul, and the Lord was their rewarder. Paul was poor, although in *II Corinthians 6:10* he said "he made many rich." He had suffered the loss of all things in this book of *Philippians*. So having nothing he boasts of all things. He said, "I have all things." Thus his earthly poverty had a glorious plus, and so can yours. His earthly account was empty and yet heaven's was exceeding abundantly above all he could ever check out of the bank of heaven. He had title to not so much as one foot of land, yet a title to all things. He couldn't say "my money, my land, my house, etc." But he said, "My God...my God." He owned Him. Isn't that amazing? That resource could not be affected by circumstances. God's rivers ever run brimming full. So when he would requite the saints who were helpful to him, his returned kindness went through God, who he thought of as the real Central; and God did it.

I emphasize that the very poorest child of God has the wonderful privilege of remitting the love debts to heaven's bank. We can bless our benefactors through the unsearchable riches of Christ. Do you remember Elisha as he went through the country? There was a Shunamite woman who said to her husband, "I perceive that he is a man of God. Let's build a room on our home for the prophet so when he comes this way he will have a place to stay." (*II Kings 4:8-37*) So Elisha came and stayed and went to this woman who was so desperate for a child. He said, "What would you have me do?" She said, "Oh, if I just had a child." He said, "You'll have one." Later the child died, and Elisha went and brought him back to life.

You see, our hands can be filled with the unsearchable riches of Christ. I feel, with the Apostle Paul, that God has given me that authority to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. What better could you ever have? We can bless our benefactors through the unsearchable riches of Christ. We can be just like Elisha, having nothing yet having everything. Who can measure the wonder that the ears of the almighty God are ever open to the faintest cry? In fact, "While they are yet speaking I will hear," He said. (*Isaiah 65:24*) You say, "Oh, I've asked, and He won't answer." Don't get in a hurry like Saul did and jump the gun.

So Paul shares in the hidden treasures and essences of the very universe. God wants to bless you. Don't get the idea you have to put Him in a corner and twist His arm to get something out of Him. It's just the reverse. He wants to do something for you, and sometimes he has to pull the rug out from under you before you will let him do something for you. We may not be able to give him gold, myrrh, and frankincense like the wise men, and yet we do have the power to present our lives as a garden of waters and springs and spices and fruits. Often it has been the poor who offer God the greatest return. Do you realize that? Very few rich people ever bless God.

I think of the lady in England who was saved during the time of Booth's ministry. She loved to quote that statement, "Not many mighty, rich, and noble." (*I Corinthians 1:26*) She said she was so glad it said not "many" instead of not "any." You see, God didn't say there weren't any, He just said that there weren't many.

So God forbid that a child of God sit in material poverty or have little talent, and pine and mope. A widow had two mites and gave more than they all. Another widow had a dust of meal and a little bit of oil in a cruse and gave it all. Again and again we've seen that type of a thing. Every child of God can lead a positive and an active life. All are privileged to be coworkers together with God. Now we ask, how can we be sure of this? Jesus said it like this, "In as much as ye did it to the least my brethren, you did it to me." (*Matthew 25:40*)

Is anyone glad that you came their way? Who have you met in life's way? Oh, it has been my distinct privilege to lead people to the Lord everywhere I've ever been; in the airplanes, in filling stations, in barber shops, in place after place after place. In Australia I led two Roman Catholics to the Lord. I don't know how many others will be blest for it. Again and again, you learn that you have something that the world needs. So what if they turn you down. You're rewarded just as much as if they hadn't. Talk about seed! The more you try to scatter it the bigger your seed bin becomes. It increases and you go on and on.

Many times we seem to minister to the poor, and yet if we do it in Jesus name we minister to the King. So they thought to minister to Paul, but they find out that they ministered to God. How precious this is! Paul thankfully accepts and confidently knows God will reward them. The vast wealth of the infinite backs their every need. Such riches are unsearchable, unexplorable, unthinkable, unspeakable. Think of it. The eternities will come and go and come and go and come and go, and we'll still be increasing in our conception of Him. Oh, this glory bank repays the least blessing of the Lord. Can't you see that? Give your life to Him. Heaven opens to us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. And the great ocean of grace crashes its plenitude at our feet every day almost pleading with us, "Cast out into the deep and let down your nets." He is saying that to you and to me.

Then Paul breaks into the doxology, "Now unto God our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." Growing in grace, Paul became increasingly grateful; and his letters from prison of later years are the ones, you'll note, that abound with thanksgiving. Now there is nothing like gratitude to keep you and I young. If you want to stay young, stay thankful; be grateful. The microbes that seem to sour so many in their old age simply can't thrive in the sweet atmosphere of gracious thankfulness.

Philippians Study 23

"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Philippians 4:21-23)

In verse 21 we especially think of the courtesy that should be manifest between brethren. So often we're suspicious where we ought to be considerate. It's amazing how suspicious God's people can be of one another. Of course, things can take place, but how much better it would be if we had the love that thought no evil. Every conventionality should be in the circle of Christianity. In *Zechariah 14:20-21*, we find that here we are looking into the millennium and these two verses show us that the bells on the horses and the pots and pans in the kitchen will have HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD written on them. This speaks of the fact that even the apparent unnecessary thing is to be hallowed in that millennial time. How much more wonderful it would be if the common little courtesies and the things that God would have us have would be hallowed now. After all, you are sitting with the people right now that you are going to spend eternity with. How precious it is when we love one another enough to be courteous to one another.

I never cease to be amazed at how much we can get out on a limb for a relative, and yet that relationship may be a very temporal affair. But the child of God that we're going to be with forever -- we can treat them as strangers and almost as dirt. We can be among the foremost, apart from God to do them harm if the opportunity arises.

So God through Paul shows us that he doesn't favor a Christian life in which trifles are thrown together in heedless and thoughtless confusion. Your life is that which God is producing. Everything should be pervaded by Christian grace and clothed in a sacred beauty. In fact, our growth in grace may be well measured by the least things that are in our lives, not just the big things. How do we face life as concerns our brother?

This great epistle, if you will notice, culminates in the common salute; that is, the hallowing of ordinary courtesies between a brother and a brother. There are many Christians whose integrity is unimpeachable and who would be willing to die before they would become immoral, yet they can be cold and curt with their brother in the Lord. This would be the type of a person who would lie, cheat, sow discord, and would go so far as to take advantage of a brother especially if some money were involved.

This kind of believer lacks in fine courtesy and gracious, winsome behavior. They are never suspected of anything wrong, but they are distant like the Pharisee. It is hard to like them. It is hard to warm up to them. It is hard to get near them. Their discipleship may be unquestioned, and yet they are bores if you get around them -- genuine but harsh. They claim to believe in the grace of God, but in reality you will find that they represent Moses. They doubtless meet sinners just the same as others do, yet they never win them to the Lord.

I don't imagine anyone has had a more difficult time in his life with Christ as my son John, and yet it is hard to find anyone that wins souls to Christ like he does. What is it? What is the difference? Does he have a special skill? Or is it that there is something in him that reaches out to people? They feel like they can be drawn to it. He has to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, because "If I be lifted up I will draw all men to me." (*John 12:32*)

Now certainly if the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ truly fills a life and is given full sway, then we will become perfectly gracious, beautifying the most conventional relationships. Our

Lord showed such infinite pains in just the structure of a leaf. Think of this: a mite on the whisker of a gnat. Do you remember seeing that some years ago in one of the leading magazines? That mite on the whisker of the gnat was perfectly made. You could see his jaws, his teeth, his legs, his whiskers. They had magnified him so you could see everything. Now think of the infinite skill that went in that hated pest. Think of a leaf. Think of the design of a snowflake that can melt even while it is falling -- the beauty of it, the perfect design of it, that which not one out of even 10 million people even know what it looks like. Yet the God who made it took such infinite skill and pain it seems in one sense of the word. Well, dear hearts, will He leave the masterpiece of the eternities in any sense incomplete? No wonder the Apostle Paul said to these, "He who hath begun the good work in you will perform it." Isn't that precious.

Here the matter of courtesy is unfinished, and we are unfinished unless it is. He that would complete that snowflake -- you are His masterpiece. That's what Paul tells us. "We are His workmanship." (*Ephesians 2:10*) That word means masterpiece, God's masterpiece. He spoke billions of galaxies into existence with the perfection of a sun, a star, or a moon. I suppose someday we will see the world as it came from the hand of the Creator. It must have been a gorgeous place, and yet the devil and man corrupted it and continues to corrupt it. One day this universe will be complete, and you will be its masterpiece. Think of that. What a thrilling, almost unbelievable fact.

So a Christian should be as ashamed of any discourtesy as they would be of lying, gossiping, killing, robbing, drunkenness, etc. You must understand that these things are the imperfections of the old creation. Truth is to possess the whole of you and I; it is the first item that is mentioned in the amour of believers in *Ephesians 6*. Here in this world it is our salutes that Paul is concerned with. Shall we bring them into the circle of the righteous acts? Shall I bring my treatment of my brother into the circle of that which is right; that is, our familiar modes of recognition? How do we recognize one another? Our style of greeting, our manners should all become children of the light. Nothing can impress the world as the grace and love we show to one another. Remember, Jesus said, "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples." (*John 13:35*) This book tells us that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." (*John 3:16*) This is how they will know you.

Clean morals are commendable, and yet our severe morals don't necessarily attract the world to us. Rather it is the winsomeness of our approach. I am utterly amazed that some can know the Bible so well, and yet it is evident that they don't know God. Let me come again to this thought. Do you think that Jesus represented God when He said to that woman, "Neither do I condemn thee?" (*John 8:11*) Do you think He represented God? Of course, He did. Do you think He compromised the holiness of God when He said that? Do you think for one moment He brought any slight smear on the work of God? He said, "I do always those things of my Father." So His Father had to be in perfect harmony with Him in what took place there.

Now don't get the idea that I'm defending immorality or something of that nature. I am trying to show you that when God really gets into your life, harshness, etc., will disappear. Isn't it amazing how Christians won't even speak to each other? Now it has to be somebody's fault; I know that. There are people that won't speak to me, but God help me that it not be my fault.

So some know the truth, and yet they are not true to God in their actions. Brilliant scholars, yet these kind may not ever win a soul. Paul wrote, "Though I give my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profits me nothing." (*I Corinthians 13:3*) Love makes us tender and

sensitive. It helps us to discern with an exquisite touch. There is just something about it, and you and I can't duplicate it. It has to be the love of God. So it is the manner of the salute that reveals what we are. Do people know you love them? I hope they do.

Now our intercourse with one another reveals little of the gentle touch in this day (I am speaking of people out there as a whole) unless it be strikingly and startlingly beautiful like that of the Lord. The only person He was ever harsh with was the Pharisee. You look it over. The only person He was ever harsh with was the Pharisee. The sinner and the Publican gladly sought Him. They said of Jesus, "He has gone to sup with a sinner." But Jesus said in *Luke 7:44*, "Simon, I came in here and you didn't give me the common courtesy of a pan of water to wash my feet. This woman that you are criticizing from the moment I came in hath not ceased to wash my feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head." How did that woman know she could touch Him like that? How do you suppose? This was God. Do you understand that? He was very God of very God. How could she be so bold and so assuming as to go in and touch Him? Why, that Pharisee knew that Jesus couldn't be the person He claimed to be, or He would know who it was that touched Him. Dear hearts, these are days that we had better dig deep. So we can never represent the Lord to the world unless love and grace and courteous attitudes be a part of our demeanor. All of us meet many of the needy out there in the world. I know you do. I meet them on the airplanes and in the shops across the country. I meet them so many places. Almost without exception, I lead someone to the Lord. What is it? I am not pointing to myself other than to say that I do know the grace of God.

Do we remind people of a beautiful landscape in the frozen north country? It can be very perfect after the new fallen snow and the bitter cold. I remember talking to a brother who had gone up to the farthest known place in Canada to buy fur from the Eskimos. He said he went out to look at his traps one day, and it was 85 degrees below zero. He said if you just got your parka off your face for a moment it felt like a dart of fire hit you. That is how quick it would freeze you. Is that how we represent the Lord? Think about it. Or do we remind people of warm winds, babbling brooks, singing birds, blooms, and the promise of a harvest? You can do that. You are capable of that with God.

Grace saints should give others a glimpse of the glory. "They took note of them that they had been with Jesus." (*Act 4:13*) Did you ever read that? So before we go any further, let me point out that Paul's counsel here is to believers. This isn't to sinners; this is to believers. I emphasize that his counsel is so needed and pertinent for the church of our day. We so need to become expert in the gracious art of Christian recognition.

There was a black brother recently in our church that I witnessed to several months ago at the Pancake House. I knew he was a Christian the moment I saw him. Sunday morning he asked us where our church was, and Sunday night he came. Now he was black. He is a dishwasher. Surely socially he might be considered below a lot of people, but not below the Lord Jesus Christ. So we need to become expert in the gracious art of Christian recognition. We can be so cool and sometimes even cutting to one another. The world looks on and wonders. They say, "Are they Christians?" This is the way they know us as Christians. Even by our common behavior. So may we bring our salutes of one another under the level of God's will.

Now we will look at verse 22, "The saints in Caesar's household." You'll note the gentle and gracious river flows to the lowest and vilest of places, even Caesar's household. I don't inhabit bars or anything like that, and I don't believe that you go in and drink a glass of beer

with a fellow and try to testify to him. I know a man who when he got saved would go in a bar and say, "Now everybody shut up. I'm going to read the Bible to you." Everyone was afraid of him so they would listen. But I never did know of anyone that he won to the Lord. That isn't the way you do it. Now I'm not above going in a bar and witnessing to them about the Lord because the river flows in there too, but you can't go in there and partake of them and be a witness.

So how can we express this precious thing that we see here -- the river of grace and love and mercy of God flowing into that imperial, lust-filled, cruel and tyrant household? Whether they were the slaves of the nobles that he addresses or dignitaries themselves, we must realize Jesus saved some mighty and some noble, but not usually, not very many because they are so self-sufficient. Regardless who these were, they were members of the mystical body of Christ and heirs together of God's promises. Imagine the contamination of that household. Yet it is even there that the sweet, sparkling, and pure waters of Ezekiel's threshold flowed out.

This is grace we are talking about, and this miracle of grace can arrest and startle the world. Christians can be in such unexpected places. Don't think you are going to just find them in a church. He makes grass to grow on the mountains. The wonder of that statement is that the tender shoots are found on the cold and inhospitable heights. We expect to find grass in the sheltered and well-watered valley where the harsh winds are softened to a wooing caress, but to find grass on the playground of the storm fascinates and causes us to notice and regard.

Let me reverently say that God delights to lift the beggars. He picks them up from the vilest and lowest dunghill and puts them on the throne with His only begotten Son. Only God can do that. Only God can grow grass on the mountain. Only God can take a beggar from the dunghill. Only God could take that vile, low woman and make her feel like a lady as she walked out of His presence. Only God can do these things.

So Paul tells that it is not just given to us to believe on the Lord Jesus, but also to suffer for His sake. Isn't that marvelous? In other words, it seems that the greater bounty is to suffer. One of the purest and most beautiful souls I have ever known in almost 60 years in the ministry never knew who her mother was. She was reared by a drunken, bootlegging father in the slum district of a city in Missouri. Then in adult life she was challenged physically, mentally, like Job himself, with so many reasons to curse God and die. Yet I saw her recently and she continues to grow in grace and knowledge of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She can't hear it thunder. She can hardly see. She has had several major surgeries. She has been paralyzed. She can't do much for herself, and yet she sits and glorifies God. Now where did she get that vision? When I went to see her I said, "Well honey, it won't be long and we will be there and the good work will be done." Where did she get the vision of that? Who could ever give you a vision to encounter all of that and stay sweeter than honey? Of course, it is the resource to lift her life to the loveliness of its present state. Where did that come from? I'm glad I know where it came from. Her rootage can be found in the soils of love and grace, and she is like the tree planted by the river that *Psalms* 1 tells about. Its leaf doesn't wither.

So with David, you and I can find a feast spread for us in the desert and in the very presence of our enemies. There is no way our enemies can keep us from feasting. The devil couldn't keep Job from it. The devil couldn't keep this woman from it. The devil can't keep you from it. If you don't feed, it will be your fault. The feast will be there. Circumstances may not seem like it, but you don't deal with circumstances you deal with the word of God. Faith feeds on the word of God.

I would have you know that God's word abounds in promises that will enable us to be more

than a conqueror. That is you. Just as Israel in the wilderness ate and drank from God's abundance, so His provision unseals fountains and stores of blessing in the hard and sterile waste of Caesar's house. These were thriving saints. They were saints that could take in this book of *Philippians* in Caesar's household. Do you think you are in a place like that?

Let's go a little step further. This letter is coming from a man in Caesar's dungeon. Think about it now. So may you and I never cease to believe in spite of the circumstances. The stormy waste may resound the happy song of the Lord; because if you just get your eyes off the waste, you will really have them on something that is worthwhile. The thing that is seen is temporal. The thing that we don't see is eternal.

Let's look at verse 23, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." How many of you? With you all it says. I like that. That's that good old southern statement. So how fitting it is that the letter which began with the prayer of grace ends the same way. We could say from cover to cover it is just a little volume of graciousness, bound within the covers of grace. Thus it is a model letter of all Christian correspondence. A fellowship that has its springs in grace and which returns to its bounty will always be pervaded by vitalizing and fertilizing power. Like water that rises no higher than its level, human fellowships must find their springs in grace if they would maintain a high level.

In other words, if your fellowship begins in a fountain of self, don't be alarmed when it wrecks. I've seen people so close to one another and such friends, and all at once -- bang! If it begins in self, we are simply never going to attain to the fellowship that Paul is speaking of here. Paul says, "We are raised together and seated together in the heavens in Christ." (*Ephesians 2:6*) That is where it is, away in the spiritual heights in an altitude of grace. We ought to be gracious.

You can't take your place in the heavens and not be gracious. Don't let anyone pretend to tell you that they have taken their place in the heavens and they are not gracious. According to God, they are there. So our affairs will be of mountain height if the grace of God rules our lives.

Now, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," he says. But I ask the question, "What is grace?" Think about it. What is grace? It is so necessary to do or to be anything in the sight of God. Paul said, "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was present with me." And, "I am what I am by the grace of God." (*I Corinthians 15:10*) He said to the Corinthians, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work." (*II Corinthians 9:8*)

Oh how sufficient you and I can be if we want to be. What is grace? It is so necessary for us to do or be anything in the sight of God. You will never be anything in the sight of God except by His grace. You will never be able to do anything in the sight of God but by His grace. So we'd better know what it is.

We can no more define grace than we could define life or love or God Himself. Can you define God? Can you define love? Not really. You can't define grace either. You can come close to it; certain aspects of it are found in the Bible. In our present stage of life, it is all you and I need. There is enough in this Bible to tell us what we need to know about the grace of God. The Bible tells us that, "In the ages to come, He will shew forth the exceeding riches of His grace . . ." (*Ephesians 2:7*) We are just seeing the beginning of it now as it were.

So whatever it is, its very essence is that we have not up to this time nor can we ever in the future merit it, nor can we ever deserve it. We can't secure it by virtue. We can't earn it by

toil. No one can put out their hand and demand it as a right. I am right now what I am by the grace of God, and I'm not going to go home tonight and say, "Give me a good night's rest, You owe it to me." He doesn't owe me a thing, and He doesn't owe you a thing. When you recognize that, you are not going to be better than your brother. You may advance more. You may know the truth more than your brother. You may lay hold of God and grow in grace more than your brother, but you remember it was grace that brought about your growth. It was the grace of God that brought you to the place that you are.

Apart from grace we are nothing and can do nothing. The beneficiary of it cannot now or ever take credit for its abundance. The receiver of it must be like the dirty stinking beggars I have seen on the streets of Mexico and Egypt. You and I have to take from the hand of God just like a beggar would take from you. Does that give you a little idea of what grace is? We must take it as a favor. Grace is a spontaneous thing. It is a gift from God to those who have nothing to offer Him in return.

Then grace is much more than a favorable attitude of God. It is more than a friendly countenance or a smile of regard. It is a real and a positive energy. It's as real and necessary to our spiritual life as electricity is in the realm of matter. We must never think of it as a passive sentiment, a sort of good-natured indolence, or a pose in which lightning hides its deadly strikes. We must think of it like the beggar that comes up to you in a foreign country might think of you, if he's an honest beggar and you give him something. The only difference is that God brought the pressure on you and I to reach out our hand.

So grace is a positive power, an unthinkable active beneficence that works in the lives of all who dare believe. Again, I point you to Paul's statements, "I labored more abundantly. I am what I am by the grace of God. God is able to make all grace abound towards you." (*I Corinthians 15:10, II Corinthians 9:8*) So if we'll take Paul's references to the grace of God, we have a clue to its interpretation. In *II Thessalonians 2:16* we read, "We have good hope through grace." I like that.

This is far more than that the Lord has thrown open the pearly gates to sinners so that they can enter in and be safe for time and eternity. It is so much more than that. This is a shining light that lights the pathway all the way to the fact that I can share the throne of that city. This is the good hope, and thank God that you and I shall go there when this life is over. Yet if we've been called just to the pearly gates, what are some of the unthinkable statements that the Apostle Paul says of the unspeakable heights? "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (*Ephesians 3:8*) Heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer together with Him that we might also reign together with Him. (*Romans 8:17*) "Sons, and if sons, then heirs." What does he mean? So, we have good hope through grace.

I'm not just hoping to get through the pearly gates. My precious mother who is up there tonight said to me, "Son, you can have that high place if you want it, but I'll be satisfied to get there by the skin of my teeth." I said, "No mom, that isn't right." How can you best appreciate and thank God? Again I quote the Psalmist to you, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will take of the cup of salvation and drink more." (*Psalms 116:12*) If you want to please God, take that cup and drink and drink and drink.

What about this hope? How is it kept alive? Is it through your faithfulness? Now God help us to be faithful, but who is it that keeps you going? Do you understand what I am saying? Is it His grace or your holding out faithful to the end? You had better get this thing straight, because you don't have long to get it straight at the best. Remember, you are not going to

accomplish anything in your life until it is accomplished by the grace of God. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (*Acts 20:32*) That is where you will get it, and that is where it is.

Thank God that you and I will go to heaven when this life is over, but thank God more that we have been called to the unspeakable heights. God would have this hope burn in our hearts. So by grace, He keeps it going. Oh, the storms that would blow that light out if He didn't protect you. You learn that He is your shield. Is He your shield? Then why do you complain about the thing that He lets get to you? Can't He hold that out unless it's good for you to let it get in? Job never would have had twice as much if God would have kept the hedge up. Do you understand this?

Where would any of us be without the grace of God? So grace is to our life what electricity is to that light bulb. Without the electricity there is no light. Without the grace of God, there is no reality. There is a wealth of revelation if we care to search it out in Paul's letters. One more reference to grace is found in *Colossians 3:16*, "Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Now to fully understand the meaning of God's grace to our life and the unsearchable riches it bestows, we simply must sing His praises. You'll never be a worshiper and a singer of His praise until you begin to realize who you were and what He has made you. I know the Bible doesn't say the angels sing. Some people make a big play of that. Well, if I were a betting man, I'd bet you a million to one that they do sing, because as cursed as the frog is, he sings. The birds sing, and I imagine if the serpent ever gets his vocal chords back, he will sing a little too. He's going to go on his belly the rest of his life through all the eternities and dust will be his meat. Did you ever think of that? Go up in the mountains and see where the snake has gone in the dust. He picks up that dust everywhere he goes.

Am I to think of grace as just my conception of God's goodness, or is it the real energy of God's goodness working in me? I'm sure that is the way it is. There is a season when song comes to us naturally, when the circumstances are at a high level and the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places. However, this song comes and goes. Some mornings you get up and you can sing. Then here comes a bolt of circumstances, and a truck comes up to your door and dumps its garbage. There you are; you see, your heart doesn't want to sing then. This grace song comes even in the dungeon, and Paul shows it. Oh the joy, unspeakable and full of glory! Though all in Asia have forsaken him and even Timothy is ashamed to be identified with him, yet there can be singing with grace in his and our heart to the Lord.

Has He forsaken you? Has He deserted you? Circumstances say He has. No food on the table says He has. No money to pay the rent says He has. I know because I have been there. But He has promised He will never leave us or forsake us. (*Hebrews 13:5, Deuteronomy 31:6,8, Joshua 1:5*)