

# CHAPTER 4

## INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 4

This chapter contains exhortations to various duties becoming Christians, the apostle's thankfulness to the Philippians for their present to him, and the conclusion of the epistle with the salutations of the brethren: in (<5001>Philippians 4:1); the apostle exhorts the saints with great affection to perseverance in the doctrine and faith of Christ; and in (<5002>Philippians 4:2); mentions some persons by name, and to whom he recommends unity and agreement; and in (<5003>Philippians 4:3); entreats others to assist them therein; and in (<5004>Philippians 4:4); exhorts them all in general to joy in the Lord, and to moderation, enforced by this argument, the Lord being at hand, (<5005>Philippians 4:5); and to calmness and quietness of mind, and to prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, (<5006>Philippians 4:6); to which they are encouraged, by the promise of having the peace of God, keeping their minds through Christ, (<5007>Philippians 4:7); and to conclude, he exhorts them to everything that is virtuous had commendable; to which he stimulates them, from the consideration of the nature of the things themselves, from his own example, and from the presence of God with them, they might expect to enjoy, (<5008>Philippians 4:8,9); and then he proceeds to take notice of the kindness of the Philippians to him, declares his joy on account of it, and expresses it by their care of him again; which he corrects, by observing that it was not for want of care in them before, but of opportunity of showing it, (<5009>Philippians 4:10); nor did he take notice of this present of theirs, with so much exultation on account of his own penury, for he had learnt the great lesson of contentment in every state, (<5010>Philippians 4:11); which he enlarges upon and explains; namely, that he had been taught, and knew how to behave in fulness and want, in prosperity and adversity; though this was not owing to himself, but to the power and strength of Christ, (<5011>Philippians 4:12,13); however, he commends the Philippians for their communicating to him in his affliction, both at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, and at several times since, (<5012>Philippians 4:14-16), the reason of which commendation was not because he was covetous of gifts and presents from them, but to encourage them to bring forth fruit, which would turn to their own advantage,

(<sup><5047></sup>Philippians 4:17); as for himself he had enough, and therefore said not this on his own account, but because such communication was a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and a return would be made by him; who, as he was able to supply all their need, would; of which he assures them, and for which he prays, (<sup><5047></sup>Philippians 4:17-19), and to whom he gives the glory of what they had given, and he had received, (<sup><5040></sup>Philippians 4:20); and then the epistle is concluded with the salutation of the apostle, and the saints, and brethren with him, and with his usual benediction, (<sup><5021></sup>Philippians 4:21,22).

**Ver. 1.** *Therefore, my brethren*, etc.] Not in a natural but spiritual relation; having the same Father, being of the same family, and household of faith: seeing that on the one hand there were false teachers, who stand described by various characters in the preceding chapter, by whom they were in danger of being carried away from the simplicity of the Gospel; and on the other hand, such were the conduct and conversation of the apostle, and other true believers, and such were their expectations of Christ from heaven, and of happiness from him as there expressed; therefore he exhorts to steadfastness in him, and that under the most tender, affectionate, and endearing appellations; given in the uprightness of his soul, without any manner of flattery, to signify his strong affection for them, and to engage them to attend the more to what he was about to exhort them to; and which arose from pure love to them, an hearty concern for their good, and the honour of Christ Jesus:

*dearly beloved*: as belonging to Christ, interested in him, members of him, redeemed by him, and bearing his image; and as his brethren, and so not loved with a carnal, but spiritual love:

*and longed for*; to see them, converse with them, and impart some spiritual gift to them; being the excellent in the earth, as other saints, towards whom was his desire, and with whom was all his delight. These epithets are joined with the word “brethren”, in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and read thus, “my dearly beloved, and longed for brethren”; and in the Ethiopic version, “our beloved brethren”: to which are added,

*my joy and crown*; they were matter of joy to him, as he had reason to hope well of them; yea, to be confident that the good work was begun, and would be carried on in them; and that they had hitherto continued in the doctrine of the Gospel, and walked worthy of it; and they were his “crown”, as they were seals of his ministry; and whom he valued more, and

reckoned a greater honour and ornament to him, than the richest diadem, set with the most costly jewels and precious stones, and which he hoped and believed would be his crown of rejoicing another day; when he, with them, should stand at the hand of Christ triumphing, as victors crowned, ever sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell:

*so stand fast in the Lord*; or “by the Lord”; by his power and strength, which is only able to make to stand fast; saints are liable to failing, and would fall, were they not upheld with his right hand, and kept by his power; they only stand fast, as they stand supported by his strength, trusting in his might, and leaning on his arm. Christ is the only foundation where they can stand safe and sure; and such as are rooted and grounded, and built up in him, are established and stand; though they are still in need of being exhorted to hold the head, abide by him, and cleave unto him; to stand fast in his grace, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and love upon him; in the liberty of Christ, in opposition to the bondage of the law, false teachers were for bringing them into; and in the doctrine of faith, and not depart from it in any degree, nor give way in the least to the opposers of it, but continue steadfast in it without wavering, and which is chiefly intended here: so the Arabic version renders it, “so stand in the faith of the Lord”; both in the grace faith, and in the doctrine of it, and in the profession of both: (see <sup>4613</sup>1 Corinthians 16:13). The apostle bids them so stand fast; that is, either as they had hitherto done, or as they had him and others for an example; whose views, conversation, and behaviour, are described in the foregoing chapter:

*[my] dearly beloved*; this, which otherwise would be a repetition of what is before said, is by some connected with the former clause, and read thus, “so stand fast my dearly beloved in the Lord”; and contains a reason, both why they were dearly beloved by the apostle, because beloved in and by the Lord; and why it became them to stand fast in him, and abide by him, his truths, ordinances, cause, and interest.

**Ver. 2.** *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche*, etc.] Two women, who were members of this church at Philippi, and who seem to have been at variance; either with each other, on account of some temporal and civil things, as often is the case of the dear children of God, who fall out by the way; and it becomes a very hard and difficult task to reconcile them, though as here entreated in the most tender and importunate manner to agree: or else with the church, having entertained some sentiments in

religion different from it; being drawn aside by false teachers from the simplicity of the Gospel, and their steadfastness in the faith; and this may rather be thought to be the meaning, since the apostle would scarcely take notice of a private difference in so public a manner, and since this exhortation follows so closely the former:

*that they be of the same mind in the Lord*; either that they agree together, and be reconciled to each other, considering the relation they stood in to one another, and to the Lord; or that they become of the same mind, and embrace the same truths, and profess and maintain the same principles the church did; and so the Arabic version renders it, “that ye entertain one and the same opinion concerning the faith of the Lord”.

**Ver. 3.** *And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow*, etc.] Not his wife, as some think <sup>f28</sup>, for he had none, as appears from (~~417E~~ 1 Corinthians 7:7,8), at the writing of which epistle he was at Ephesus, where he stayed some little time, and then went to Jerusalem; where he was quickly apprehended, and sent a prisoner to Rome, and where he now was as such; and therefore it is not likely that he should marry a wife within this compass of time, and much less that he should have one at Philippi; besides, the word used is of the masculine gender, and designs a man and not a woman: some think it is the proper name of a man, who was called “Syzygus”, and so the Arabic interpreter seems to understand it; and by the apostle, true “Syzygus”, signifying that as was his name, so was he, really and in truth, a companion and fellow labourer, that drew in the same yoke with him; the Syriac version renders it, “the son of my yoke”, and the Ethiopic version, “my brother and my companion”: some think this person was the husband or brother of one of the above women; and therefore is entreated to use his interest, and compose the difference between them, or endeavour to reconcile them to the church; and others that it was the jailer, that was converted by the apostle: but it seems most likely to have been one that was under the same yoke of the Gospel, and who had been employed with him in preaching of it, a fellow labourer; such an one as Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy, and might be one of those; or rather Epaphroditus, who was minister in this church, and by whom the apostle sent this letter, and whom he might address and importune in this manner; the word may very well be thought to answer to the Hebrew word **rbj**, often used in Jewish writings, for an associate, a colleague, and a disciple of the wise men, to which the apostle may allude; (see ~~417E~~ Philippians 2:25);

*help those women*; Euodias and Syntyche. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read “them”, referring to the above women; and the Arabic version reads, “help both”; that is, both those women; not by relieving their temporal wants, which it does not appear they were in; but either by composing their differences, or by assisting them with good counsel and advice; and giving them proper instructions in the doctrines of the Gospel, that they might be brought to think the same things the church did: and the rather such pains should be taken with them, since they were such, says the apostle,

*which laboured with me in the Gospel*; not in preaching it, for he suffered not a woman to teach in the church, (<sup>5402</sup>1 Timothy 2:12); but by professing it, and bearing reproach and persecution for it; and by supporting and encouraging, and spreading it with their worldly substance:

*with Clement also*; which some think is the same with Clemens Romanus, who was afterwards bishop of Rome, and whose epistle to the Corinthians is still extant; other writings are ascribed to him, but are spurious; however, by his name he seems to be a Roman; and from his being joined with the apostle, as one with whom these women also laboured in the Gospel, he appears to be a preacher of it at Philippi:

*and [with] other my fellow labourers*; in the work of the ministry, as Timothy, who was with him at Philippi, when he first preached the Gospel there, (<sup>4401</sup>Acts 16:1,12), and some others:

*whose names [are] in the book of life*; the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees, divine predestination to eternal life; and this being called a “book”, and the names of persons being said to be in it, denote the love of God to his elect, his care of them, his value for them, his remembrance of them, and the exact knowledge which he has of them; as well as imply, that his eternal election of them is personal and particular, is well known to him, and is sure and unchangeable; being more so than the writing of Pilate on the cross, who said, what I have written, I have written, (<sup>4502</sup>John 19:22); and is called the “book of life”, because those whose names are written in it, have a spiritual life here, and an eternal one hereafter; to both which they are afore written in this book, or pre-ordained in God's counsels, and certainly and infallibly enjoy it: now the apostle's knowledge of these persons being written in this book, did not arise from any special revelation, as being shown the book of life, and the names of the elect in it, when he was caught up into the third heaven, (<sup>4702</sup>2 Corinthians 12:2); nor

was his knowledge of this matter peculiar and limited to these persons only, but common to all that he had reason to hope and believe had received the grace of God in truth, and walked worthy of the calling wherewith they were called, (<sup>400</sup>Ephesians 4:1); such persons in a judgment of charity, which hopes and believes all things, he concluded were in this book of life; and the same judgment, faith, and hope, ought all believers to form and entertain one of another, nothing appearing contrary to it, in their faith and conversation.

**Ver. 4.** *Rejoice in the Lord alway*, etc.] This is a repetition of the exhortation in the preceding chapter; (see Gill on “<sup>401</sup>Philippians 3:1”); with this addition “alway”; for there is always cause and matter for rejoicing in Christ, even in times of affliction, distress, and persecution; since he is always the same; his grace is always sufficient; his blood has a continual virtue in it, and always speaks for peace and pardon; his righteousness is an everlasting one, and so is his salvation, and such is his love; though some join this word with what follows,

*[and] again, I say, rejoice*; this is what was continually inculcated by him, as being of great importance and use for the comfort of believers, and the honour of Christ.

**Ver. 5.** *Let your moderation be known unto all men*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin reads, “your modesty”. The Syriac and Arabic versions, “your meekness”, or “humility”; graces which accompany moderation, and are very necessary to it, but not that itself. The Ethiopic version renders it, “your authority”, which by no means agrees; for moderation lies not in exerting authority and power to the uttermost, at least with rigour, but in showing clemency and lenity; not dealing with men according to the severity of laws and strict justice, but according to equity, and with mildness and gentleness; giving up strict and proper right, receding from what is a man's due, and not rigidly insisting on it; putting up with affronts and injuries, and bearing them with patience; and interpreting things in the best sense, and putting the best constructions on words and actions they will bear; and in using inferiors and equals with all humanity, kindness, and respect: and this is what is here intended, which the apostle would have made “known”; exercised and practised publicly, that it might be seen and known of all, and God might be glorified, by whose name they were called, though their agreeable conversation among men; (see <sup>4156</sup>Matthew 5:16); and he would not only have this known unto, but exercised towards “all

men”; not only to believers, the members of the church, by ruling with gentleness, by bearing the infirmities of the weak, and by forgiving offences; but also to unbelievers, to the men of the world, by not avenging themselves, but giving way to wrath; by patient suffering for well doing, without making any returns of ill, either by words or deeds: this is the moderation here meant, and not moderation in eating and drinking, and in apparel, and in the love and use of, and care for the things of this world; though such moderation highly becomes professors of religion; and much less moderation in religion, or towards the false teachers, thinking and speaking well of them; and interpreting their notions in the best sense, hoping they may mean otherwise than they say, and therefore should treat their persons with great respect, and their principles with tenderness; but this can never be thought to be the apostle's sense, after he had himself given them such names and characters, as in (<sup><1000></sup>Philippians 3:2,18,19); and besides, though we may, and many times ought, as men and Christians, to give way, and yield up what is our right and due, for the sake of peace, yet we cannot, nor ought to give up anything, that of right belongs to God and Christ, in matters of doctrine or worship; nor in the least abate of our zeal for the same, or give way to false teachers in any respect, nor for any time: moreover, moderation in religion is nothing else but lukewarmness and indifference, than which nothing is more detestable, or abhorred by Christ. The argument or reason enforcing moderation in the above sense of it follows,

*the Lord [is] at hand.* The Syriac version reads, “our Lord”: and the Ethiopic version, “God is at hand”. The sense is, either the Lord is near, he is omnipresent, and sees and observes the conduct of his people, their deportment in the world, and to one another; and therefore, as in his presence, and under his eye, they should behave according to equity, and with kindness and tenderness towards their fellow creatures and fellow Christians: or the Lord is nigh unto them, as he is to all that call upon him in truth, (<sup><1000></sup>Psalm 145:18); he is a present help in time of trouble, (<sup><1000></sup>Psalm 46:1); he is in the midst of them, and will help, and that right early, (<sup><1000></sup>Psalm 46:5); and will avenge his elect, and vindicate their cause, and right all their wrongs in his due time; and therefore they should take all things patiently, and not avenge themselves: or in a little while Christ will come to judgment, when he will plead the cause of his people, and convince ungodly sinners of their ungodly deeds, and hard speeches against him and his, (<sup><1000></sup>Jude 1:15); and therefore they should leave all to that

time, and commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously, (~~4123~~ 1 Peter 2:23).

**Ver. 6.** *Be careful for nothing*, etc.] This must be understood not in the most extensive sense, but with a limitation and restriction. There are many things that saints are to be careful for, as men and Christians; they are to be careful of their bodies, as well as of their souls; of the health of them, which is to be preserved by all lawful means, and not exposed to unnecessary danger; and for their families, to provide things honest for them, proper food and raiment, and the necessaries of life; for whoever does not do that, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel; and even for the things of this world in a moderate way, using all diligence and industry in obtaining them; men ought to be careful to discharge the duties of their calling in civil life, and to care and concern themselves for the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the support of the Gospel; and that they offend not God, by sinning against him: but the carefulness the apostle speaks of, is an anxious solicitude for worldly things, an immoderate concern for the things of life, arising from diffidence, or negligence, of the power, providence, and faithfulness of God: saints should not be anxiously, or in a distressing manner concerned for the things of this world, but be content, whether they have less or more; nor be over much pressed with what befalls them, but should cast their care upon the Lord, and carry every case to him, and leave it there:

*but in everything.* The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, “in every time”: always, constantly, every day, as often as there is opportunity, and need requires. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions join it with the following clause, “in every prayer and supplication”; but the grammatical construction of the words will not admit of such a version; it is best to understand it of every thing, or case, which should be brought to God; whether it be of a temporal or spiritual kind, relating to body or soul, to ourselves or others, to our families, relations, and acquaintance, the church, or the world:

*by prayer and supplication:* which may include all sorts of prayer, mental or vocal, private or public, ordinary or extraordinary, and every part of prayer: prayer may design petition, or asking for good things that are wanted; and “supplication”, a deprecating of evils that are feared; though these two are often used together for the same thing, for prayer in general: which ought always to be accompanied



*with thanksgiving*; for mercies received; for a man can never come to the throne of grace, to ask for grace and mercy, but he has mercies to bless God for, and so to do is very acceptable to God; nor can a person expect to succeed in the enjoyment of future mercies, when he is not thankful for past and present ones: in this manner therefore, at all times, upon every occasion, in a way of humble petition and supplication, joined with thankfulness for all favours,

*let your requests be made known to God*; not to men; fly not to an arm of flesh, but to God, to him only, and that in the most private manner, as not to be known by men; and put up such requests, as there may be reason to hope and believe God will “know” and approve of; such as are agreeable to his will, to the covenant of his grace, and the declaration of his word: use familiarity with God, tell him as you would do a friend, freely and fully, all your case, pour out your souls and your complaints before him. This God would have his people do, and he expects it from them; and though he knows all their wants, and what are their desires before they express them, yet he will seem not to know them, or take any notice of them, until they open them to him in some way or other; either by vocal prayer, or mental; by ejaculations, or sighs and groans, by chattering as a crane or a swallow, all which he understands: and be the case made known in what way or manner soever, with ever so much weakness, so be it, it is made known, it is enough, it shall be regarded and not despised.

**Ver. 7.** *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding*, etc.] Not that peace which God calls his people to among themselves in their effectual calling; and which he requires of them to cultivate and maintain; and which he encourages in them by the promise of his gracious presence among them; and which indeed he is the author of, and therefore is so called, (<sup>scribis</sup>Colossians 3:15); and which may be said to surpass or exceed all speculative knowledge, and understanding; for the one puffs up and profits nothing, but the other edifies; and much less that peace which God has in himself, who is all peace and love, and which passes all understanding, human and angelic; but either that peace which is made with God by the blood of Christ, and is published in the Gospel of peace, which passes and surprises all understanding of men and angels, that it should be; that the thoughts of God should be concerning it from everlasting; that a council of peace should be called and held between the eternal Three, and a covenant of peace entered into; that Christ should be appointed the peace maker, and the chastisement of it laid on him; that he should make it by the

blood of his cross, and for men, while enemies to God and to himself: or else that peace of conscience, which arises from a view of peace made by Christ; of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which may be called “the peace of Christ”, as the Alexandrian copy reads; both because it is founded upon, and springs from him, and is what he is the donor of: and this is what passes the understanding of every natural man; he knows nothing of this peace, what this tranquillity of mind means; he intermeddles not with this joy; it is unaccountable to him how it should be, that such then should have peace, who have so much trouble, are so much reproached, afflicted, and persecuted, and yet have peace in Christ, while they have tribulation in the world; which

*shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ*, or “in Christ Jesus”: some read these words prayer wise, or as a wish, “let it”, or “may it keep”, so the Vulgate Latin; but they are rather a promise, encouraging the saints to the discharge of the above duties; as rejoicing always in the Lord, showing their moderation to all men, avoiding anxious care, and betaking themselves at all times, on all occasions, to prayer to God; in which way they may expect peace, and such as will be of that see vice to them, as here expressed; that is, be a means of their final perseverance; for the peace of God, in either sense, is a preservation of the saints: peace made with God secures them in Christ from all condemnation by the law, sin, Satan, the world, or their own hearts; and peace in their own souls, on so good a foundation as it is, keeps them through Christ as in a garrison, from being overset with the troubles of the world, or the temptations of Satan; and is a means of preserving them from being carried away with the errors and heresies of the wicked, having a witness to truth within themselves; and from every evil way and work, from profaneness and immorality; the grace of God teaching them, and the love of Christ constraining them, which is shed abroad in their hearts, to live and act otherwise.

**Ver. 8.** *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true*, etc.] To close all with respect to the duties of Christianity incumbent on the professors of it, the apostle exhorts to a regard to everything that is true; that is agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, to the Gospel the word of truth, or to the law and light of nature; and whatever was really so, even among the very Heathens, in opposition to falsehood, lying, and hypocrisy

*whatsoever things [are] honest*; in the sight of men; or grave, or “venerable” in speech, in action or attire, in opposition to levity, frothiness, or foppery:

*whatsoever things [are] just*; between man and man, or with respect both to God and men; giving to God what belongs to him, and to man what is his due; studying to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, in opposition to all impiety, injustice, violence, and oppression:

*whatsoever things [are] pure*; or “chaste”, in words and deeds, in opposition to all filthiness and foolish talking, to obscene words and actions. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, “whatsoever things are holy”; which are agreeable to the holy nature, law, and will of God, and which tend to promote holiness of heart and life:

*whatsoever [are] lovely*; which are amiable in themselves, and to be found even among mere moral men, as in the young man whom Christ as man is said to love, (<sup><410></sup>Mark 10:21); and which serve to cultivate and increase love, friendship, and amity among men; and which things also are grateful to God and lovely in his sight, in opposition to all contention, strife, wrath, and hatred:

*whatsoever things [are] of good report*; are well spoken of, and tend to get and establish a good name, which is better than precious ointment, (<sup><210></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1); for though a good name, credit, and reputation among men, are to be sacrificed for the sake of Christ when called for; yet care is to be taken to preserve them by doing things which may secure them, and cause professors of religion to be well reported of; and which beautiful in all, and absolutely necessary in some:

*if [there be] any virtue*; anywhere, among any persons whatever, in opposition to vice:

*and if [there be] any praise*; that is praiseworthy among men, and deserves commendation, even though in an unjust steward, (<sup><218></sup>Luke 16:8), it should be regarded. The Vulgate Latin adds, “of discipline”, without any authority from any copy. The Claromontane manuscript reads, “if any praise of knowledge”:

*think on these things*: meditate upon them, revolve them in your minds, seriously consider them, and reason with yourselves about them, in order to put them into practice.

**Ver. 9.** *These things which ye have both learned,* etc.] Meaning from himself, in a doctrinal way:

*and received;* not only into their heads but hearts, had embraced cordially, with great affection, in the love thereof, as well as given a full assent to:

*and heard;* either publicly or privately, from the pulpit, or in conversation; or had heard of him when absent, or from him when present:

*and seen in me:* in his life and conversation, which were well known, and were a pattern to them that believe; and therefore he adds,

*do;* practise the same things which they had learned from him as their duty, and had heard him urge as such, and had seen exemplified in himself:

*and the God of peace shall be with you;* to give that peace which is beyond the conception of a natural man, and the expression of a spiritual one, and is the great preservative through Christ; and to enable to do and to continue to do the above things, and to keep them from all harm, and every enemy of their souls; to favour them with his gracious presence here, and with endless peace hereafter.

**Ver. 10.** *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly,* etc.] The apostle proceeds to the last part of this epistle, and to take notice of the present which these Philippians had sent him, on account of which this his rejoicing was; and which was not small but great, and was not of a carnal but spiritual kind; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, which is opposed to meats and drinks, and earthly enjoyments; it was a joy in the Lord; “in our Lord”, as the Syriac version renders it; it was not so much on account of the nature, substance, quantity or quality of the things sent him, and the suitableness of them to his present necessity; but because this thing was of the Lord, he had put it into their hearts to do it, and had given them not only ability, but a willing mind, and had wrought in them both to will and to do; and because what they did they did for the sake of Christ, and to him as an apostle of his, and in obedience to Christ, and with a view to promote his cause and interest, honour and glory:

*that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again;* which supposes that they had formerly, at the first preaching of the Gospel, showed great respect to him, and took great care of him, as appears from (<sup>ROMS</sup>Philippians 4:15,16), but that for some time past, and it seems for a considerable while, they had dropped it, or at least had not shown it; but that now it revived

again, and was seen in the present they had now sent him. The allusion is to trees, which in the summer season bear much fruit, in autumn cast their leaves, and in the winter are entirely bare, and in the spring of the year revive again, and put forth leaves and fruit: and just so it is with the saints, they are compared to trees, and are called trees of righteousness, (<sup><231B></sup>Isaiah 61:3), and are fruitful ones, (<sup><232B></sup>Jeremiah 23:3); but they have their winter seasons, when they are barren and unfruitful, and look as if they were dead; but when it is a spring time with them they revive again, as in the exercise of their faith and hope in Christ, so of their love to him, and to one another, and the ministers of the Gospel; when the south wind of the Spirit blows, the sun of righteousness arises, and, the dews of divine grace fall upon them; and such a revival was now in this church; and this was what the apostle so much rejoiced in, not so much for the gift bestowed on him, as for the fruit that appeared in them; (see <sup><1047></sup>Philippians 4:17); but whereas he had said that this care of him flourished again, “at last”; lest this should be thought as finding fault with them, and bringing a charge against them, he corrects himself by adding,

*wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity*; signifying that he believed they had entertained the same sentiments of him, had the same affection and inward care for him all along; but they had no opportunity of showing it, he being at such a distance, and they having no convenient or proper persons to send to him; or were hindered through multiplicity of business on their hands, that they could not attend to him; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “but ye were busied”, or taken up and employed in business; or it was for want of ability; for the words will bear to be rendered, “but ye lacked ability”; and to this sense does the Syriac version render it, <sup>ˆ</sup>wtywh <sup>ˆ</sup>yqps al al a, “but ye were not sufficient”; or had not a sufficiency, were not able to do it, and therefore to be easily excused.

**Ver. 11.** *Not that I speak in respect of want*, etc.] Either of want of will in them; of their slowness and backwardness in their care of him, postponing him to others, caring for him last of all; this gave him no uneasiness, he did not take it ill, knowing and owning himself to be less than the least of all saints: or of his own want before this present came; and his sense is, that he did not express himself with so much joy, because of the penury and distress he was in before the things came to him which they sent; for he was not in want; though he had nothing, he possessed all things, and was

as happy, and in as comfortable a frame, and in as much content then as now:

*for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content;* or “to be sufficient”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or that that is sufficient for me which I have, as the Syriac version renders it; for the word here used signifies to be self-sufficient, or to have a sufficiency in one's self, which in the strict sense of the phrase is only true of God, who is “El-shaddai”, God all-sufficient; but, in a lower sense, is true of such who are contented with their present state and condition, with such things as they have, be they more or less, and think that they have enough, as old Jacob did, (<sup><01331></sup>Genesis 33:11); and such persons have a sort of an all-sufficiency in them; they are thankful for every thing they have, be it little or more, and in every state, whether of adversity or prosperity; and quietly and patiently submit to the will of God, and cheerfully take and bear whatever is assigned them as their portion; and such an one was the apostle: he was not only content with food and raiment, and such things as he had, but even when he had nothing at all; when he had neither bread to eat nor clothes to wear; when he was in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, as was sometimes his case; and therefore he does not say here, that he had learnt to be content with such things as he had, but **εν οἷς εἶμι**, “in what I am”: and this he had not by nature, but by grace; it was not natural, but adventitious to him; it was not what he had acquired by his industry, but what he had “learned”; and that not in the school of nature and reason, while an unregenerate man; nor at the feet of Gamaliel, while he was training up under him in the law of Moses, and in the traditions of the elders; but he learned it of God, and was taught it by the revelation of Christ, and under the teachings of the Spirit of God, and that in the school of affliction, by a train of experiences, of many sorrows, afflictions, and distresses; for this lesson is learned quite contrary to all the rules and reasons among men, not by prosperity, but by adversity: many are the things that may excite and encourage to the exercise of this heavenly grace, where it is wrought; as the consideration of the unalterable will of God, according to which every man's state and condition is settled, and therefore what God has made crooked can never be made straight; and of our case when we came into the world, and what that will be when we go out of it, naked and bare of this world's things; and of our unworthiness of the least mercy at the hand of God: add to which, the consideration of God being our portion and exceeding great reward; of having an interest in Christ and

all things in him; and of the profits and pleasures of a life of contentment; and of the promises which God has made to such; and of the future glory and happiness which will shortly be enjoyed: so that a believer may say, who has the smallest pittance of earthly enjoyments, this, with a covenant God, with an interest in Christ, with grace here and heaven hereafter, is enough.

**Ver. 12.** *I know both how to be abased*, etc.] Or “humbled”; to be treated with indignity and contempt, to be trampled upon by man, to suffer hardships and distress, to be in a very mean and low condition, to work with his own hands, and minister to his own and the necessities of others in that way; yea, to be in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and have no certain dwelling place; and he knew how to behave under all this; not to be depressed and cast down, or to fret, repine, and murmur:

*and I know how to abound*; or “to excel”; to be in the esteem of men, and to have an affluence of the things of this world, and how to behave in the midst of plenty; so as not to be lifted up, to be proud and haughty, and injurious to fellow creatures; so as not to abuse the good things of life; and so as to use them to the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the good of fellow creatures, and fellow Christians:

*every where*; whether among Jews or Gentiles, at Jerusalem or at Rome, or at whatsoever place; or as the Arabic version renders it, “every time”: always, in every season, whether of adversity or prosperity:

*and in all things*; in all circumstances of life:

*I am instructed*; or “initiated”, as he was by the Gospel; and, ever since he embraced it, was taught this lesson of contentment, and inured to the exercise of it, and was trained up and instructed how to behave himself in the different changes and vicissitudes he came into:

*both to be full, and to be hungry*; to know what it was to have plenty and want, to have a full meal and to want one, and be almost starved and famished, and how to conduct under such different circumstances:

*both to abound and to suffer need*; which the apostle repeats for confirmation sake; and the whole of what he here says is an explanation of the lesson of contentment he had learned; and the knowledge he speaks of was not speculative but experimental, and lay not merely in theory, but in practice; and now lest he should be thought guilty of arrogance, and to

ascribe too much to himself, he in (<sup>5043</sup>Philippians 4:13) attributes all to the power and grace of Christ.

**Ver. 13.** *I can do all things*, etc.] Which must not be understood in the greatest latitude, and without any limitation; for the apostle was not omnipotent, either in himself, or by the power of Christ; nor could he do all things that Christ could do; but it must be restrained to the subject matter treated of: the sense is, that he could be content in every state, and could know how to behave himself in adversity and prosperity, amidst both poverty and plenty; yea, it may be extended to all the duties incumbent on him both as a Christian and as an apostle, as to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men; to take the care of all the churches; to labour more abundantly than others in preaching the Gospel; and to bear all afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions for the sake of it; yea, he could willingly and cheerfully endure the most cruel and torturing death for the sake of Christ: all these things he could do, not in his own strength, for no man was more conscious of his own weakness than he was, or knew more of the impotency of human nature; and therefore always directed others to be strong in the Lord, and in, the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Christ, on which he himself always depended, and by which he did what he did; as he adds here,

*through Christ which strengtheneth me.* The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word “Christ”, and only read “him”; and so the Alexandrian copy and others; but intend Christ as those that express it: strength to perform duty and to bear sufferings is in Christ, and which he communicates to his people; he strengthens them with strength in their souls, internally, as the word here used signifies; by virtue of which they can do whatever he enjoins them or calls them to, though without him they can do nothing.

**Ver. 14.** *Notwithstanding ye have well done*, etc.] This he says lest they should think he slighted their kindness, and lest they should be discouraged from doing any such thing of this kind another time, either to himself or others; for though he was so well contented with his state, and knew how to be abased and to suffer need, and could do all things through the strength of Christ, yet he observes they did well in communicating to him; for communicating to poor saints or ministers is a considerable branch of well doing; it is a good work when it is done in faith, and from love, and with a view to the glory, honour, and interest of Christ; it is what is



agreeable to the will of God, and is an odour of a sweet smell, and acceptable to him:

*that ye did communicate with my affliction*; by which is meant, not any affliction of mind, for he was in as comfortable a frame, had as clear views of his interest in God, as his covenant God, and was as contented and satisfied as ever he was in his life; nor any disorder or distemper of body; but he was in prison and penury: these Philippians communicated with him in it, both by sympathizing with him in his tribulation, and by sending their minister to visit him, and with him a present for his relief and support; in doing which they did well.

**Ver. 15.** *Now ye Philippians know also*, etc.] As well as the apostle did, that they not only communicated now, but also had done formerly, and when none else beside them did; wherefore he not only commends them for their present kindness to him, but for their past favours:

*that in the beginning of the Gospel*; of the preaching of it by the apostle in the parts of Macedonia, particularly at Philippi; as soon as ever the Gospel was preached to them, they showed a grateful and beneficent spirit; of which we have an instance in Lydia, the first person we read of converted there, and also in the jailer, who was the next; (see <sup><44612></sup>Acts 16:12,14,15,34,40); yea, not only while he was with them they communicated to him, but when he was gone from them:

*when I departed from Macedonia*; when he went to Corinth and other places, to preach the Gospel in other parts and to other people, they sent the brethren after him with presents which supplied what was lacking to him, and in which other churches were deficient; (see <sup><47108></sup>2 Corinthians 11:8,9); the Ethiopic version reads, “when ye went from Macedonia with me”: but is not supported by any copy or other version:

*no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*; the phrase, “giving and receiving”, is the same with <sup>^</sup>tmw açm, which is often used by the Jews for trading and commerce <sup>f29</sup>; and the allusion is to the keeping of accounts by men in business, by debtor and creditor, in a book, putting down in one column what is delivered out, and in the other what is received, whereby accounts are kept clear: the apostle's meaning is, that whereas he and his fellow ministers had delivered out spiritual things to this church, they had in return communicated their carnal

things; so that there was a proper account kept, which was not observed by other churches, and which was greatly to the commendation of this.

**Ver. 16.** *For even in Thessalonica*, etc.] When the apostle was there; for from Philippi he went to Thessalonica; (see <sup><4170></sup>Acts 17:1);

*ye sent once and again unto my necessity*; for his use and service, to support him while he was at that place, and relieve and assist him in his necessities; for the people at Thessalonica were either not able to communicate, or were not of a beneficent disposition, or the apostle did not care to be chargeable to them; and they seem many of them to have been idle and lazy, and therefore he wrought among them with his own hands to set them an example; and the Philippians hearing and knowing that this was the case, sent frequently, while he was here, some of the brethren with gifts unto him.

**Ver. 17.** *Not because I desire a gift*, etc.] This commendation of them he entered into, not because he desired another present to be made to him, either by them or others; he was not a man of such a disposition, he was not like one of those that could never have enough; he was fully satisfied and highly contented with what he had; he was not like the false teachers, that made merchandise of men; he sought not theirs, but them:

*but I desire fruit that may abound to your account*; he had planted them, or had been an instrument in planting of them, as trees of righteousness, (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 61:3); and his great desire was to see fruits of righteousness grow upon them, (<sup><5011></sup>Philippians 1:11); by which sometimes are meant acts of beneficence, as in (<sup><4090></sup>2 Corinthians 9:10); and that these might be abundant and turn to their profit and advantage, as such fruit does; for God does not forget to recompence acts of bounty, and labours of love, but if even a cup of cold water is given to a prophet or minister of Christ, on account of his being so, it shall have its reward in the issue of things, upon the casting up of accounts, (<sup><4002></sup>Matthew 10:42); for the apostle still has reference unto that; his view was, that the balance might be on their side, and that much might be received by them; so that it was not for himself, but for their encouragement and future good, he said this; for as for himself he adds,

**Ver. 18.** *But I have all things, and abound*, etc.] Or “I have received all things”, as the Syriac version renders it; all that they had sent by Epaphroditus; and for which he now gives a receipt; and by virtue of which

he now abounded; and which abundance of his was not so much owing to the largeness of their presents, as to the peace of his mind; looking upon this gift of theirs, though it might be but small in itself, a fulness to him; for he adds,

*I am full*; as much as he desired, he wanted no more, he had enough:

*having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you:* and which he acknowledged, that the character of this good man might stand clear, who had been intrusted with this affair:

*an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God,* this is said in allusion to the sacrifices under the former dispensation, in which God smelled a sweet savour, (<sup><0021></sup>Genesis 8:21), in reference to which, as the sacrifice of Christ is said to be of a sweet smelling savour, (<sup><0022></sup>Ephesians 5:2), and as the spiritual sacrifices of the saints, as praises and prayers, are called odours, (<sup><0023></sup>Revelation 5:8), and are said to be acceptable unto God, (<sup><0024></sup>1 Peter 2:5); so acts of beneficence are called sacrifices, with which he is well pleased, (<sup><0025></sup>Hebrews 13:16).

**Ver. 19.** *But my God shall supply all your need*, etc.] Or “fulfil all your need”: the Jews, when they would comfort any, under the loss of any worldly enjoyment, used to say, *Ænwrsj Æl al my μwqmh*, “God fulfil”, or “will fulfil thy need”<sup>f30</sup>. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read these words as a wish or prayer, “but may my God supply” or “fulfil all your need”; I am not able to make you any returns, but I pray that my God would recompence it to you, that as you have supplied my want, he would supply all yours; but we with others, and as the Ethiopic version, read, “shall” or “will supply”; as an assertion by way of promise, though he could not, yet his God would; he who was his God, not only as the God of nature and providence, or as the God of the Israelites, but as the God of all grace; who had loved him as such, had chosen, adopted, regenerated, and sanctified him; who was his God in Christ, and by virtue of the covenant of grace, and which was made known in the effectual calling; whose ambassador he was, and whom he had faithfully served in the Gospel of his Son; this God, who had been his God, was and would be so unto death, in whom he had an interest, and because he had an interest in him, and was thus related to him, be firmly believed, and fully assures these saints, that he would supply their wants who had been so careful of him: believers, though they need nothing as considered in Christ, being complete and filled

full in him, having in him all grace, and all spiritual blessings, and under believing views of this at times, see themselves complete and wanting nothing; yet, in themselves, they are poor and needy, and often want fresh discoveries of the love of God to them, fresh supplies of grace from Christ, stand in need of more light from him, and to be quickened according to his word; they want fresh supplies of strength from him answerable to the service and work they are daily called to; and as their trials and afflictions abound, they have need of renewed comfort to support under them; and have also need of fresh manifestations and applications of pardoning grace to their souls, and fresh views of the righteousness of Christ, as their justifying righteousness before God; and, in a word, need daily food for their souls as for their bodies: now God, who is also their God, is able and willing to supply their wants; and he does so, he withholds no good thing from them, nor do they want any good thing needful for them, for he supplies “all” their need; and this they may expect, since he is the God of all grace, and a fulness of grace is in his Son; and this grace is sufficient for them, and a supply of it is given them by the Spirit;

*according to his riches*; God is rich not only in the perfections of his nature, which are inconceivable and incommunicable; and in the works of his hands, of creation and providence, the whole earth is full of his riches, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 104:24), and according to these riches of his goodness he supplies the wants of all creatures living; but he is also rich in grace and mercy, (~~Ephesians~~ Ephesians 2:4,7), and it is according to the riches of his grace he supplies the spiritual wants of his people, and he does it like himself, according to the riches he has; he gives all things richly to enjoy, plenteously and abundantly:

*in glory*: in a glorious manner, so as to show himself glorious, and make his people so, to the glory of his rich grace; and “with glory”, as it may be rendered, with eternal glory; he will not only give grace here, and more of it as is needful, according to the abundance of it in himself and in his Son, but glory hereafter: and all

*by Christ Jesus*; and through him, who is full of grace and truth; who is the Mediator in whom the fulness of it lies, and through whose hands, and by whom, it is communicated to the saints: or “with Christ Jesus”; along with him God gives all things freely, all things pertaining to life and godliness: or “for the sake of Christ Jesus”; not for any worth or merit in men, but for

the sake of Christ, in whom they are accepted, and on whose account respect is had to their persons, and so to their wants.

**Ver. 20.** *Now unto God and our Father*, etc.] To God, who is our Father in Christ,

*[be] glory for ever and ever, Amen*; for all the grace he gives now, and for all the glory and happiness expected hereafter; for the supply of every want both temporal and spiritual; seeing every good gift comes from him, and is to be ascribed to his free grace and favour, and not to any deserts of men: and particularly he may mean for what they had sent him, and he had received from them.

**Ver. 21.** *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus*, etc.] Meaning at Philippi, whether rich or poor, lesser or greater believers, common saints, as well as the officers of the church, bishops and deacons; who were in Christ by electing grace, and as their covenant head, and representative from everlasting, and which was manifested and made known by their conversion and the effectual calling:

*the brethren which are with me greet you*; such as Timothy; (see <sup><169></sup>Philippians 2:19); and Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lucas; (see <sup><202></sup>Philemon 1:23,24); he makes no mention of Peter anywhere, when he writes from Rome or to it, which shows he was not there then, or a bishop of that place, as the Papists say.

**Ver. 22.** *All the saints salute you*, etc.] The members of the church at Rome,

*chiefly they that are of Caesar's household*; for by means of the apostle's bonds, which were made manifest in the emperor's palace, Christ was made known to some there likewise; though Nero, the then reigning emperor, was a very wicked prince, and his court a very debauched one, yet the grace of God reached some there: who these were cannot be said; as for the conjecture that Seneca the philosopher, Nero's master, was one of them, it is without foundation; the eight letters of his to the Apostle Paul, and the six letters of the apostle to him, are spurious, though of ancient date, being made mention of by Austin and Jerom <sup>f31</sup>: a like groundless conjecture is that, that Lucan the poet, Seneca's brother's son, was another; for there is nothing in his writings, or in any account of him, any more than in the former, that shows him to be a Christian. Torpes, a man in great favour and dignity in Nero's court, and Evellius his counsellor, who both

suffered martyrdom under him, according to the Roman martyrology, are also mentioned.

**Ver. 23.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “with your spirit”, as in (~~4168~~ Galatians 6:18); and so the Alexandrian copy and some others read. This is the apostle's token in all his epistles of the genuineness of them, and which he wrote with his own hand, (~~53187~~ 2 Thessalonians 3:17,18); (see Gill on “~~45162~~ Romans 16:22”), (see Gill on “~~45164~~ Romans 16:24”).

*Amen*: with which all the epistles are concluded; (see Gill on “~~45167~~ Romans 16:27”).

The subscription is,

*[it was] written [to] the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus*; that this epistle was written to the Philippians by the Apostle Paul, when he was a prisoner at Rome, and sent to them by Epaphroditus their minister, when he returned from him to them.

# FOOTNOTES

- Ft1** -- Vid. Ptolom. Geograph. 50:3. c. 13.
- Ft2** -- Kimchi in Psal. 6:5.
- Ft3** -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3.
- Ft4** -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 51. 3.
- Ft5** -- Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1.
- Ft6** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 113. 4. & in Exodus fol. 36. 4.
- Ft7** -- Socraticus, Xenophon, & Aristo Chius, apud Minuc. Felic. Octav. p. 20. & Hostanes apud Caecil. Cyprian. de Idol. van. p. 46.
- Ft8** -- Laertii proem. ad Vit. Philosoph. p. 7.
- Ft9** -- Leg. Alleg. 50:1. p. 48, 49.
- Ft10** -- Vid. Kimchi in ~~ibid~~ Joshua 3:4.
- Ft11** -- Lipsins de Cruce, 50:1. c. 12.
- Ft12** -- Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1.
- Ft13** -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. Yom Haccippurim, c. 2. sect. 7.
- Ft14** -- Artinn. Epictet. 50:1. c. 1, 19, 26. & Aurel. Victor. Epitome Romans Imp. in Nerone.
- Ft15** -- Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.
- Ft16** -- T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 47. 2.
- Ft17** -- T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 7. 4.
- Ft18** -- Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 5. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib.
- Ft19** -- Hilch. Mila, c. 1. 16.
- Ft20** -- Pocock. Specim. A. ab. Hist. p. 3, 9.
- Ft21** -- T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1.

- Ft22** -- Sepher Cosri, p. 3, sect. 16. fol. 152. 1.
- Ft23** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.
- Ft24** -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. See Cetubot, fol. 111. 1.
- Ft25** -- Euripides.
- Ft26** -- Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. 50:12. c. 2.
- Ft27** -- Midrash Hanneelam in Zohar in Genesis fol. 69. 1.
- Ft28** -- Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 50:3. c. 30.
- Ft29** -- Vid. Kimchi in Psal. 15:3. & Targum in ~~2004~~ Isaiah 9:4.
- Ft30** -- T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 16. 2. Debarim Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 239. 4.
- Ft31** -- Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Latin, p. 69.