

PHILIPPIANS



TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

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PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION I

THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, [Philippians 1:3-30](#)

A. The Marks of a Healthy Church, [Philippians 1:1-2](#)

[\(Philippians 1:1-2\)](#) **Introduction:** this is a most unusual greeting to a church from Paul. He does not refer to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Why? There was no need for him to defend his call from God. His relationship with the church at Philippi was just what it should be: a relationship founded and rooted in Jesus Christ and in the love and respect for each other. The church held its minister, Paul, ever so closely to its heart; they loved and cared for him as few churches love and care for their ministers. This greeting gives some outstanding distinctives of Christian believers.

1. [A healthy church disciples young people \(v.1\).](#)
2. [A healthy church serves Christ \(v.1\).](#)
3. [A healthy church is full of true saints \(v.1\).](#)
4. [A healthy church has leaders who lead by example \(v.1\).](#)
5. [A healthy church experiences grace and peace \(v.2\).](#)

1. [\(Philippians 1:1\) Discipleship— Young People: a healthy church disciples young people.](#)

In the words "**Paul and Timothy**" we see *a father and son in the faith*—the adult and the young person together. There was deep affection that bound Paul and Timothy together. That affection found its root and purpose in the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul contributed the wisdom of experience, and Timothy the hope and vibrant energy of youth. It should be noted that the adult, Paul, is mentioned first. The adult always holds the primary responsibility and privilege for taking hold of young people and making disciples of them. This was the command of the Lord's *great commission*; therefore, the believer must always keep his focus upon finding young people and making disciples of them (see note, [Discipleship—'Matthew 28:19-20'](#) for more discussion). (See [Deeper Study #1, Timothy—Acts 16:1-3](#) on page #4 for discussion on Timothy's life.)

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [making disciples] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" ([2 Tim. 2:2](#)).

[Deeper Study #1, Timothy—Acts 16:1-3](#)

([Acts 16:1-3](#)) **Timothy—Discipleship:** Timothy was just a child when Paul visited Lystra on his first mission (about five or six years before). He was probably somewhere around ten to twelve years old. He was still a young man when Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)). All this means Timothy was somewhere around eighteen years old when Paul met him on his second mission to Lystra.

It is also possible that Paul led Timothy to the Lord on his first mission tour, but it is more probable that Timothy's mother and grandmother led him to the Lord.

The present passage seems to read as though Paul did not know or remember Timothy from his first mission. In either case, his spiritual maturity at this point was strong enough for Paul to challenge him to join his mission corps. The facts of his life seem to be as follows.

Timothy's father was a Greek and an unbeliever, but his mother was a Jew and a believer. Her name was Eunice and his grandmother's name was Lois ([2 Tim. 1:5](#)). Timothy was not circumcised; hence it would seem that he was educated in Greek ways and customs ([Acts 16:3](#)). When Paul met Timothy, Timothy was already a Christian believer with a strong testimony, so strong in fact that Paul arranged for him to become his missionary partner ([Acts 16:1](#)). Timothy's maturity and importance are seen by the word "he" of [Acts 16:1](#) being changed very rapidly to "they" of [Acts 16:4](#). Timothy became a son to Paul ([1 Cor. 4:17](#)).

He was esteemed so highly and loved so deeply by Paul that Paul said he was the one man whose mind was at one with his own ([Phil. 2:19](#)). He was probably chosen by Paul to become Paul's successor. From this point on, he was seen either ministering with Paul or else being sent out by Paul to minister to certain churches. He was with Paul in Paul's first imprisonment ([Col. 1:1](#); [Philemon 1](#)). Apparently, Paul was released from prison and Timothy began to travel with him again. On this journey Paul left him in Ephesus to correct some errors that had arisen, while Paul himself traveled on into Macedonia to visit the churches there. Soon thereafter Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome a second time. As soon as possible Timothy joined him ([2 Tim. 4:11, 21](#)), but this time Timothy was imprisoned also. However, Timothy was later released ([Hebrews 13:23](#)), while Paul was either beheaded or released and began a mission tour into Spain.

[2. \(Philippians 1:1\) Servants—Slaves \(doulos\): a healthy church serves Jesus Christ, really serves Him.](#)

The word "servant" (*doulos*) is the word *bond-slave* in Greek. There is a distinct difference between a servant and a slave. A servant is free to work for whomever he wishes; a slave is bought and purchased—completely and totally owned by a master. A slave is bound by law to his master.

Paul calls himself and Timothy the *slaves of Jesus Christ*. A look at the slave market of Paul's day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a "slave of Jesus Christ."

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him. Therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.

2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence. He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.

3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service. He was at the master's disposal any hour of the day. So it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ—hour by hour and day by day.

4. The slave's will belonged to his master. He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul belonged to Christ. In fact, he even said that he fought and struggled to bring *every thought* into captivity "to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:3-5](#), esp. [2 Cor. 10:5](#)).

5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by his being "a slave of Jesus Christ." He meant that he had the highest and most honored and kingly profession in all the world. Men of God, the greatest men of history, have always been called "the servants of God." It was the highest title of honor. The believer's slavery to Jesus Christ is no cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is the position of honor—the honor that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- a. **Moses** was the slave of God ([Deut. 34:5](#); [Psalm 105:26](#); [Malachi 4:4](#)).
- b. **Joshua** was the slave of God ([Joshua 24:9](#)).
- c. **David** was the slave of God ([2 Samuel 3:18](#); [Psalm 78:70](#)).
- d. **Paul** was the slave of Jesus Christ ([Romans 1:1](#); [Phil. 1:1](#); [Titus 1:1](#)).
- e. **James** was the slave of God ([James 1:1](#)).
- f. **Jude** was the slave of God ([Jude 1](#)).
- g. **The prophets** were the slaves of God ([Amos 3:7](#); [Jeremiah 7:25](#)).
- h. **Christian believers** are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ ([Acts 2:18](#); [1 Cor. 7:22](#); [Ephes. 6:6](#); [Col. 4:12](#); [2 Tim. 2:24](#)).

Thought 1. The great need today is for men and women to become slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must become His slaves and do what He says. Then and only then will the world be reached with the glorious news of eternal life. Then and only then will the desperate needs of the world be met.

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" ([John 12:26](#); cp. [Romans 12:1](#); [1 Cor. 15:58](#)).

"[Laboring] not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" ([Ephes. 6:6-7](#)).

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" ([Col. 3:23-24](#)).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

"And ye shall serve the Lord your God" ([Exodus 23:25](#)).

"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" ([Deut. 10:12](#)).

"Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling" ([Psalm 2:11](#)).

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing" ([Psalm 100:2](#)).

3. (Philippians 1:1) Saints— Sanctified— Holy: a healthy church is full of true saints.

The Bible never uses the word *saint* to refer to a few people in the church who have achieved unusual spiritual maturity. The word "saint" refers to the sanctified or holy ones. It simply means to be set apart and to be separated. Therefore, every believer who has truly trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior is separated from the world and set apart to live for God. Every true believer is a "saint," a person set apart unto God.

(See [Deeper Study #1—1 Peter 1:15-16](#) on page #9 for more discussion.)

There are three stages of sanctification.

1. There is initial or positional sanctification. When a person believes in Christ, he is immediately set apart for God—once and for all—permanently.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" ([Hebrews 3:1](#)).

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" ([Hebrews 10:10](#)).

2. There is progressive sanctification. The true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day. The Spirit of God takes him and conforms him into the image of Christ more and more—for as long as he walks upon this earth.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" ([John 17:17](#)).

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)).

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" ([Ephes. 5:25-26](#)).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" ([1 Thes. 5:23-24](#)).

3. There is eternal sanctification. The day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service—without any sin or failure whatsoever. That day will be the great and glorious day of the believer's eternal redemption.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" ([Ephes. 5:27](#)).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" ([1 John 3:2](#)).

Thought 1. We are the property of the Lord Jesus, set apart as His holy possession. Let us, therefore, live as the possession of the Lord. Let us walk as the separated people of God, living holy and righteous and pure lives.

Thought 2. Lehman Strauss points out the following (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959, p.32f).

1) God is a thrice-holy God.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" ([Isaiah 6:3](#)).

"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" ([Rev. 4:8](#)).

2) The Lord Jesus Christ who saved us is *holy*.

"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" ([Acts 4:27](#)).

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus" ([Acts 4:29-30](#)).

- 3) The Spirit of God who indwells our bodies is holy.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

- 4) The Bible, which is to be the guide of our lives, is called the Holy Scripture.

"Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" ([Romans 1:2](#)).

- 5) One of the names given to us is that of *holy brothers*.

"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren" ([1 Thes. 5:27](#)).

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" ([Hebrews 3:1](#)).

- 6) One of the great gifts of God is to make us a *holy priesthood* before God.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" ([1 Peter 2:5](#)).

- 7) The great call of God to us is a *holy calling*.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" ([2 Tim. 1:9](#)).

- 8) The great purpose for the Lord's return is to present us *holy before God*.

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" ([Col. 1:21-22](#)).

- 9) One of the great inheritances we shall receive when the Lord returns is the *holy city*.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" ([Rev. 21:2](#)).

In light of all that God has done for us.....

- a. How can we do anything less than to live a sanctified, holy life before God?
- b. How can we be lethargic and complacent, sleepy-eyed, and unmotivated?
- c. How can we allow ourselves to live lives of routine and unconcern?
- d. How can we live lives of indulgence, license, selfishness, immorality, perversion, wickedness, and evil?

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" ([2 Peter 3:10-12](#)).

Deeper Study #1—1 Peter 1:15-16

(1 Peter 1:15-16) Holy— Saint— Sanctification: (*hagios*): all three of these words and their various forms (holiness, saints, and sanctification) are translated from one Greek word *hagios*. Its Hebrew equivalent is *kadosh*. It is difficult to translate into English although its meaning is easy to grasp.

Its basic meaning is “**to be separated**”, “**set apart**”, and “**different**”. Morally, it means **pure, sinless, righteous, holy**. Something holy is set apart, separated, different from all other persons or things. It is something that God has set aside for Himself. Man cannot set it aside as holy. It has to be set aside by God Himself.

A study of the word *holy* shows the movement of God in history.

1. God is said to be preeminently and supremely holy ([Luke 1:49](#); [John 17:11](#); [1 Peter 1:15](#)). He possesses an incomparable majesty, so supremely majestic that there are beings who do nothing but surround His throne day and night singing out the praises of His holiness ([Isaiah 6:1](#); [Rev. 4:8](#)).

2. Things that have a special connection to God are said to be holy. The ground upon which Moses stood when God confronted him was said to be holy ([Exodus 3:1-5](#); [Acts 7:33](#)). The temple was said to be holy ([Matthew 24:15](#)), and the Holy of Holies in

particular was holy ([Hebrews 9:2-3](#)). The mount where Christ was transfigured was called holy ([2 Peter 1:18](#)). The covenant that God made with Abraham was holy ([Luke 1:35](#)). The gospel and Scriptures are called holy ([Matthew 7:6](#); [Romans 1:2](#)). Anything that becomes associated with God is set apart unto God in a very special sense and becomes different from other things.

3. The Jews are called a *holy nation* ([Exodus 19:6](#)). They were set apart in a very special way to God. The Old Testament deals primarily with the Jews and their special relationship to God: "Ye shall be holy unto me; for I, the Lord, am holy, and have separated you from other people, that ye should be mine" ([Leviticus 20:26](#); cp. [Daniel 7:18, 22](#)).

- a. The Jewish people were *holy* in that they were to be different from other nations, different in that they were to believe God and serve Him faithfully. God knew them in a very special way above all the nations of the earth.
- b. The Jewish priesthood was *holy*, different from other men ([Leviticus 21:6](#)). The people's tithe or tenth was *holy*, different from other money and goods and used for different purposes ([Leviticus 27:30, 32](#)). The temple was *holy*, different from other buildings ([Exodus 26:33](#)).

But note this: the Jews refused to play the part in history that God wanted them to play. The Old Testament is a continuous record of their rejection of God's will. And when God sent His Son into the world, they committed the supreme and lasting rejection. They refused to acknowledge Him and put Him to death.

4. Jesus Christ is said to be holy in a very special way.

- a. Before His birth, the angel said to Mary, "That holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" ([Luke 1:35](#)).
- b. Mary worshipped Him in song and praise before His birth saying, "Holy is His name" ([Luke 1:49](#)). He was the only begotten Son of God, *holy*, revered, and worthy of veneration and worship.
- c. The people recognized that He was *sanctified* by God ([John 10:36](#); [John 6:69](#)).
- d. The mentally ill and demon-possessed recognized Him as the Holy One of God ([Mark 1:24](#); [Luke 4:34](#)).
- e. The church worshipped Him as "the Holy Child of God" ([Acts 4:27, 30](#)).

Note this: Jesus Christ Himself was the transition from God's dealing with the Jewish nation as holy to a new people as holy. When the Jews rejected God's Son, they showed their ultimate refusal to follow God, to be holy and separated unto Him. Therefore, God had no choice but to raise up another people to be separated unto Him. The new people are those of all nations and peoples who believe and follow Christ as the Lord of their lives.

5. The church is now said to be the holy people of God. The privileges and responsibilities of following God were taken from Israel and given to the church ([John 17:14, 16](#); [Romans 11:16](#)).

- a. The church is called *a holy nation* and a *royal or holy priesthood*, a people made up of genuine believers from all nationalities and languages and races ([1 Peter 2:5, 9](#)).
- b. The church is a people who set themselves apart unto God as holy and separated and different, who utterly trust Him and abandon themselves to follow Him.
- c. The church is now the dwelling place for God's presence. Believers are being built "**together for a habitation of God through the Spirit**" ([Ephes. 2:21-22](#)). The church in some unique and spiritual sense, by an act of God, becomes the very body of Christ ([Ephes. 1:22-23](#)). The church, the body of believers when meeting together locally, now replaces the temple of the Old Testament.

6. But there is something even more precious and hallowed to real believers. The body of the individual believer becomes holy, for the Spirit of God dwells within the believer's body ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)). The body of the believer becomes the dwelling place for God's very presence, and the body replaces the holy of holies within the inner sanctuary of the temple. Thus, believers are called *saints or holy ones* ([Acts 9:13, 32, 41](#); [Acts 26:10](#); [Romans 1:7](#))

4. (Philippians 1:1) Bishops—Deacons: a healthy church organizes for ministry and has leaders who lead by example.

Note that both *bishops* and *deacons* are mentioned as being in the Philippian church. What Paul is doing is addressing the leaders of the church and setting them apart from the membership whom he addressed as "**saints.**"

This is significant, for it means that the leadership or officers of the early church are here named: they were **bishops** and **deacons**. A complete discussion of these two offices is given elsewhere (see [Deeper Study #1, Bishop—Titus 1:5-9 on page #13](#); and [Deeper Study #2—1 Tim. 3:8-13 on page #14](#)). The point to see in this passage is that believers organize for ministry.

1. The bishops (*episkopois*) were apparently the same as the elders (*presbuteros*) or ministers of a church. The two words are used interchangeably to refer to the same men ([Acts 20:17, 28](#); [Titus 1:5, 7](#)). The word "**bishop**" means to oversee, look after, manage. The instructions in the Epistle of Titus say that his duties included primarily exhortation and overseeing the lives of the believers. The bishop was the person whom we call the minister of the church. (See [Deeper Study #1—Titus 1:5-9 for full discussion.](#))

2. The deacons (*diakonois*) were spiritually minded men who had dedicated their lives to the Lord to minister to the *saints* of God. They were persons who were chosen to minister to the widows and widowers and to the poor and sick of a church *in order to free the minister to concentrate on prayer and preaching.*

But note a significant fact:

- a. Preachers are sometimes called deacons, that is servants.

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [*diakonoi*] by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" ([1 Cor. 3:5](#)).

"Who also hath made us able ministers [*diakonous*] of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" ([2 Cor. 3:6](#)).

- b. The first deacons preached as well as ministered to the needy of the church.

"And Stephen [a deacon], full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" ([Acts 6:8](#)).

"Then Philip [a deacon] went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" ([Acts 8:5](#)).

Thought 1. Two significant points need to be stressed.

1. The church must organize for ministry and must always be careful to ordain only persons who have proven to be spiritually mature in the Lord.
2. The two ordained officers of the church must be diligent in both their duty and in sharing the Word of the Lord. Every believer is needed to bear witness for the Lord Jesus and the *leadership must take the lead*. How can we expect others to be witnessing and ministering if we, the leadership, are not witnessing and ministering?

"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" ([Mark 10:43-44](#)).

"She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying" ([Mark 14:8](#)).

"For unto whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" ([Luke 12:48](#)).

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" ([John 13:14](#)).

"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" ([John 21:16](#)).

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" ([1 Cor. 3:9](#)).

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" ([2 Cor. 6:1](#)).

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever" ([1 Peter 4:11](#)).

Deeper Study #1, Bishop—Titus 1:5-9

([Titus 1:5-9](#)) **Elder— Bishop**: note the term elder (*presbuteros*) and bishop (*episkopos*) are used interchangeably in this passage ([Titus 1:5, 7](#)). The elder or bishop was probably the same office as the pastor-teacher or minister of a church. The gift of pastor-teacher refers to only one gift which is given to the same person ([Ephes. 4:11](#)). The focus of the gift is to *pastor, oversee, and shepherd* believers in the local church. William Barclay points out that elder was more of a Jewish name and bishop was more of a Greek name, each referring to the same office (*The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p.80-81).

The word *elder* was used to refer to the man, to his standing, to his years of faithfulness and service. The word *bishop (episkopos—overseer)* and the gift *pastor-teacher* were used to refer to the man's duties and his work of overseeing and supervising the church. In comparison, a man today is often called minister, pastor, preacher, or reverend. Usually reverend is used to refer to the man personally and minister, pastor, or preacher is used to refer to the man's functions.

The pastoral gift is the gift that is directly ascribed to the Lord Jesus. He called Himself the Good Shepherd ([John 10:11, 14](#)). Others called Him the Great Shepherd of the sheep ([Hebrews 13:20](#)), the Shepherd of men's souls ([1 Peter 2:25](#)), and the Chief Shepherd ([1 Peter 5:4](#)). The pastoral gift is an ordained office; the elder is the basic office of the church.

1. Elders are called and set apart by the Holy Spirit ([Acts 20:28; Acts 13:2](#)).
2. Elders are ordained officers ([Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5](#)).
3. Elders shepherd and oversee the flock of God ([Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2-3](#)).
4. Elders are to guard and preach the Word ([Titus 1:9](#)).
5. Elders have a healing ministry through prayers and the anointing with oil ([James 5:14](#)).
6. Elders took a leading part in the decisions of the Jerusalem Council. They are identified along with the apostles as the chief authorities of the church ([Acts 15:2; Acts 16:4](#)).
7. Elders are the ones to whom Paul reports when returning from his third missionary journey, and they are the ones who advise him how to combat the Judaizers ([Acts 21:18-25](#)).
8. Elders are the ones to whom Paul delivers the offering that had been taken for the Jerusalem Church during the great famine ([Acts 11:30](#)).

Deeper Study #2—1 Tim. 3:8-13

(1 Tim. 3:8-13) Deacons: the word deacon (*Diakonous*) means servant, minister. The first reference to deacons is in Acts ([Acts 6:1-7](#)). Deacons were appointed to help in the ministerial and administrative duties of the church ([Acts 6:2](#)). Their function was to relieve ministers so that ministers could give themselves "**continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word**" ([Acts 6:4](#)). In particular they were chosen to minister to the day-to-day needs of believers and to the needs of widows and widowers and the poor and sick of a church. They were to relieve ministers so the ministers could *concentrate on prayer and preaching*.

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" ([Acts 6:3-4](#)).

However, note a significant fact: this does not mean that ministers are never to meet day-to-day needs of believers nor that deacons should never share or preach the Word. In the early church both ministers and deacons served in both areas, but each *concentrated* upon their primary call and mission.

- a. Preachers were sometimes called deacons, that is, servants.

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [diakonoi] by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" ([1 Cor. 3:5](#)).

"Who also hath made us able ministers [*diakonous*] of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" ([2 Cor. 3:6](#)).

- b. The first deacons preached as well as ministered to the needy of the church.

"And Stephen [a deacon], full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" ([Acts 6:8](#)).

"Then Philip [a deacon] went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" ([Acts 8:5](#)).

- c. Deacons are closely linked to bishops.

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" ([Phil. 1:1](#)).

- d. Deacons are to be spiritually equipped for their task.

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" ([Acts 6:3](#); cp. [1 Tim. 3:8-13](#)).

- e. The office of the deacon was an early development in the church.

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" ([Acts 6:1-4](#)).

5. ([Philippians 1:2](#)) Grace—Peace: a healthy church experiences grace and peace (see note, Grace—[Galatians 1:3](#); note—[Ephes. 2:8-9](#); note, Peace—[Galatians 1:3](#); and note—[Galatians 5:22-23](#) for discussion).

([Galatians 1:3](#)) Minister—Grace—Peace: the minister wishes the very best for other believers. The minister, Paul, wanted the believers of Galatia to experience the grace and peace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Note again how the deity of Jesus Christ is proclaimed: He is placed side by side with God.)

1. Grace (*charis*) means the *undeserved favor and blessings* of God. The word *undeserved* is the key to understanding grace. Man does not deserve God's favor; he cannot earn God's approval and blessings. God is too high and man is too low for man to deserve anything from God. Man is imperfect and God is perfect; therefore, man cannot expect anything from God. Man has reacted against God too much.

Man has.....

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. rejected God | f. sinned against God |
| b. rebelled against God | g. disobeyed God |
| c. ignored God | h. denied God |
| d. neglected God | i. questioned God |
| e. cursed God | |

Man deserves nothing from God except judgment, condemnation, and punishment. But God is love—perfect and absolute love. Therefore, God makes it possible for man to experience His grace, in particular the favor and blessing of salvation which is in His Son, Jesus Christ.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:24](#)).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" ([Ephes. 2:7](#)).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:19](#)).

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 1:14](#)).

2. **Peace** (*eirēnē*) means to be bound, joined, and weaved together with God and with everyone else. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God.

It means to have a sense, a consciousness, a knowledge that God will.....

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| a. provide | f. deliver |
| b. guide | g. save |
| c. strengthen | h. give life, real life |
| d. sustain | both now and |
| e. encourage | forever |

A person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Jesus Christ. Only Christ can bring peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and assurance to the human soul.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ([John 14:27](#)).

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" ([John 16:33](#)).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 5:1](#)).

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:6](#)).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord only makest me dwell in safety" ([Psalm 4:8](#)).

The point is this: not everyone in the church was experiencing the grace and peace of God. Some had fallen from the grace of God, no longer trusting Christ to save them; they depended upon their own works and goodness to make them acceptable to God. As a result they did not have peace of heart. Some had even fallen into all forms of sin and shame ([Galatians 5:19-21](#)).

Others had become extremely critical and divisive, standing against Paul and any who supported Paul. **Note:** Paul wished the very best for the churches of Galatia—even for the false teachers and critics.

He wanted everyone to experience...

1. the grace of God by coming to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.
2. the peace of God as they walked through life confronting all its struggles and trials.

Thought 1. Every minister should wish the very best for all believers, even for his critics and enemies. It might be difficult, but his very call to the ministry is to proclaim the grace and peace of God.

Thought 2. Believers must guard against falling from grace, guard against trusting their own works and goodness to save them and to make them acceptable to God.

PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION I

THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, [Philippians 1:3-30](#)

B. The Marks of Mature Believers, [Philippians 1:3-11](#)

([Philippians 1:3-11](#)) Introduction: What are the marks of a mature Christian believer? What are the marks of a dynamic, mature Christian church? This passage answers these questions. Concisely and clearly, the marks so desperately needed by believers and churches are spelled out.

1. **The mark of a thankful heart (v.3).**
2. **The mark of prayer (v.4).**
3. **The mark of joy (v.4).**
4. **The mark of fellowship (v.5).**
5. **The mark of confidence in God's salvation (v.6).**
6. **The mark of partnership (v.7-8).**
7. **The mark of a growing and discerning love (v.9-10).**
8. **The mark of righteousness (v.11).**

1. ([Philippians 1:3](#)) Brotherhood—Fellowship—Church: there is the mark of a thankful heart.

Paul did not stand alone in the world. He was not the only person living for God and sharing Christ. He belonged to a great family, a family of believers who constituted the family of God. They, too, were living for God and sharing Christ with a lost and needful world. Remember that Paul was in prison in Rome and that he was a great distance from the Philippian believers. He did not have their presence; all he had was the memory of their time together. And sitting there in prison, remembering their love and care and support, his heart swelled up with thanksgiving for them, and he thanked God for them.

Thought 1. What a lesson for us! If Paul thanked God for believers who were so far away from him, how much more should we thank God for each other. We have the love and care and support of each other week by week and day by day, and we can call upon each other for help any hour of any day. Yet how often do we thank God for each other?

Another point is this: we should be following Paul's example and thanking God for all believers every day. We are not alone in the world. God is building a body of people world-wide—a body of people who are just like us—committed to live for the Lord Jesus Christ and to carry His gospel of salvation and love and care to a world that reels under the weight of desperate need.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" ([Col. 1:12](#)).

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" ([Col. 3:15](#)).

2. (Philippians 1:4) Prayer: there is the mark of prayer.

Paul says that he always prayed for the church. The idea is that he prayed all throughout the day for them. They were constantly on his mind and in his prayers. As Matthew Henry says, Paul prayed by name for all the churches he knew, and he had seasons of prayer for each church (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.6. Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, no date listed, p.724).

Thought 1. What a dynamic lesson in prayer!

- 1) To pray by name for all the churches we know.
- 2) To take blocks of time (seasons of prayers) to pray for each church.
- 3) To always—all day long—pray for the churches of our living Lord.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" ([John 17:20](#)).

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you [the Roman church] always in my prayers" ([Romans 1:9](#)).

"[I] cease not to give thanks for you [the Ephesian church], making mention of you in my prayers" ([Ephes. 1:16](#)).

"For this cause [the church] I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Ephes. 3:14](#)).

"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you [the church]" ([Col. 1:3](#)).

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" ([Col. 4:12](#)).

"We give thanks to God always for you [the church] all, making mention of you in our prayers" ([1 Thes. 1:2](#)).

3. (Philippians 1:4) Joy: there is the mark of joy.

Remember that Paul is in prison, yet his heart is filled with joy. Joy (*chara*) means an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful and rejoicing heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful and rejoicing behavior.

The joy of the Lord is not the same as the joy of the world. The joy of the world is more of a temporary pleasure than joy. The world's joy is always nagged by some incompleteness, some lack, some unfulfilling thing, some missing ingredient, some need still existing. There is not a completeness—not a complete sense of assurance, confidence, and satisfaction. There is the knowledge, *the haunting awareness*, that something can go wrong: circumstances can change or some situation can arise to disturb the joy (sickness, death, financial loss, war). The haunting awareness always keeps the world's joy from being full and complete, assuring and satisfying.

Several things need to be said about the believer's joy.

1. Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit, a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy ([John 15:11](#); [Acts 13:52](#); [Romans 14:17](#); [Galatians 5:22](#); [1 Thes. 1:6](#)).
2. Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer's heart overrides all, even the matters of life and death ([Psalm 5:11](#); [2 Cor. 6:10](#); [2 Cor. 7:4](#)).
3. Joy springs from faith ([Romans 15:13](#); [Phil. 1:25](#); [2 Tim. 1:4](#); [Matthew 2:10](#)).
4. Joy of future reward makes and keeps the believer faithful ([Matthew 25:21, 23](#); [Acts 20:24](#); [Hebrews 12:2](#)).

The source of the believer's joy is severalfold.

1. The fellowship of the Father and His Son brings joy ([1 John 1:3-4](#)).
2. Victory over sin, death, and hell brings joy ([John 14:28](#); [John 16:20-22](#)).
3. Repentance brings joy ([Luke 15:7, 10](#)).
4. The hope of glory brings joy ([Romans 14:17](#); [Hebrews 12:2](#); [1 Peter 4:13](#)).
5. The Lord's Word—the revelations, commandments, and promises which He made—brings joy ([John 15:11](#)).
6. The commandments of Christ and the will of God bring joy. Obeying and doing a good job stirs joy within the believer's heart ([John 15:11](#); [John 17:13](#); [Acts 13:52](#)).
7. Prayer brings joy ([John 16:24](#)).
8. The presence and fellowship of believers brings joy ([1 John 1:3-4](#)).
9. Converts bring joy ([Luke 15:5](#); [Phil. 4:1](#); [1 Thes. 2:19-20](#)).
10. Hearing that others walk in the truth brings joy ([3 John 1:4](#)).
11. Giving brings joy ([2 Cor. 8:2](#); [Hebrews 10:34](#)).

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" ([Romans 14:17](#)).

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" ([1 Peter 1:8](#)).

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" ([Psalm 16:11](#)).

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" ([Isaiah 12:3](#)).

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" ([Isaiah 61:10](#)).

4. [\(Philippians 1:5\)](#) **Fellowship: there is the mark of fellowship.**

Note two significant points.

1. The source of fellowship is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great salvation of God. The gospel of Christ is the glorious news that He has died for our sins, risen again, and conquered death that we might live with God eternal-ly, never having to die ([1 Cor. 15:3](#)).

Christian believers have *fellowship*, a spiritual bond, a spiritual union because.....

- a) they have experienced the *same salvation*, the salvation of God.
- b) they have embraced the *same faith*.

Forcefully stated, ***genuine believers***—believers who have totally committed their lives to the gospel of Christ—live and proclaim the gospel. Therefore, true believers are bound together around the gospel—all living the same kind of life and doing the same kind of things. They live, serve, and bear witness to the same Lord; therefore, their lives are bound together in the Spirit of Christ and His fellowship.

2. The fellowship of believers is to exist from the very first day of salvation. What a glorious testimony the Philippian church had! It had been about ten years since some of the members had given their lives to follow Christ and had founded the church. And note: the fellowship of the church had continued from the very first day of its founding. As all churches experience, there must have been differences and problems which had arisen, but the believers handled them *in Christ*—just as they should have. Therefore, the peace and unity of the Spirit was kept alive and the fellowship of the church remained strong.

Thought 1. One of the most critical needs facing the church today is the need for peace and unity in the Spirit of God—a strong fellowship rooted around the gospel of Christ. Lehman Strauss gives the secret: "There was no conflict, no confusion, but continuance. A continuing fellowship is a ***prayer fellowship***. Today a very narrow conception of fellowship prevails. If we attend the same church, recite the same creed, say the same prayers, eat at the same church supper, and socialize with the same crowd, we call this Christian fellowship. But is it? For years I have watched all of these things going on among professing Christians where there was often little conception of ***true fellowship in the gospel***. Among Christians there may be difficulties and disappointments along the way, but never a disruption where there is ***prayer fellowship***" (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.42).

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" ([Acts 2:42](#)).

"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" ([Romans 1:12](#)).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" ([1 John 1:7](#)).

"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" ([Psalm 119:63](#)).

"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" ([Malachi 3:16](#)).

5. (Philippians 1:6) Power, God's— Confidence— Assurance: there is the mark of confidence in God's salvation.

God will complete His good work in believers. Confidence and assurance are two of the striking traits of genuine believers. Believers know God, know Him personally. God's Spirit actually lives within the heart and body of the believer ([John 14:16-17](#); [John 14:26](#); [1 Cor. 6:19-20](#); etc.). The Spirit of God actually bears witness with the spirit of the believer, that he is going to be redeemed someday—presented perfect before God. In fact, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer's body is the very guarantee of the believer's salvation ([2 Cor. 1:22](#); [2 Cor. 5:5](#); [Ephes. 1:14](#)).

1. The believer has absolute confidence in the work of salvation or redemption which God has begun in his life. He has confidence through the presence of God's Spirit who dwells within him.

2. The work begun by God is a good work; that is, it is a work that revolutionizes or radically changes the life of the believer. No matter what kind of life a person was living, once God converts him, the new believer begins to live a *good life* :

a life of.....

- a) righteousness, purity, and holiness.
- b) love, joy, and peace.
- c) faith, humility, and control.

3. The good work is incomplete as long as the believer lives on this earth. He is never perfected, not while a man. There is always work for God to do; therefore, God is always working within the life of the believer to mature him more and more. God is always working to make the man more and more pure and more and more faithful in his service to the Lord Jesus.

4. The good work is to be completed when Jesus Christ returns to this earth. At that time, the believer will be transformed into a perfect man and given a perfect body. He will become a perfect man who will live in the new heavens and earth with Christ. And he will worship and serve the Lord Jesus in perfection throughout all eternity.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" ([John 17:11](#)).

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" ([Phil. 1:6](#)).

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:7](#)).

"...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" ([2 Tim. 1:12](#)).

"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" ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)).

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" ([1 Peter 1:5](#)).

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness [the Holy Spirit] in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" ([1 John 5:10](#)).

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" ([Jude 24-25](#)).

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" ([Rev. 3:10](#)).

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" ([Genesis 28:15](#)).

"O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful" ([Psalm 31:23](#)).

"For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever" ([Psalm 37:28](#)).

"The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands" ([Psalm 138:8](#)).

6. (Philippians 1:7-8) Sympathy— Service— Ministry: there is the mark of "Christian partnership"

(Barclay, William. *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1957, p.21.)

Note how closely bound together Paul and the church were.

1. They were **partners in heart**. Paul loved them as he loved himself; he held them ever so dear to his heart and they constantly filled his thoughts.

2. They were **partners in the sufferings** of Paul.

This means.....

- a) that they were sympathizing with Paul in his imprisonment.
- b) that they were sending hope to Paul while he was in prison.
- c) that they had or were themselves suffering because of the gospel just as Paul was.

The point is this: the affection between Paul and the Philippians was so tender that their hearts went out to each other. What one experienced, the other felt, even the sufferings of each other.

Thought 1. What a striking picture of the kind of sympathy needed for those who suffer. We must learn to be partners in suffering. Then and only then can we bear each other's burdens and truly minister to each other.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)).

"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" ([Hebrews 2:17-18](#)).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)).

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" ([Hebrews 13:3](#)).

3. They were **partners in the gospel**. The Philippians had not given up the gospel, nor had they become silent or complacent in sharing the gospel. They were actively defending and proclaiming the truth of the gospel. The church and its members were busy

for Christ—actively bearing witness to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were taking the great commission of our Lord seriously.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" ([Acts 4:20](#)).

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:8](#)).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).

4. They were **partners in the grace of God**. Paul was expressing the wonderful grace of God—the favor and blessings of God. And the Philippian church was expressing the same grace. God was pouring the richest blessings upon both Paul and the church. Why? What was it that was causing God to so richly bless these two? Their faithfulness: as this passage shows, they were bearing the marks of mature believers.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:19](#)).

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 1:14](#)).

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" ([2 Tim. 2:1](#)).

5. They were **partners with Christ**. The word "**bowels**" (**splagchnois**) means tender mercies, compassion, deep affection. **And note:** it is the tenderness of Jesus Christ that Paul says he has for the Philippians. He longs for them with the very affection and tenderness of Christ Himself.

Thought 1. How desperately the minister and church need such tenderness and affection for each other! What a tremendous difference would exist in churches if believers held each other ever so tenderly—held each other with the tenderness and affection of Christ Himself.

Thought 2. The great need of the church today is for partnership—partnership among its members. Believers desperately need to become partners with each other and with the minister of God:

- a) partners in heart
- b) partners in suffering
- c) partners in proclaiming and defending the gospel
- d) partners in the grace of God
- e) partners with the Lord Jesus Christ

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if we have love one to another" ([John 13:34-35](#)).

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" ([John 15:12](#)).

"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" ([Romans 12:9](#)).

"Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone" ([1 Thes. 3:1](#)).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" ([1 Peter 1:22](#)).

7. ([Philippians 1:9-10](#)) Love: there is the mark of a growing and discerning love.

Note this: love in the Bible never focuses upon *good feelings*. Feelings may and usually do come to the person who truly loves another person, but feelings are never the focus—not with true love. What then is the focus?

- 1) The focus of love is knowledge. If we truly love someone, we want to know that person. In fact, we want to know all we can about the person.
- 2) The force of love is judgment (*aisthēsei*). The word means intelligence or discernment. If we truly love someone, we not only want to know a person but we want to learn all we can about the person. We want to gather all the intelligence and facts possible and discern them so that we can please the person.

Note that Paul wants the believer's love to grow more and more. We need to know more and more about Christ and each other; we need to gather more and more understanding, more and more discernment, more and more intelligence about each other. The more we know about Christ and each other, the more our love for each other will grow.

There are three reasons why we need a love that grows more and more.

1. A growing love is needed to approve things that are excellent. It is not enough just to know what is right and wrong. It is not enough just to do what is right. Sometimes the choice is between the good and the excellent, the acceptable and the best. Only a growing love will stir us to choose the excellent and the best.

- a) The more we love the Lord, the more we will choose the excellent and best for Him.
- b) The more we love each other, the more we will choose the excellent and best for each other. A growing love will not want to do anything that would even come close to causing a person to stumble.

2. A growing love is needed to be sincere and pure. The word “**sincere**” (*eilikrineis*) means to sift about through a sieve in order to make pure. Therefore, the word means pure, uncontaminated, not polluted, untainted. Note that we are to stay pure until the return of Christ. Only a growing love will keep our eyes focused upon Christ. If we do not love Him, we will not look to Him. If we love Him, we will keep our eyes fastened upon Him, longing to see and be with Him. Only love—true love—will keep us pure waiting for His return.

Thought 1. A good illustration of this point is found in the young lady who loves the soldier and is awaiting his return. If she truly loves him, she will keep her eyes fastened upon him and keep herself pure.

3. A growing love is needed to keep us from causing others to stumble. We must always guard against being an “**offense**” (*aproskopi*) or a stumblingblock to others. **Note:** we must be willing to choose the best and the excellent for the sake of others.

We may be able to control, but others may not be able to control.....

- a. drinking
- b. television
- c. social functions
- d. the latest fashion and dress
- e. dancing
- f. movies
- g. eating
- h. makeup

The list could go on and on with almost everything we do. We must control everything we do, not slipping over into the questionable—sometimes not even doing the acceptable and good, but we must choose the best. Approve only the things that are excellent. Why?

- a) To keep from causing a brother to stumble.
- b) To offer up to the Lord the very best we can. This point should *break our hearts*. Just think how often we have chosen to do less than the best for our Lord. We have offered up to Him behavior, words, thoughts, deeds, works that were second best—and we knew it! How His heart must have been cut—especially when He went to the ultimate limit in loving and giving Himself for us.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" ([Romans 14:21](#)).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)).

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

8. ([Philippians 1:11](#)) Righteousness: there is the mark of righteousness.

Righteousness (*dikaiosunē*): means two simple but profound things. It means both *to be right and to do right*.

1. There are those who stress *being righteous and neglect doing righteousness*.

This leads to two serious errors.

- a. **False security.** It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has *believed in* Jesus Christ. But he neglects doing good and living as he should. He neglects obeying God and serving man.
- b. **Loose living.** It allows one to go out and do pretty much as he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his *faith in Christ*. He knows that what he does may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behavior will not affect his salvation. He thinks that no matter what he does he is still acceptable to God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means *being righteous*, but it also means *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous without living righteously.

2. There are those who stress *doing righteousness and neglect being righteous*.

This also leads to two serious errors.

- a. Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works and behaves morally and keeps certain rules and regulations. He does the things a Christian should do by obeying the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance—that God does not love him and accept him because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
- b. Being judgmental and fault-finding. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and finds fault with others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept, he keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized, and censored.

The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is *being righteous as well as doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without *being made righteous in Christ Jesus*.

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 5:20](#)).

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" ([1 Cor. 15:34](#)).

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)).

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" ([Ephes. 6:14](#)).

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" ([Phil. 1:11](#)).

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" ([1 Tim. 6:11](#)).

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" ([Titus 2:12-13](#)).

PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION I

THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, [Philippians 1:3-30](#)

C. The Marks of a Mature Witness, [Philippians 1:12-19](#)

[\(Philippians 1:12-19\)](#) **Introduction:** circumstances often throw and defeat people. The maturity of a person can be seen by how well he handles the things that happen to him—the things that affect a person with mood changes ranging from mild to severe. The one thing that a believer must do is to learn to live above circumstances—to keep his witness for Christ strong and mature. **This is the subject of the present passage: the marks of a mature witness.**

1. **He shares the gospel regardless of circumstances (v.12-14).**
2. **He holds no personal jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige (v.15-18).**
3. **He possesses the assurance of a happy ending: salvation (v.19).**

1. [\(Philippians 1:12-14\)](#) **Witnessing— Believer:** a mature witness shares the gospel regardless of circumstances.

Note two significant points.

1. **Paul faced dark circumstances: he was a prisoner in Rome.** The dark circumstances stared Paul right in the face. No circumstances could ever be any more severe—no matter what they were. Paul was waiting to appear before the Supreme Court of Rome: he was facing a trial before Nero, the Roman Emperor, and he was innocent. He had done nothing that should cause his arrest and imprisonment. Yet there he was, and he was having to wait the arrival of his Jewish prosecutors with their trumped-up and malicious charges. True, he had some privileges—renting his own house and receiving friends—but these privileges were minor when the strains of his sufferings are seen. He was imprisoned for over two years, and as is the case with all prisoners, the days wore on ever so slowly—hour by hour and day after day. **Whatever pressures hang over a man's head who is awaiting a trial that is to determine whether he lives or dies hung over Paul's head.** As he says in [Ephes. 3:13](#), his tribulations were intense and protracted.

But note something: Paul.....

- a) did not grumble and complain
- b) did not question God and wonder why
- c) did not whine and murmur
- d) did not fall to pieces
- e) did not curse God nor give up his faith

2. **Paul used his dark circumstances to spread the gospel.** Paul did not see himself as a prisoner of Rome nor of Nero. He saw himself as a prisoner *for Jesus Christ*. He did not see himself as a victim; he saw himself as a conqueror for Jesus Christ. In [Acts 28:20](#)

Paul says he was "**bound with this chain,**" and in [Ephes. 6:20](#) he calls himself an "**ambassador in bonds.**" The word "**halusis**" is used. The "**halusis**" was a small length of chain that bound a prisoner to the wrist of a guard to prevent his escape. Just imagine! Paul was bound to a Roman guard every day and night for over two years. What do you suppose Paul talked about with the guards? He tells us: "**The things which happened to me have fallen out to the futherance of the gospel.**"

- a. Paul spread the gospel through the *Praetoria Guard*, the elite of the Roman army. These soldiers were the Imperial Guard of Rome, men who had been hand-picked to protect the emperor and to carry out the major armed functions of the state. There were sixteen thousand of them, most of whom were stationed in Rome at any given time (Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.26). It was these soldiers who guarded and were chained to the wrist of Paul day and night for two years—young men who were the elite of Roman youth. How many Paul led to the Lord is unknown.

But note: Christ was shared so much that the gospel spread throughout.....

- 1. the whole Praetorian guard.
- 2. the palace of the emperor.
- 3. all other places.

Paul—his imprisonment and stand for Christ and the gospel which he preached—became the conversation throughout Rome, the conversation among all the social circles including the upper strata, the very palace of the emperor himself.

Thought 1. The lesson for us is this: we must never let circumstances get us down—never let them defeat our testimony and witness for Christ, **no matter what they are.....**

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| a. persecution | h. bankruptcy |
| b. accident | i. sin |
| c. failure | j. loss of a loved one |
| d. financial loss | k. rejection |
| e. divorce | l. abuse |
| f. imprisonment | m. poverty |
| g. age | n. poor health |

If we are living for Christ, we must know that God is in control of our lives. He will strengthen us to bear whatever circumstances fall upon us. We must use the circumstances to witness to the saving power of Christ—to the eternal hope He gives of forgiveness and of living forever. **We must witness to all around us when we.....**

- 1. lie in the bed of sickness
- 2. are in the midst of death
- 3. are facing money problems
- 4. are being abused and persecuted

And if we have sinned and failed—no matter how terribly—we must repent and get back to the task of witnessing, overcoming the circumstances of having failed and sinned so much. We must do all we can to conquer the circumstances for Christ and continue to witness, sharing all the good we can in order to reach all we can. All must be done for Christ, for He is worthy. He has died for us, bearing our sin and punishment and freeing us to live perfectly before God for all eternity. The world does not know this—the world does not know that the cure for the cancer of sin is now available. They cannot know unless we tell them. We must share the good news—share it *regardless of circumstances*.

We must always remember:

1. we conquer circumstances for Jesus Christ.
2. we are not the victim of circumstances; we are the conquerors of circumstances—all for Jesus Christ.
3. we are not to allow our circumstances to discourage others; we are to use our circumstances to encourage others.

b. Paul spread the gospel by encouraging other believers to be more fearless in witnessing. How was this possible?

Note several things.

1. Paul's dynamic witness and the converts among the Imperial guard were being noised about all over the city. Of course, the new converts among the soldiers were beginning to share Christ.
2. Paul's fellow ministers who visited him (Timothy and others) were sharing news about Paul and witnessing themselves.
3. Paul was allowed visitors. While a prisoner, many of the believers throughout Rome visited him and he shared Christ with them—boldly shared Christ. Note what is said:

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" ([Acts 28:30-31](#). Read the brief account for an encouraging picture of just how much Paul shared the gospel—no matter his circumstances, [Acts 28:17-31](#).)

Paul's dynamic witness made a strong impact upon all those around him. His strong witness, despite his terrible circumstances, stirred *many* believers to become much more confident in their own witnessing. Many of the believers began to witness wherever they were—no matter their circumstances.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)).

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" ([John 20:21](#)).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" ([Acts 4:20](#)).

"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" ([2 Cor. 4:13](#)).

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:8](#)).

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" ([Titus 2:15](#)).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).

2. ([Philippians 1:15-18](#)) Faithfulness— Jealousy— Self-seeking: a mature witness holds no personal jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige.

This is a strange experience shared by Paul, yet it is an experience that is so often and tragically repeated in the church and among believers.

Some preachers in Rome were jealous of Paul and envious.....

- a) of the results he was having.
- b) of the favorable attention and prestige he was gaining from society and the social circles of the community.
- c) of the support and loyalty believers were giving him.
- d) of the attention he was receiving from so many of their members.
- e) of the position he was gaining as the leader of the Christian community in Rome.

Note: the preachers were true followers of Christ. They were not the Judaizers, the false preachers who sometimes followed and opposed Paul. These were genuine preachers who were ministers in and around the metropolis of Rome. We know this because Paul agreed with their preaching; he just regretted their opposition to him. Instead of supporting him, they were speaking out against him, hoping to silence his influence and to get rid of him ([Phil. 1:16](#)).

However, not all the preachers throughout Rome opposed Paul. Some were preaching Christ out of love, and they were encouraging their members to show their love for Paul by visiting and supporting him in his ministry of proclaiming Christ.

Thought 1. How often has this scene been repeated? How many are repeating the scene right now?

How many believers and Christian workers are jealous and envious.....

- a) of the position of someone else?
- b) of the attention, support, and loyalty that someone else receives?
- c) of the results that another worker is having?

How many of us begin to question and speak against a Lord's servant because of these things—speak quietly perhaps to only one or two others; nevertheless, we do speak out? God forgive us!

We must always remember: we are *all* ministers and workers if we have been truly called by Christ to preach and teach His gospel. Each one has his call, and no matter the call, the road is always difficult. Therefore, we must support each other. The Lord does not require *big ministries* and *big names* and *big followers* from us all. What he requires is faithfulness—only faithfulness in the ministry to which he has called us. Therefore, let us be *faithful* and support all the ministers of the gospel of Christ.

"Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" ([John 21:21-22](#)).

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" ([1 Cor. 4:1-2](#)).

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" ([2 Cor. 4:5](#)).

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre [personal gain], but of a ready mind" ([1 Peter 5:2](#)).

"His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter" ([Isaiah 56:10-11](#)).

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" ([Jeremiah 3:15](#)).

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord" ([Jeremiah 23:2](#)).

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" ([Ezekiel 34:2](#)).

3. (Philippians 1:19) Deliverance: a mature witness possesses the assurance of a happy ending—that of deliverance.

Again, remember Paul's circumstances: he was in prison, but he was, as always, preaching Christ. No matter his circumstances, he was always preaching Christ; and because he was so faithful to his call, God was honoring his preaching. Tremendous results were occurring: unbelievers from all over were being saved, and believers were being encouraged to step forward and become bolder witnesses for Christ. The result was that everyone throughout all of Rome, believers and non-believers, were talking about Paul, esteeming and holding him ever so highly in their minds. However, some were beginning to show so much attention and support and loyalty to him that some of the local preachers were becoming nervous, jealous, and envious, so they began to speak out against Paul and his ministry.

The point of the present verse is this: Paul is sure God will save and deliver him from their criticism and opposition.

He is sure of God's help and deliverance because of two things:

1. There was the prayer of those who supported him—both those in Rome and those around the world who were praying for him daily. Note that he was writing to the Philippians, so he knew they would begin to pray for him immediately, and God answered their prayer. Therefore, he knew that God would deliver him from such antagonistic opposition because the Philippians were praying for him even if no one else was.

Thought 1. What a glorious teaching for a church—a church so strong in the Lord that the answer to its prayers are always answered.

2. The supply of the Holy Spirit would deliver him. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit would supply whatever he needed to get through his circumstances. No matter what our need is nor how great our need is, the Holy Spirit will deliver us. Strauss points out why the Holy Spirit has been given to believers, and Paul knew the reasons; therefore, he knew that he would be delivered (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.79).

a. The Holy Spirit was given to be our compassion.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" ([John 14:16](#)).

b. The Holy Spirit was given to counsel us.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" ([John 14:26](#)).

- c. The Holy Spirit was given to give us courage for witnessing no matter the circumstances.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" ([John 15:26-27](#)).

- d. The Holy Spirit was given to put conviction in our lives and ministry.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" ([John 16:7-8](#)).

- e. The Holy Spirit was given to share the deep things of God with us.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" ([1 Cor. 2:9-10](#)).

- f. The Holy Spirit was given to pray and intercede for us and to help us pray.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" ([Romans 8:26](#)).

- g. The Holy Spirit was given to bear His fruit in us.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

- h. The Holy Spirit was given to fill us and to put a song and joy in our hearts despite circumstances.

"...be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" ([Ephes. 5:18-19](#)).

- i. **The Holy Spirit was given to give us assurance that we are children and heirs of God.**

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" ([Romans 8:16-17](#)).

PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION I

THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, [Philippians 1:3-30](#)

D. The Marks of the Great Christian Believer, [Philippians 1:20-26](#)

[\(Philippians 1:20-26\)](#) **Introduction:** if a man has ever lived a life of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, it was Paul. Remember, he was in prison facing a capital crime with his deliverance looking almost hopeless. Death was staring him in the face. This passage is one of the great passages of Scripture. [Phil. 1:21](#) has been adopted by many believers as their life verse. Many have committed their lives to pursue either [Phil. 1:20](#) or [Phil. 1:21](#).

This is the personal testimony of Paul: the marks of the great Christian believer.

1. **One great expectation and hope: to magnify Christ in his body (v.20).**
2. **One great commitment in life and death: Christ (v.21).**
3. **One great dilemma: to live or to depart to be with Christ (v.22-23).**
4. **One great willingness: to serve sacrificially (v.24-26).**

1. [\(Philippians 1:20\)](#) **Believer, Purpose— Hope: the great Christian believer has only one great expectation and hope—to magnify Christ in his body.**

1. Note the words "**earnest expectation**" (*apokaradokian*). It means to gaze into the distance with the head erect and outstretched just like a watchman on a tower. It is aiming one's attention at an object with concentration, eagerness, and intensity. It is turning the eyes away from everything else and focusing upon one object and one object alone. It is total concentration upon a person's desire.

2. Note what Paul's expectation and hope was. Remember Paul was in prison being charged with a capital crime which carried with it the penalty of death. The one hope of most prisoners would be release from prison or else to have the death penalty reduced to a lesser punishment. But note Paul's "**earnest expectation and hope**": to magnify Christ in his body. Paul's mind was not upon his terrible plight and circumstances; it was upon Christ—upon magnifying Christ in his body.

As a prisoner he wanted to guard his body from.....

- a) wondering and questioning God
- b) becoming discouraged and depressed
- c) becoming complacent and lethargic
- d) becoming inactive and undisciplined
- e) denying and turning away from God
- f) reacting and cursing God

Paul knew the weakness of the human body, how it tended toward doubt, questioning, self-centeredness, pride, boasting, self-satisfaction, indulgence, extravagance, habit, lethargy, complacency, laziness, enslavement, bondage, and neglecting and ignoring God. Since his conversion, Paul had totally committed himself to magnifying Christ. And there was only one place where Christ could be *magnified and seen*: that was in his body. The only place that men can see Jesus Christ living is in the body or life of a person. Jesus Christ was no longer on the earth; therefore, He could not be seen unless Paul and others allowed Christ to magnify Himself through their bodies. Paul knew this; therefore, he gave his body to Jesus Christ.

3. Note the reference to "**by life, or by death.**" Paul was facing death. He did not know if he was going to die or continue living. If he was to be executed, he wanted to be as faithful as ever and to magnify Christ in death. If he was to be declared innocent and set free, he wanted to continue to magnify Christ in his body.

4. Note why Paul wanted Christ to be magnified in his body: that he might not be ashamed in anything. Paul knew that he was going to face the same thing that every believer is to face: the judgment seat of Christ. He knew that everyone of us has to give an account for what we have done with our bodies while on earth. In fact, Lehman Strauss points out that it had been only about four years earlier that Paul had written the piercing words (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.81):

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" ([2 Cor. 5:10](#)).

When believers face Christ in judgment, the experience will not necessarily be peaches and cream.

a. There will be some believers who will be ashamed.

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" ([1 John 2:28](#)).

b. There will be some believers who will suffer loss and look like a burned out building.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" ([1 Cor. 3:13-15](#)).

This is what Paul meant: he did not want to be ashamed when he stood before Christ. He loved Christ with all of his heart, for Christ had done so much for him. Therefore, his one expectation and hope was for Christ to be magnified in his body. He wanted Christ to be honored both in his life and in his death. Above all, he did not want to be ashamed when he stood before his wonderful Lord.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).

"Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" ([Romans 6:13](#)).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)).

2. ([Philippians 1:21](#)) Believer, Purpose: the great Christian believer has one great commitment in life and death—Jesus Christ.

Paul declares two phenomenal statements:

1. First, "To me to live is Christ." What did he mean by this?

He meant at least five things.

- a. He presented his body as a living sacrifice to Jesus Christ.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Romans 12:1](#)).

- b. He struggled to yield the parts of his body—every member of his body—to Christ as a tool for righteousness.

"Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" ([Romans 6:13](#)).

- c. He struggled to control his mind—to control every thought and to focus every thought upon Jesus Christ and the great virtues of life.

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).

"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" ([Phil. 4:8](#)).

- d. He committed himself to work for love and justice within all of society.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" ([Matthew 7:12](#)).

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" ([Matthew 22:39](#)).

- e. He gave his life—every moment of it—to reach and minister to as many people as possible during his journey upon earth.

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" ([John 20:21](#). Cp. [Matthew 20:28](#) and [Luke 19:10](#), the two verses below.)

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#)).

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

Thought 1. What does life mean to you? Why are you living? What is your great purpose in life?

- a. Are you living for money and possessions (clothes, houses, cars, property)? If so, what do you do in a few years when you die—if you escape accident or disease? What do you do if you lose it? When that day comes—and it is coming, there is nothing in heaven or earth that can stop it—if you have lived for money, what good will it do you?
- b. Are you living for comfort (a good job, a nice place to live, plenty to eat, and enough money to do what you desire now and at retirement)? If so, what happens when disease or accident or tragedy strikes or old

age comes? And one or the other is coming. It cannot be stopped. If you have lived for comfort, what good will it do you?

- c. Are you living for a position? If so, what do you do when you are edged out, removed, demoted, transferred, by-passed, face disease or accident? What good will position do you?
- d. Are you living for family? If so, what do you do when the family has transferred, moved away, or when the various family members die? And it happens to everyone of us. What good will family do you when you face Christ?
- e. Are you living for recognition, honor, popularity, recreation, gratification, sensuality—whatever? What do you do when you face the crises of life and then in the end come face to face with death? At that moment if not before, what good will anything on this earth do you?

2. This brings us to the second point of Paul. He declares that "to die is gain." He knew better than to base his life upon these things. He knew that everything upon earth was aging and passing away including man himself. Therefore, Paul reached out for a Savior, a Person who could save him and give him an eternal world that would never age or pass away. This is the reason he grabbed hold of Christ. Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son whom God sent into the world to reveal the truth of another world to us, a world that is permanent and that has no corruption—no aging—no passing away in it.

Therefore, Paul grabbed hold of Christ when he found out.....

- a) that Christ saved men from sin, death, and condemnation.
- b) that Christ made it possible for men to live forever with God in a new heavens and earth.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" ([Romans 14:8](#)).

"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" ([2 Cor. 4:11](#)).

"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](#)).

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" ([Phil. 1:21](#)).

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" ([Hebrews 11:13](#)).

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" ([2 Peter 3:13-14](#)).

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" ([1 John 3:14](#)).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" ([Rev. 21:1](#)).

[3. \(Philippians 1:22-23\) Believer, Life: the great Christian believer has one great dilemma—to live or to depart and be with Christ.](#)

The word **"depart"** (*anulusai*) is descriptive. **It has a twofold meaning that speaks to the believer's heart.**

1. It means to break up; to loosen as in breaking camp and loosening the ropes of the tent. It is the picture of breaking loose; packing up; and moving on to a new location. The same picture is true of the believer when he departs this life. He is not ceasing to exist; he is simply breaking loose and moving on to a new campsite, in fact, a perfect campsite.

2. It means to loosen the moorings of a ship, weigh anchor, and set sail for another port. Again, the believer does not cease to exist, he simply loosens the moorings of this life, pulls the anchor up, and sets sail for God's eternal presence.

Paul says that he is caught between two great desires:

- a.** One desire is to live a life of fruitful service for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b.** The other desire is to depart and go on to be with Christ which is far better.

The natural mind wonders and questions how a person in his right mind could ever want to go ahead and die. The reason is simply answered: the genuine believer does not die; he never tastes death. He is transferred into the presence of Christ. Immediately—quicker than the blinking of an eye—the believer is transported into the perfect world of God which is named heaven. The believer is perfected—never again to experience pain, suffering, sin, corruption, infirmity, weakness, deformity, disappointment, fear, loss, or death. He will be perfected to work for Christ throughout the new heavens and earth, and he will serve and worship Christ for ever and ever. The promises of God to the believer are phenomenal; they just explode the human mind. It is for this reason that the believer can declare: "To die is gain."

- a.** There is the promise of never dying and of living forever with Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).

"[God's grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Tim. 1:10](#)).

- b. There is the promise that is most dear to the heart of every faithful believer, the promise of being with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself forever and ever.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" ([John 14:2-3](#)).

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" ([2 Cor. 5:8](#)).

"For 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 in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1 Thes. 4:16-17](#)).

- c. There is the promise of receiving a glorious body just like our Lord's glorious body.

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" ([1 Cor. 15:50-53](#)).

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" ([Phil. 3:21](#)).

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" ([Col. 3:4](#)).

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" ([Matthew 13:43](#)).

- d. There is the promise of being made an heir of God.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" ([Romans 8:16-17](#)).

- e. There is the promise of ruling and reigning with Christ forever and ever.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" ([Matthew 25:23](#)).

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth the light; and they shall reign for ever and ever" ([Rev. 22:5](#)).

Promise after promise could be listed, and reason after reason could be given as to why the faithful believer sometimes aches to go on to be with the Lord. As Barclay so aptly says, it will be a glorious day of *union and reunion*—a glorious day of union with our wonderful Lord and a glorious day of reunion with all our loved ones who have gone on ahead of us (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.34). The only word that can adequately express all that God has prepared for us who know Him is the word that is the same in all human languages: *Hallelujah!*

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" ([Matthew 24:44](#)).

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning" ([Mark 13:35](#)).

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding" ([Luke 12:35-36](#)).

[4. \(Philippians 1:24-26\) Believer—Ministry: the great Christian believer has one great willingness—to serve sacrificially.](#)

This is an interesting statement by Paul. Sitting there in prison waiting for the trial which would determine whether he lived or died, something happened to Paul. Either through thinking about the needs that existed in the world and in the churches, or through some sense from the Holy Spirit, Paul became convinced that he would be found innocent of the false charges and released from prison. But note why: it was not for his sake and enjoyment of life, but so that he could continue to minister.

The point to see is Paul's heart—how it longed to reach people for Christ and to meet the needs of a world that reels under the weight of desperation.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" ([Romans 14:19](#)).

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" ([Romans 15:2](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:11-12](#)).

PHILIPPIANS: DIVISION I

THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, [Philippians 1:3-30](#)

E. The Marks of the Great Christian Church, [Philippians 1:27-30](#)

[\(Philippians 1:27-30\)](#) **Introduction:** Paul was in prison. He faced a capital crime and there was a strong chance he might be executed. He did not think so, but there was a possibility. He was not sure if he would ever see the Philippian church again, so he sat down and began to write to them. What would you say if you were writing to a group of God's people for the last time? One of the subjects that concerned Paul was the subject of this passage: the marks of a great church. The Philippian church was a great church, and Paul wanted it to remain great. Therefore, he reviewed with them the marks of a great Christian church.

1. **Mark 1: Christian conduct—heavenly citizenship (v.27).**
2. **Mark 2: honoring the gospel (v.27).**
3. **Mark 3: standing fast (v.27).**
4. **Mark 4: courage and fearlessness (v.28-30).**

1. [\(Philippians 1:27\)](#) **Citizenship, Heavenly—Believers, Duty: the first mark of a great church is Christian conduct or heavenly citizenship.**

The word "**conversation**" or "**conduct**" (*politeuesthe*) is significant. A.T. Robertson points out that this word is used only twice in the New Testament ([Acts 23:1](#); [Phil. 1:27](#)) (*Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.441*). Usually, when the New Testament refers to behavior or conduct, it uses a word meaning how a person should walk about day by day (*peripatein*). But Paul switches the word in writing to the Philippians. Why? The reason is significant. As stated in the introductory material, Philippi was a proud Roman colony. In fact, it was famous as a miniature Rome. A city became a Roman colony by one of two ways. At first Rome founded colonies throughout the outer reaches of the Empire to keep the peace and to guard against invasions from barbaric hordes. Veteran soldiers, ready for retirement, were usually granted citizenship if they would go out and settle these colonies. Later on, however, a city was granted the distinctive title or a Roman Colony for loyalty and service to the Empire. The distinctive thing about these colonies was their fanatic loyalty to Rome. The citizens kept all their Roman ties: the Roman language, titles, customs, affairs, and dress. They refused to allow any infiltration of local influence whatsoever. They totally rejected the influence of the world around them. They were Roman colonists within an alien environment.

This is the reason Paul uses the word *politeuesthe*. It means conduct and behavior, but more accurately it means the conduct and behavior of *citizenship*, of a person who is the citizen of a great nation. The Philippian church knew exactly what Paul was saying: they were citizens of heaven.

Therefore, they must.....

- a) keep their close ties with heaven.
- b) speak the clean and pure language of heaven.
- c) bear the title of heaven, Christian, and do so proudly.
- d) bear witness to the customs of heaven.
- e) carry on the affairs of heaven.
- f) dress as a citizen of heaven.
- g) allow no infiltration of worldly influence whatsoever.
- h) live and conduct themselves as a heavenly colony within a polluted and dying environment.

"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" ([Phil. 1:9-10](#)).

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)).

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [behavior, conduct] his works with meekness of wisdom" ([James 3:13](#)).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" ([2 Peter 3:10-13](#)).

2. (Philippians 1:27) Church— Believers: the second mark of a great church is honoring the *gospel*.

The word "**becometh**" or worthy (*axiōs*) means to fit, correspond, be suitable, be worthy.

The believer's behavior is to.....

- a) fit the gospel he professes.
- b) correspond to the gospel he professes.
- c) be suitable to the gospel he professes.
- d) be worthy of the gospel he professes.

No church and no believer within the church is to bring dishonor to the gospel. If a person professes the gospel he is to live worthy of the gospel. His conduct and behavior is to fit and correspond to the gospel he professes.

Lehman Strauss points out that this is the picture of clothing which is so often stressed by Scripture (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.94). We often say that some piece of clothing is becoming to a person. What we mean is that the clothing matches and enhances the person's looks and personality. The same with the gospel of Christ. If we put on the gospel, we are to wear the gospel. Scripture declares:

"Adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" ([Titus 2:10](#)).

"But now ye also put off [as clothing] all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" ([Col. 3:8-10](#)).

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" ([Col. 3:12-14](#)).

3. (Philippians 1:27) Steadfastness— Church: the third mark of a great church is standing fast.

Remember that Paul was in prison, awaiting trial on a capital charge. There was a chance he would be executed for a false crime. He thought he would be released, but he was not absolutely sure. Therefore, whether he was able to return to the church or not, there was a much needed exhortation that the church must heed: the exhortation to stand fast.

1. The church must stand fast in *unity*: "**in one spirit, with one mind.**"
 - a. *One spirit* means that all the members of a church must be born again by the Spirit of Christ. All members must have a renewed spirit from the same source, from the same Person. They must all be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. They must all have a heart given to Him.
 - b. *One mind* means that all members must be set upon the same purpose; they must all be focused upon the purpose of Jesus Christ.

The point is this: the world—its people, families, and nations—may be split and divided, arguing and differing, fussing and feuding, fighting and divorcing, warring and killing, seeking and grasping; but the church is not to live that way. The church is to be unified; it is to be one in spirit and one in mind; one in heart and one in purpose.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" ([1 Cor. 1:10](#)).

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" ([2 Cor. 13:11](#)).

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" ([Ephes. 4:3](#)).

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" ([Phil. 1:27](#)).

"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" ([Phil. 2:3-4](#)).

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" ([1 Peter 3:8](#)).

2. The church must stand fast in striving together for the faith of the gospel. The word **"striving together"** (*sunathlountes*) is the word taken from an athletic contest. It is the picture of a team working and struggling together against strong opposition (compare a football team). The church—every member of it—is to strive for the faith of the gospel: strive, work, struggle, push, exert all the energy possible; everyone cooperating together, not a single person letting up or turning aside or walking off the field. The opposition is difficult; therefore, the faith of the gospel needs every member working and struggling together.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)).

"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" ([Titus 1:13](#)).

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" ([1 Peter 5:8-9](#)).

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" ([2 Peter 3:17](#)).

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" ([Jude 3](#)).

4. (Philippians 1:28-30) Courage— Persecution: the fourth mark of a great church is courage and fearlessness.

Being a Christian believer in a corrupt world is hard. People oppose our stand for Christ and righteousness. It may be next door, in the office, at school or a hundred other places—**the Christian believer is sometimes.....**

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| a. avoided | i. ignored |
| b. ridiculed | j. neglected |
| c. mocked | k. overlooked |
| d. isolated | l. by-passed |
| e. cursed | m. slandered |
| f. questioned | n. persecuted |
| g. abused | o. imprisoned |
| h. mistreated | p. martyred |

Note the exhortation: we are not to be terrified by our adversaries.

There are four reasons why.

1. Persecution is a sign that the persecutors are doomed. And note: it is a sign *to them*. The Spirit of God is able to take their persecution of us and convict their hearts of the evil they are doing. Their persecution of a fellow human being strikes the fact of doom and judgment to their hearts: it convicts them, and by that conviction they stand a better chance of being saved.

2. Persecution is a sign of salvation for us. Of course, it is not the only sign, but it is one sign. If a believer stands fast in persecution, it is a clear sign that he is being strengthened by the Spirit of God and is a true believer.

3. Persecution is a privilege, not a terror. When we are persecuted, we are suffering for Christ, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. Christ is not some *insignificant rebel*, some *leader of men* hiding out in some remote spot who embarrasses us and of whom we should be ashamed. Christ is the Son of God, the Lord of lords, the God of the universe, the Sovereign Majesty of all. It is a privilege to be numbered among His followers and to represent Him. If we happen to be cornered by some who oppose and rebel against Him, we are not to deny Him, nor be ashamed to own His name. We are not to be terrified by persecution. It is the highest honor imaginable to represent and serve the Lord God of all. He is coming soon to subject all opponents and enemies and to rule and reign over all. We could have no greater privilege than preparing the way for Him—even if some do oppose us.

4. Paul (and others) had left the church a dynamic example to follow in bearing persecution. Paul had been arrested, beaten, and jailed when he was in Philippi; and the church had witnessed the whole scene. He bore it all for Christ. Therefore, we are to follow in his steps and bear whatever persecution is launched against us—all for Christ.

The great Christian soldier can bear it—through the presence and power of Christ—bear it as a great Christian soldier for Christ.

"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" ([Matthew 10:17](#)).

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" ([Matthew 24:9](#)).

"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" ([John 15:20](#)).

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" ([Phil. 1:29](#)).

"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" ([1 Thes. 3:3](#)).

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" ([2 Tim. 3:12](#)).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" ([1 Peter 4:12-14](#)).

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" ([1 Peter 4:16](#)).

"All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me" ([Psalm 119:86](#)).