

Epistle to the Philippians III Chapter Two

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I hope that you have found going through book of Philippians to be very helpful. I want to read Philippians 2 from the point of view and of the mind that Paul was in prison. He didn't know whether he would live or die, or see the brethren again or not. Here is a tremendous instruction for us that gets down to *the very heart and core of Christian growth*, Christian maturity, growing in grace and knowledge and developing and having the very attributes that God wants us to have.

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if there be any encouragement and comfort in Christ, if any comfort and inspiration of love, if any fellowship and communion of the Spirit... [the Spirit fellowshiping with us; and truly our fellowship—as John says—is with God the Father and Jesus Christ] ... if any compassions and tender affections of the innermost being." That's what God wants. He doesn't want a façade of 'religion' on the outside. He doesn't want the merit badges of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He doesn't want great names and titles. ***He wants conversion and love from your innermost being!***

Verse 2: "Fulfill to overflowing my joy and happiness, that you be of the same attitude of mind and heart, having the same love, joined together in soul, and all be minding the one thing (the attainment of the Kingdom of God). Never let anything be done which is motivated by contention and strife, nor by self-exaltation or arrogant vain-glory; but in humility and lowliness of mind let each of you be esteeming others above himself. each esteeming the others above himself. Do not be selfishly focusing and concentrating on your own things, but let each of you also consider the things and necessities of the others" (vs 2-4). This gives us the attitude of mind so that we can grow in grace and knowledge.

Verse 5 becomes a very central and key important verse: "**For this cause...** [everything that has gone before] ...**let this mind and attitude be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus.**" That's the kind of mind and attitude that we are to have.

I remember a man writing when we did the series *Who is Jesus?* He said, 'How can a human being have the mind of the eternal God? *Well, if you have the Spirit of God, which is eternal, in your very mind and being—by the begetting from God the Father—then you can have the mind of Jesus Christ!*

Let's understand exactly what it was that

Jesus did, and to understand that the lesson is not that we're going to have the same spirit mind as Christ, *but the mind and attitude that Christ had when He was here on the earth*; the mind and attitude that God has in His own humility, to reach down and save all of those whom He is calling.

Verse 6: "Who was really existing as God, in God's form and appearance, when facing the prospect of becoming human, He did not consider being equal with God a conspicuously to claim or to cling to greedily." Let's think on that for just a minute.

God is Creator! He made everything that there is! What good would God's power, might and creative ability in righteousness be if He could not save humankind? What good would that do for His creation and for us? *None whatsoever!* When God was facing the prospect of becoming human—that is the One Who became Jesus Christ—He didn't throw a temper tantrum and tell God the Father, 'You're making me give up all of this.' *NO!*

Verse 7: "But He willingly emptied Himself of His Divinity (that is He gave up existing as God with eternal glory and all that He had with the Father before the world existed), and divested Himself of all His privileges as God; and having been made in the similitude and likeness of mortal men, He took upon Himself the exact form of flesh and blood of human beings and the appearance of a common slave"—the appearance of a common slave. The Greek for *slave* is 'doulos.'

Verse 8: "And after existing as a human being with the same fleshly functions as all human beings, (and having experienced every temptation common to every human beings, yet never sinning), He humbled Himself in abject abasement, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (which is a most excruciating form of death)." When we understand exactly what God did, that that is for us:

- that we may be saved
- that we may be partakers of His Divine nature
- that we may be partakers of His Divine life

Let's look at some of the Scriptures that show what God has done. This is really tremendous and really fantastic, brethren. John 1 is very basic, but there are people who have believed this in the past who are throwing this aside, who are not

accepting what the Word of God is teaching, telling us that it means something else other than what it really says.

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.**” There is nothing any plainer or clearer than that. This becomes very important in relationship to the Feast of Tabernacles, in relationship to what Jesus Christ has done, and in relationship to our understanding of what God did for us! We might ask ourselves as we go through this:

- What have I done for God?
- What have I given up for God?
- What have I put behind me?

The ‘rich man’ came to Jesus and said, ‘Good Master, what good thing should I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said, ‘Don’t call me *good*, there’s only One good and that is God.’ At that time, in the form of a human being, He was no longer God as God *is* God. That’s why He said that there is only One good, and that is God. ‘But if you will enter into life, **keep** the commandments.’ Then He named a lot of the commandments, and the young man said, ‘I’ve done all of these things from my youth, what lack I yet?’ And Jesus said, ‘If you will be perfect, go sell everything that you have and give to the poor and come and follow Me.’

You stop and think for a minute: Is there anyone of us that has really given up something. And even if we did, should we brag about it? What good would it be if we just boasted and bragged in empty vain glory. ‘I gave this up for God!’ You did? **Look what God gave up for you!**

Verse 2: “He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (vs 2-4).

Verse 14: “**And the Word became flesh...**” That’s the same kind of flesh that we have. God gave up being a spirit being with eternal power and glory, divested Himself of all His glory—emptied Himself of His power and existence as God—to be made flesh, subject to the same pulls and temptations that we have.

“...and tabernacled... [temporarily lived among His creation] ...among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and Truth” (v 14).

Let’s look at some other Scriptures that also prove that Jesus was in heaven and was God *before* He became a human being. That’s so we can fully comprehend and understand what it is that God did.

When we read this Scripture, we really begin to understand it. We know that Jesus loved the Father. We know that the Father loved Jesus Christ. We know that for the salvation of all mankind, God placed everything as it were at risk and on the line to save the world, to offer salvation to all humanity. We’re the firstfruits at this present time, and we don’t need to brag and boast about that, because God didn’t call us because of what we are; God called us because *He chose us!*

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who **believes in Him** may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (vs 16-17).

Verse 31 shows that Jesus came from heaven, Jesus *was* God, and it is amazing how all of these detractors and those who are throwing away the Truth of God just close their mind to these Scriptures and say, ‘It doesn’t mean that; it means something else.’

Verse 31 “He Who comes from above is above all... [Can anything be plainer than that?] ...The one who is of the earth is earthy, and speaks of the earth. He Who comes from heaven is above all.” What a tremendously clear Scripture. *He that comes from heaven!* Where did Jesus come from? *Heaven!* *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!* So, He that comes from heaven is above all!

John 8:23—Jesus was telling those who were the religion leaders of His day: “And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.’” Why? *Because He came from heaven!*

Verse 58: “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.’” We know that’s one of the names of God. In the Old Testament when the Lord God told Moses to tell the children of Israel Who He was, He said, ‘I AM that I AM,’ which means that God’s name is so absolutely fantastic that there is virtually no vocabulary in any language that can truly describe God! Just think on that for a while.

John 16—here again showing that Jesus came from heaven. That’s a tremendous thing! When we stop and think about what it is that we have done for anyone else to help them, to save them, to do whatever we can—whatever it is, even in the flesh—and then we compare what God has done for us! Then we stop and think about how absolutely ridiculous and silly and worthless it is to be complaining, griping Christians. That’s why Philip. 2 is so important:

- to have love
- to have unity
- to have that spirit in mind and attitude

Paul is saying, ‘I want you to perfect this, the very mind of Christ in you.’

John 16:27: “For the Father Himself loves you... [That means that the Father Himself is loving you. God has that capacity to have that special and particular love for every human being whom He calls] ...because you have loved Me, **and have believed** that I came forth from God.... [He didn’t come from the earth. He came *from* God.] ...I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father” (vs 27-28). If He came from the Father, where was the Father? *In heaven above!* If He came to the earth and returned back to the Father, and the Father is in heaven—we are told to pray, ‘Our Father **Who is in** heaven’—He’s not here on the earth.

That’s the whole plan of God: that God the Father is going to eventually be here on the earth with His whole spirit family. That’s what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures.

John 17:1: “Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come... [It was time for Him to go through the crucifixion] ...glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You; since You have given Him authority over all flesh...” (vs 1-2). That’s why Jesus Christ is the Savior:

- because of what He did
- because of what He gave up
- because of what He performed in this life

having the law of sin and death in Him, being like any other human being and never sinning—never once sinning! Therefore, His sacrifice covers all human beings for all time, because *He* was Creator; because *He* has done this!

He has “...authority... [and power] ...over all flesh in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him” (v 2). That’s why we’re here; that’s what the Word of God is all about; that’s what our calling is all about—to *receive eternal life!* Not just to have a ‘religion’ to be ‘good people’ in the world. There are many ‘religions’ that can accomplish that. But to have eternal life that comes from God the Father!

Verse 3: “For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You **before the**

world existed” (vs 3-5). Was Jesus Christ God? *Yes, absolutely! No doubt about it whatsoever, absolutely none!*

1-Timothy 3:16 shows that Jesus was indeed God in the flesh: “And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness... [that God is performing in us, and was performed in Christ Jesus] ...God was manifested in *the* flesh... [Isn’t that something? This is talking about Jesus’ life] ...was justified in *the* Spirit...” Brought justification for all human beings, because God did not need to be justified because He did not sin. Justified in the Spirit means bringing that justification for all human beings. That justification means that you and I, all that God calls, are put in right standing with God in heaven above through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“...was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the* Gentiles, was believed on in *the* world, was received up in glory” (v 16). This one verse encapsulates the whole sum of the Gospel.

1-John 3:16: “By this *very act* we have known the love *of God*... [notice how this relates to John 3:16] ...because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.” There it is again, we are to conduct our lives exactly as Christ did. That’s why we are to have the mind of Christ within us. That’s tremendous, brethren; absolutely incredible!

Let’s see how with the Spirit of Christ we can have, we can be granted, the very mind of Christ. If Christ is *in you*, and the Word of God is *in you*, and you are growing in grace and knowledge, can you have the mind of Christ? Can you have the attitude of Christ? *Yes, you can!* But it’s not something that you can reach down and pull up your own bootstraps and say, ‘AH! I will have the mind of Christ.’ *NO!* God has to give that to you. Here’s how He gives it to you. I think we need to go over these Scriptures, and to really have it in our mind

- so that we can begin to grasp
- so that we can begin to reach out
- so that we can have God with His Spirit fill us
 - ✓ with this knowledge
 - ✓ with this understanding

1-Corinthians 2:9: “But according as it is written, ‘*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*’” We see this constantly begin preached: the love of God; and the love of God is what is going to bring us closer to God, closer to each other.

At the Democratic Convention (1992) we had a great blasphemous perversion of this Scripture.

Bill Clinton said that ‘We’re going to make a new covenant with the American people.’ I watched that and was saying, ‘Oh, man, talk about fraud and deceit. Then he ended by saying, ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear has not heard, things that *we* can do.’ If that is not nearly sitting in the seat of God, if that is not blasphemous to a great degree, I don’t know my Bible. It’s not what human beings will do, *it is what God can do for those who love Him!*

We also have the same thing in Rom. 8 where it says, ‘For we know that all things work together for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.’

Verse 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.” This is how we are able to have the same mind, the same attitude of Jesus Christ.

Let’s understand this, because it’s the Holy Spirit that is teaching us these things; it is the Holy Spirit that shows us how to compare spiritual things with spiritual things, and rightly divide the Word of God, rightly put it together, rightly understand the Word of God, because there are many, many out there twisting and turning and perverting the Scriptures. And just when we think that things are not as bad as there were, WHAMO! something comes along and there’s a little twisting, perverting, changing, throwing away belief in Christ and the doctrines of the Bible.

This is why we have to have the mind of Christ, v 15: “However, the one who is spiritual discerns all things... [Why? *Because they’re viewing them with the Word of God as the guide in their mind!* That’s why we can look at something and know whether it is wrong, know whether it is good, know whether it is evil] ...but he himself is discerned by no one”—because we are judge of God; we’re not judged by another man. We’re not judged by someone coming along and condemning us and saying to do this, that or the other thing. *NO!* If we have the mind of Christ, what are we going to want to do?

- We’re going to want to keep the commandments of God!
- We’re going to want to do the things that please God!

Jesus said, ‘I always do the things that please the Father.’ If we have the mind of Christ, is that not what we’re going to want to do? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 16: “For who has known *the* mind of the Lord? Who shall instruct Him?...” No one is going to tell God what to do? The Scriptures say, ‘Shall the thing made say to him that is making it, what are you doing?’ We have people who get violently mad because we say that God is going to

give people an opportunity for salvation that He never gave an opportunity for salvation—through what we know is the second resurrection; the celebration of the Last Great Day. They get mad and say, ‘God can’t do that.’ Who’s going to tell God what to do? Who’s going to tell God where to go? *No one!*

“...But **we have the mind of Christ**” (v 16). Not to instruct God, but we have the mind of Christ so that we know and understand the things that God freely gives to us. You can’t buy them! You can’t discover them on your own! God is the One Who has to do it.

- This is why it is so very, very important as to what God has done.
- This is why we are to have this mind in us.
- This is why we are to have this attitude in us.

Let’s see some other things concerning this and what it is we need to know and understand concerning what Jesus did.

Philippians 2:8: “And after existing as a human being with the same fleshly functions as all human beings, (and having experienced every temptation common to every human being, yet, never sinning)...” This is really important for us to know, and something to comprehend.

Let’s understand what it is that Jesus did, what it is that Jesus went through, and to know that at any time—regardless of the problem or difficulty that you may have; regardless of the sin that you may have committed—you can go to Christ in confidence. There may have to be some deep and penetrating repentance on your part, or on my part—or whomever it is that sins—to come to God to have those sins forgiven. We can have this confidence that Jesus Christ—when He was made flesh and blood—was subject to all the temptations that we are.

Hebrews 2:14: “Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same... [that is the exact same flesh as we know it] ... in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil.”

As we see on the Day of Atonement, that’s the whole key important thing, to destroy the works of the devil. The world cannot be a perfect place to live until the return of Jesus Christ and the elimination of Satan the devil, and the destruction of all of his works. He is the one who is causing all of these things. Today we need to be very careful about how this sanctimonious ‘religion’ of the world—this way of the world—is coming on, that we do not be deceived.

Verse 15: “And *that* He might deliver those who were subject to bondage all through their lives by *their* fear of death.” If this does not describe the power that the Catholic Church and other religions put over people—of burning in hell forever; through fear of death you’re going to die—and keep them in bondage. Christ has relieved us from that bondage.

Verse 16: “For surely, He is not taking upon Himself to help *the* angels; but He is taking upon Himself to help *the* seed of Abraham. For this reason, it was obligatory for *Him*... [it was necessary; God obligated Himself] ...to be made like *His* brethren in everything...” (vs 16-17). He didn’t come here as a special human being different from what we are, except that He had the Holy Spirit—the full measure—from the instant of conception. But everything else was exactly as we are.

“...that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in* things pertaining to God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (v 17). We can come to God at any time! We can come to Christ at any time, and know that He is able to help us.

Verse 18: “For because He Himself has suffered, having been tempted *in like manner*, He is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Hebrews 4:14: “Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should **hold fast** the confession of *our faith*.” That’s what I really want to emphasize, brethren.

- Let us grow in grace!
- Let us grow in knowledge!
- Let us grow in the character of Christ!
- Let us grow in the mind of Christ!

If there are sins that we stumble into and get overtaken with, let’s go to God and repent of those and go on.

Verse 15: “For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who* was tempted in **all things**... [every aspect of human life] ...according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet, *He was* without sin.” That’s why God is Holy, righteous, perfect, true, loving, kind; all of those things!

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” That’s a tremendous thing! It is God’s grace: *by grace are you saved and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God!* Brethren, we’re going to have the opportunity to bring that to the whole world. That’s what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures. Isn’t that

tremendous.

Philippians 2:8: “...He humbled Himself in abject abasement and became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross (which is a most excruciating form of death).” Why is that? *So that no one is going to come to God and say* ‘God, look at the terrible death that I died. God, look at this evil that was brought upon the world that I went through. You don’t know what it’s like, God, to suffer. You don’t know what it’s like, God, to be in pain.’ **Yes, He does!** Absolutely! You think about that!

If you were God would you be willing to give up being God to come and be a human being. Let’s look at it another way: being a human being, would you be willing to give yourself up and become an ant so that you could save other human beings? That’s a little facetious and ridiculous analogy to look at, but the comparison between the existence of God and human being, and the existence of a human being and an ant maybe quite comparable.

It says in the Old Testament that all the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers. It also says that when you get down you feel just low like a worm. Yes, that’s a true analogy.

Verse 9: “Because of this... [because of what Jesus Christ did] ...God [the Father] has supremely exalted Him and pre-eminently crowned Him with the magnificent splendor, glory and honor, and graciously bestowed and conferred upon Him a name and title, which *is* superior to and more excellent than any other name.” Let’s understand that. This is so important!

There is still is a name of God that we don’t understand; a name of Christ that we don’t know. We know some of the names of Christ. We know some of the attributes that those things depict for us. This very name, the pre-eminent name that has been given to Jesus Christ, we will see that every knee is going to bow.

Revelation 19:11 “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True... [those are attributes of Jesus Christ] ...and in righteousness He does judge and make war.” Here is the only Holy war that is going to succeed. All of the other wars of mankind that are declared as ‘Holy’ are not.

Verse 12: “And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; and He had a name written that no one knows except Him.” That is the name that we’re talking about in Philip. 2.

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Let’s see how this also applies to us. We,

brethren, are going to have a new name ourselves. We're going to have a new name right by wherever it is that we're going to live in New Jerusalem that says whatever that new name is. Christ is going to give us a new name. It's going to be special, and He alone is going to give it to us. Part of what God is preparing for us, part of the building of New Jerusalem, part of our future occupancy in the Kingdom of God also includes a new name.

Revelation 2:17: "The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone **a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives it.**" That's tremendous!

Let's all more on to it, Revelation 3—here is something else. We're going to have more than one name.

- we're going to have our name
- we're going to have the name of Christ
- we're going to have the name of the Father
- we're going to have the name of the city of New Jerusalem—which comes down from God the Father

Revelation 3:12: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him he name of My God... [we have our ¹own name and the ²name of God and the ³name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* ⁴My new name." There we go, four parts to our new name. That is going to be a name that is less than the name of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:9: "Because of this, God has supremely exalted Him, and pre-eminently crowned Him with the magnificent splendor, glory and honor, and graciously bestowed and conferred upon Him a name and title which is superior to and more excellent than any other name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." (vs 9-10).

- There isn't going to be one human being that is not going to bow the knee to Jesus Christ.
- There's not going to be one angel in heaven above that is not going to bow the knee to Jesus Christ.
- There's not going to be one rebellious demon that is not going to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

"...of every being in heaven, and on earth and under the earth; and that every tongue should

confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory and honor of God the Father" (vs 10-11). That is tremendous! That is absolutely incredible!

Verse 12: "In the light of this, my beloved, in exactly the same manner as you have always attentively listened and submissively obeyed, not as in my presence only but now at this time: in my absence, you should be all the more working out your own salvation with reverential fear and **awe, and trembling generation.**" That's what we need to be doing—the same as Jesus Christ, always doing those things that please the Father—just as Jesus Christ did! Not that we have a show and pretense.

Too often it is that way; where the minister has a show and pretense before His flock, and he's the 'greatest this and that and everything.' *NO! That is not the way that it should be!* Various members come up and stroke and politic the minister for their own advantages. *That's not what it should be!* We need to be:

- loving God
- serving God
- praying
- growing
- overcoming

—all of that to where then the Spirit of God *in us* motivates us to do these things. Not that we have to be beaten into it, *because God isn't going to beat us into it!* Not that we can do it of our own accord, **but Christ in us!**

Let's see how tremendous this is. Let's see exactly what it is that we need to be doing to grow in this grace and knowledge. This is powerful, brethren. This is absolutely tremendous what God has given for us to do, and to make it possible that we can be born into the Kingdom of God, that we can rule and reign with Jesus Christ forever and ever!

2-Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained *the* same precious faith as ours by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness..." (vs 1-3). Through the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, God has given us everything. This pertains

- to Godliness
- to growing
- to overcoming
- to developing that
 - ✓ Christian love
 - ✓ Christian character
 - ✓ Christian faith

“...through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue...” (v 3). There is that crown of glory that is waiting for every one of us. Just as Jesus has been crowned and given a name—greater than any name—so likewise, we have glory and virtue that has been given to us; that we have a goal to look forward to.

Verse 4: “Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature...”

- Not only just the mind of God, *but now the Divine nature!*
- Not just the thoughts of God, *but the nature of God!*

If it's going to be the nature of God, then we are going to be the sons of God, raised in glory at the resurrection—which is tremendous and wonderful. We need to always keep that in mind!

“...having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust...” (v 4)—because of God's calling we can escape that corruption.

- There is God's Spirit *to lead us!*
- There is God's Spirit *to guide us!*
- There is God's Spirit *to give us conviction!*
- There is God's Spirit with His Word!

to give us

- stability
- understanding
- grace
- knowledge

Besides this, v 5: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides... [this is what we need to do: work out our own salvation with fear and trembling] ...add...” Grow, increase, multiply—remember the parable of the talents; the parable of the seed that was sown and those that brought forth 100-fold, 60-fold and 30-fold. All of that fits right in here.

“...to your faith, virtue... [the kind of Godly character and understanding] ...and to virtue, knowledge” (v 5). I don't think there's any way that we can ever grow to the full knowledge of God in our lifetime. We have to do the best we can and keep striving for it, but there is so much there because God is eternal. God's plan is spiritual and we are to grow in that knowledge.

Verse 6: “And to knowledge, self-control...” That's why we have the trials and tribulations we go through. The tribulations and trials bring experience, and experience brings hope, and hope makes not ashamed the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts.

“...and to self-control, endurance... [which implies that there are going to be times when it's not easy] ...and to endurance, Godliness... [the very mind and character of God] ...and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love *of God*” (vs 6-7).

There are the steps of growing and overcoming. This is what we are to be constantly being about all the time. That's just the way it is. We are serving and helping, and with the tithes and offerings that you give we are able to reach out and help many people who are trying to obey without someone around. They're trying to obey God because they love Him, because they want to serve Him, because they want the salvation of God.

Philippians 2:12: “In the light of this, my beloved, in exactly the same manner as you have always attentively listened and submissively obeyed. not as in my presence only but now at this time: in my absence, you should be all the more working out your own salvation with reverential fear and awe, and trembling generation. Because God is the One who is performing the inner work with power and energy within you, both to will and desire, and to function and work according to His good pleasure and purpose.” (vs 12-13).

God is the One Who does this! Isn't that tremendous? That is absolutely magnificent, brethren! That God could take us and do these things.

Verse 14: “Be habitually doing and performing everything without murmuring, complaining, and criticizing, and without vain reasoning and surmising.” We could add in there: no gossip, no picking and all of this sort of thing. Not to create a situation—as we have seen in the past—where the ministers put the brethren in fear so they can hide their own sins. That's not what it's talking about here at all.

Verse 15: “In order that you may be blameless, without defect, even without any mixture of vice or deceit; but be sincere children of God, even in this tormented and perverted, depraved and corrupt generation; among whom you shine as beacons of light in the world.” Isn't that true? This world is becoming more and more like Sodom and Egypt. Let's see where it talks about Lot, because we're living in that time right now.

The most perverse, wretched and evil things are coming upon this world because of that. And it's difficult, brethren to live in this world. I'm just beginning to understand what it's going to be like when we come down to the time of the *mark of the beast*. That's going to be difficult, because there is this society that has been created, inspired by Satan

the devil. We have to live in the world but not be part of the world, and when the *mark of the beast* comes, it's going to cut us off from the physical things of this world.

If there's any time that we're going to have faith in God, and trust in Christ, that is going to be it. They are developing the things now that are so incredible that you won't be able to buy and sell. That's going to make this society and living here even worse than every before. Worse than just living in this depraved society, living in Sodom and Gomorrah as it were.

2-Peter 2:4: "For if God did not spare *the* angels who sinned, but, having cast *them* into Tartarus, delivered *them* into chains of darkness to be kept for *the* judgment; and *if* God did not spare *the* ancient world, but saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought *the* Flood upon the world of *the* ungodly" (vs 4-5).

The world was so bad before the Flood. Think how bad it had to be to destroy everything! Can you imagine what it was like for Noah living in that generation, preaching the Word of God? No one believed him, only he and his family were saved, plus the animals that God brought to the ark.

Verse 6: "And having reduced *the* cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, condemned *them* with a catastrophic *destruction*, making *them* an example *for those* who would be ungodly in the future." In other words, an example of what is going to happen to them. God's got another example of what's happening to them; it is called AIDS! It is a deadly disease, absolutely kills with no cure. Now we have strain two and three, and before we know it, there's going to be four, five, six, seven and eight. We're going to have the curse brought upon this whole world and plague, because people want to sin; people want their lust, their evil and their perversion! ***Out of this society, brethren, we have been called! And it's difficult!***

Verse 7: "And *if* He personally rescued righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the lawless ones *living* in licentious conduct; (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, through seeing and hearing *their* lawless activities, *was* tormented day by day *in his* righteous soul)" (vs 7-8). I can relate to that more than ever before, and you can, too. It seems like many times it is from day-to-day that we survive in this world and go and fall over the finish line on the Sabbath Day and say, 'Thank You, God, for the Sabbath.' The world is so evil and wicked in which we live.

Verse 9—there's hope: "*The* Lord knows *how* to rescue *the* Godly out of temptation, and to reserve *the* unrighteous to *the* day of judgment to be

punished." Yes, God knows how to do that, and He is going to do that.

Let's see what God wants us to be. How do we stand before God? This is the whole important thing for us to understand concerning the righteousness of God.

Colossians 1:21: "For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds... [the hostile mind, the carnal mind, the deceitful mind] ...by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you..." (vs 21-22).

Here's how we are before the throne of God, when Jesus intervenes and intercedes for you. When you go to God and pray and say, 'Oh, God, forgive me.' When you go to God and know—through study, prayer, thoughts, meditation, living—here's how you are before God through Jesus Christ Think on this for a minute!

That He might present you "...Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him" (v 22). That is the perfection of Jesus Christ that God the Father gives to you as a gift of righteousness. I want us to understand that. There is a condition for it. It doesn't mean that you go out and do anything you want to do. We all understand that.

Verse 23: "If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that *is* under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant." We have to continue in that faith, continue in that love, working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, to look forward to the day of salvation.

Philippians 2:13: "Because God is the One who is performing the inner work with power and energy within you, both to will and desire, and to function and work according to His good pleasure and purpose. Be habitually doing and performing everything without murmuring, complaining, and criticizing, and without vain reasoning and surmising; in order that you may be blameless, without defect, even without any mixture of vice or deceit; but be sincere children of God, even in this tormented and perverted, depraved and corrupt generation; among whom you shine as beacons of light in the world, displaying in your lives the word and message of life..." (vs 13-16)—which then we can expand and continually look forward to.

"...expanding into joy and exultation for me in the Day of Christ, that I have not strenuously run an empty-handed race, neither

have I been wearied with a fruitless, exhausting labor” (v 16).

Imagine how it would be for a minister—or anyone—to just put out their whole lives for their flock, their church—to help them, to teach them—then find out that when he’s not around they don’t have enough strength or stability on their own to hold fast. That’s what Paul is saying. That’s what he’s bringing out here. Brethren, I can feel the same way. For those I know it’s not going to happen; you’re going to make it. I want to do all I can to help you make it.

Verse 17: “But on the other hand, if I expend my life and energy in being poured out upon the sacrifice and sacred ministration of your faith, I am rejoicing and conjointly rejoicing with you all.” That’s tremendous! That makes it worthwhile. That is what gets right down to what is the purpose of a minister in the first place. It is not a badge of honor. It is not a position of authority, but it is a position of service, help, to feed, to bring to understanding of God’s Word so that you can be in the resurrection; that I can be in the resurrection.

The Apostle Paul said, ‘After I have preached to others, I have to be careful that I myself am not a castaway.’ That applies to me just as well as anybody else. As you need my prayers, brethren, I need your prayers. We all together go forward in this way.

Verse 18: “And in the same manner you are rejoicing and collectively rejoicing with me. But I am hoping in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you as soon as possible, that I also may be of good courage and strengthened in soul, when I know the things concerning your situation. Because I do not have anyone who is consistently like-minded (of the same mind and spirit), who will genuinely and sincerely take to heart and care for the things concerning your welfare” (vs 18-20). This really sums up what the ministry ought to be doing. Timothy is a tremendous example of how a minister should perform his duties and live his life before God.

Verse 21 is so true today; see how the Word of God is living: “For the majority of people are selfishly seeking their own things, which please themselves (that is they are doing their own thing), and not the things of Christ Jesus. But you know and are aware of his [Timothy’s] time-tested character temperament and that as a child toward his father, devotedly enslaved himself with me for the glad tidings of the Gospel” (vs 21-22). That’s exactly how every minister needs to calculate and figure his life. That he is a *slave of Christ*—a bond-slave of God. He’s not his own to do his own thing, but he is to preach the Gospel and serve the brethren.

Verse 23: “I truly hope to send him immediately as soon as I shall see how things concerning me transpire. But I am persuaded and convinced in the Lord that I also may soon be able personally to come to you” (vs 23-24). We don’t know if Paul was able to do that. We do know that after he was let out of his first imprisonment, every indication is that he did take the trip to Spain, and every indication is that it took over two years. That is perhaps the time when Peter wrote the First Epistle of Peter to the people in the same area that Paul was, because Paul was on that journey into Spain. Later on we know from certain historical records that he went on into England. Then he came back and was imprisoned the second time when he wrote 1st and 2nd Timothy. He was crucified shortly after that.

Verse 24: “But I am persuaded and convinced in the Lord that I also may soon be able personally to come to you. On the other hand, I think it is necessary and proper to send to you Epaphroditus, who is a brother and fellow worker and laborer, even my fellow soldier; but your messenger, and the one who is ministering to my needs. **Since he has such a strong love and affection for you,** he was deeply depressed because you had heard that he was sick. Now then, he was very sick, actually hovering near the edge of death, but God showed gracious favor and saving mercy towards him; and in reality it was not towards him only, but also towards me, that I might not have sorrow heaped upon sorrow. Because of these circumstances, I have more eagerly sent him to you; so that, upon seeing him again, you may be happy and rejoice; but that I might be the less sorrowful” (vs 25-28).

Verse 29: “Receive and accept him therefore in the Lord with all joy and gladness, and always hold this kind of minister and servant in honor and esteem; because for the sake of the work of Christ he completely disregarded his own life, and he went to the brink of death, that he might compensate for your deficiency of service toward me” (vs 29-30).

Brethren, there are ministers who do that. They are to have the honor, love and respect because they are laying their lives out for the brethren. I’m sure there are many of them in these little, small congregations—the Church is being scattered (has been and will continue to be)—that the trial that comes upon us is also the trial that comes upon these different ministers to also see if they will have that same kind of care, love, concern toward the flock that God has given them charge over, to oversee, serve, help, teach and love the brethren.

Those ministers that were with Paul certainly had that kind of attitude. Brethren, that's the kind of attitude that every minister needs to have. We hope that we can exemplify that toward you also.

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

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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- 1) Philippians 2:1-8
- 2) John 1:1-4, 14
- 3) John 3:16-17, 31
- 4) John 8:23, 58
- 5) John 16:27-28
- 6) John 17:1-5
- 7) 1 Timothy 3:16
- 8) 2 John 3:16
- 9) 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 15-16
- 10) Philippians 2:8
- 11) Hebrews 2:14-18
- 12) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 13) Philippians 2:8-9
- 14) Revelation 19:11-12
- 15) Revelation 2:17
- 16) Revelation 3:12
- 17) Philippians 2:9-12
- 18) 2 Peter 1:1-7
- 19) Philippians 2:12-15
- 20) 2 Peter 2:4-9
- 21) Colossians 1:21-23
- 22) Philippians 2:13-30

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Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Who is Jesus?*

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