

Letter to the Philippians

Epistolary Prescript:

^{NIB} **1:1** Paul and Timothy, *servants* (*doulos* – slaves) of Christ Jesus,
To *all* (*pas* - every) the *saints* (*hagios* – sacred, holy) in Christ Jesus at Philippi,
together with the *overseers* (*episkopos* - bishops) and *deacons* (*diakonos* – deacons):
2 **Grace** and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Exhortation¹

³ I **thank** (*eucharisteo*) my God every time I remember you.

⁴ In all my prayers for all of you,

I **always** pray with **joy** (*chara* – delight, joy) ⁵ because of
your **partnership** (*koinonia* – fellowship, sharing) in the gospel from the first day until
now,
⁶ being **confident** (*peitho* – persuaded, convinced) of this,
that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to *completion* (*epiteleo* –
accomplish, perfect)
until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to **feel** (*phroneo* – to think, to understand, attitude) this way about all of you,
since I have you in my heart;

for whether I am in chains

or *defending* (*apologia* – legal term) and *confirming* (*bebaisios* – legal term) the gospel,

all of you **share** (*sugkoinonos* – verbal form) in God's **grace** with me.

⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the *affection* (*splagchnon* – inner parts) of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer:

that your **love** (*agape*) may abound more and more

in **knowledge** (*epignosis*)

and **depth of insight** (*aesthesis* – perception, discernment),

¹⁰ so that you may be able to *discern* (*dokimazo* - approve, test) what is best

and may be *pure* (*eilikrines* – unalloyed, judged by sunlight)

and *blameless* (*aproskopos* – not causing to stumble)

until the day of Christ,

¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness

that comes through Jesus Christ—

to the glory and praise of God.

Narratio: ² Proclamation's Progress

¹ The main function of the *exordium* was to introduce the major topic or topics that were going to be discussed in what follows. It was also designed to grab the attention of the hearers.

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers,
that what has happened to me has really (*mallon* - rather) served to **advance** (*prokopen* - progress) the gospel.

¹³ As a result, it has become clear (*phaneros* - plainly recognised) throughout the whole *palace* (*praetorian* - Caesar's personal bodyguard) guard and to everyone else that I am in chains *for* (*en* - in) Christ.

¹⁴ Because of my chains,
most of **the brothers** in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

¹⁵ It is true that **some** preach Christ out of *envy* (*phthons*) and rivalry (*eris* - strife, quarrels),
but **others** out of goodwill.

¹⁶ The latter do so in love,
knowing (*oida* - perceiving) that I am put here for the defence of the gospel.

¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of *selfish ambition* (*eritheia*),
not sincerely,
supposing (*oimai* - expect) that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.

Both parties are referred to as brothers v. 14

¹⁸ But what does it matter?

The important thing is that in every way,
whether from *false motives* (*prophasis* - pretence) or **true**, Christ is preached.

And because of this I **rejoice** (*chairo* - celebrate, be glad).

Yes, and I will continue to **rejoice** (*chairo* - celebrate, be glad),

¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the *help* (*epichoregia* - supply, provide) given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance (*soteria* - salvation) [Job 13:16 c.f. 13:13-18 LXX].

²⁰ I *eagerly expect* (*apokaradokia* - strained, breathless expectation) and hope that I will in no way be **ashamed** [*aischuno* i.e. Ps. 25:3],

but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body,
whether by life or by death.

²¹ For to me, *to live is Christ* (*to zen Christos* - sounds similar to popular Greek slogan - *to zen chrestos* = *life is good*)
and *to die is gain* (*to apothanein kerdos* - profit).

²² If I am to go on living in the *body* (*sarx* - flesh),
this will mean fruitful labour for me.

Word play in Greek

Yet what shall I choose?

I do not know! [this is rhetorical - Paul knows full well what he will do]

²³ I am *torn between* (*sunecho* - hard pressed from) the two:

I *desire* (*epithumia* - craving, lust) to depart and be with Christ,
which is better by far;

²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the *body* (*sarx* - flesh).

²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will *remain* (*meno*),
and I will *continue* (*parameno*) with all of you for your **progress** (*prokope* - advance) and **joy** in the faith,

²⁶ so that through my being with you again your **joy** (*chara* - delight) in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

² The *narratio* in a discourse has the function of stating the facts that generate the discourse, (or constitute the charge or basis of the charge in the case of a forensic discourse). It is necessary that the facts be stated before arguments are made, so the *narratio* stands before the *probatio* (proofs).

Propositio:³ Lives Worthy of the Word

²⁷ *Whatever happens* (*monon* – only, essentially),

- **conduct yourselves** (*politeuo* – to live as a citizen) **in a manner worthy** of the gospel of Christ [citizenship was a big deal in a Roman colony like Philippi].

Then, whether I come and see you
or only hear about you in my absence,
I will know that

- you **stand firm** (*steko* – to stand, committed in conviction)
 - **in one [S]pirit** (*pneuma* – i.e. Holy Spirit),
 - **contending** (*sunathelo* – engaging side by side) **as one man** (*psuche* – mind, breath, soul)
 - **for the faith of the gospel**
 - ²⁸ **without being frightened** (*pturomai* – intimidated) in any way by those who oppose you.

This is a *sign* (*endeixis* – proof, indication) to them that they will be destroyed,

but that you will be **saved** (*soteria* – delivered)--and that by God.

²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him,
but also to suffer for him,

³⁰ since you are going through **the same** struggle you saw I had,
and now hear that I still have.

²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him,
but also to **suffer** (*pascho*) for him,

³⁰ since you are going through **the same struggle** (*agon* – conflict) you saw I had,
and now hear that I still have

Argument I: The Prime Paradigm - Christ

^{NIB} **2:1** If [therefore] you have any **encouragement** (*paraklesis* – appeal, incentive) from being united with Christ,

if any **comfort** (*paramuthion* – solace) from his **love** (*agape*),

if any **fellowship** (*koinonia* – fellowship, partnership, sharing) with the Spirit,

if any **tenderness** (*splagchuon* – emotion, affection)

and **compassion** (*okitirmos* – mercies),

² then make my joy complete by

being like-**minded** (*phroneo* – think, understand, attitude),

having the same **love** (*agape*),

being one in **spirit** (*sumpsuchos* – mind, soul)

and **purpose** (*phroneo* – think, understand, attitude).

³ Do nothing out of **selfish ambition** (*eritheia* – rivalry c.f. Phil. 1:17)

or **vain conceit** (*kenodoxia* – empty glory),

but in **humility** (*tapeinophrosune* – lowly minded) **consider** (*hegeomai* – regard) others **better** (*huperecho* – rise above, surpassing) than yourselves.

⁴ Each of you should look not **only** to your own interests,
but also to the interests of others.

What is Paul interested the Philippians do? That they be united How? By promoting the interests of other rather than their own Why? Because otherwise they are behaving no differently than Paul's detractors in Rome
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³ The *propositio* (proposition) is thesis statement of the entire discourse. It is the main advice the speaker/writer wants his hearers to heed and is followed by arguments to persuade the audience to follow the course of action that he recommends.

⁵ Your **attitude** (*phroneo* – think, understand, attitude) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very **nature** (*morphe* – shape, form) God, did not **consider** (*hegeomi* - regard) equality with God something to be **grasped** (*harpagmos* – to take advantage of, exploit),

⁷ but made himself **nothing** (*keno* – emptied), taking the very **nature** (*morphe* – shape, form) of a **servant** (*doulos* - slave), being made in human **likeness** (*homoioima* – like something).

⁸ And being found in **appearance** (*schema* – shape, figure) as a man,

he **humbled** (*tapeinoo*) himself and became **obedient** (*hupekoos* – giving ear) to death --even death on a **cross**!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Good enough for Christ – it should be good enough for us – unless we think we are a special case?

This is counter cultural thinking in the Greco-Roman world (and ours) –where self-promotion is the game, and looking out for number one is where it's at!

YOU humble yourself
God will do the exalting – not US

Implications and Applications

¹² **Therefore**, my **dear friends** (*agapetos* - beloved), as you have always **obeyed** (*hupakouo*— giving ear) —
not only in my presence,
but now much more in my absence—
continue to work out your **salvation** (*soteria* - deliverance)

with **fear and trembling**,
¹³ for it is God who works in you to will
and to act according to his good purpose.

How we work out our salvation

¹⁴ Do everything without **complaining** (*gogysmos* – grumbling *c.f.* Ex. 16:2-9; 17:3) or **arguing** (*dialogismos* - disputing),

¹⁵ so that you may become **blameless** (*amemptos* – deserving no censure) and **pure** (*akeraios* - unmixed),
children of God without fault in a **crooked** and **depraved** generation (*c.f.* Deut. 32:5-6 LXX),

in which you shine like stars in the universe

¹⁶ as you **hold out** (*epecho* – hold out/towards) the word of life (Isa. 42:6-7; 49:6)

--in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.

¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a *drink offering* (Num 28:7) on the sacrifice and *service* (*leitourgia* – public, ritual service) coming from your faith,

I am glad and **rejoice** (*chairo* – celebrate, be glad) with all of you.

¹⁸ So you too should be glad and **rejoice** (*chairo* – celebrate, be glad) with me.

Argument II: The Paradigm's Partners – Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you soon,
that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you[**r state**] (*ta* – things, state)

²⁰ I have no-one else **like him** (*isopsychos* – equal in soul, likeminded *c.f.* Phil. 2:2),
who takes a **genuine** (*gnesios* - sincere) interest in your **welfare** (*ta* – things, state).

²¹ For everyone looks out for his own **interests** (*ta* – things, state),
not those of Jesus Christ.

²² But you know that Timothy has *proved* (*dokime* – proven worth, value) himself,
because as a son with his father (i.e. Paul – like father like son)

he has **served** (*douleuo* – performed the duties of a slave) with me in the work of the gospel.

²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how **things** (*ta* – things, state) go with me.

²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you **Epaphroditus** (honoured by Aphrodite),

- my *brother* (*adelphos* – familial relationship),
- *fellow-worker* (*sunergos* – co-worker used by Paul in relation to Gospel ministry)
- and *fellow-soldier* (*sustratiotes* – military term, been wounded in the wars),
- who is also your *messenger* (*apostolos* - missionary),

What does Paul mean 'work out your salvation?' – isn't it a done deal?

We are to take on the mission Israel failed to do – take the message to the gentiles

Epaphroditus would have been present when the letter was dictated – and he is the one who delivered the letter to Philippi

- whom you sent to *take care* (*leitourgos* – noun: minister, public servant see ESV) of my needs.

²⁶ For he *longs* (c.f. 1:8) for all of you and is *distressed* (*adnmonon* – c.f. Mk. 14:33; Matt. 26:37) because you heard he was ill.

²⁷ Indeed he was ill,
and almost died.

But God had mercy on him,
and not on him only but also on me,
to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him,
so that when you see him again you may be glad
and I may have less anxiety.

²⁹ Welcome him in the Lord with great joy,
and honour ~~men~~ (*toioutos* – such as this) like him,

³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ,
risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

<p>How should the Philippians respond to Epaphroditus? [C] How do we treat people like Epaphroditus? [A]</p>
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<p>Why did Epaphroditus risk his life? It was his job and calling</p>

<p>Why do the Phillipians need warning against the Judaizers, What is the attraction with conforming outwardly with Jewish practices? Judaism is tolerated by the authorities – behave like a Jew, conform and you'll be left alone</p>

Argument III: Paul and the Dogs

3:1 Finally, my brothers,

rejoice (*chairō* – celebrate, be glad) in the Lord!

It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again,
and it is a **safeguard** (*asphales* – certain, secure) for you.

² Watch out for those dogs,
those men who do evil,
those mutilators of the **flesh**

³ For it is

we who are the **circumcision**,
we who **worship** (*latreuō* - serve) by the Spirit of God,
who **glory** (*kauchaomai* - boast) in Christ Jesus,
and who put no **confidence** (*peithō* – persuaded) in the **flesh**
(*sarx* – can mean human flesh or weakness, sin).

⁴ though I myself have reasons for such **confidence** [in the **flesh**].
If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put **confidence** in the **flesh**,
I have more:

⁵ circumcised on the eighth day,
of the people of Israel,
of the tribe of Benjamin,
a Hebrew of Hebrews;
in regard to the law, a Pharisee;
⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church;
as for legalistic righteousness, **faultless** (*amemptos* -
blameless).

⁷ But whatever was to my **profit** (*kerdos* – gain c.f. Phil. 1:21)

I now consider **loss** (*zemia* – damage, loss) for the sake of
Christ.

⁸ What is more,

I consider **everything** (*pas* – all, every) a **loss** compared to
the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,
for whose sake I have **lost** all things.

I consider them **rubbish** (*skubalon* – excrement, filth),

that I may **gain** (*kerdaino*) Christ

⁹ and be found in him,

not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,
but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that
comes from God and is by faith.

¹⁰ I want to know Christ

and the power of his resurrection

and the **fellowship of sharing** (*koinonia* – fellowship, partnership,
sharing) in his sufferings,

becoming like (*summorphizo* - conform) him in his death (c.f. Phil.
2:6-11 – Paul wants to be Christlike),

¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already **obtained** (*lambano* – i.e. 'arrived') ~~all this~~,

or have already been made **perfect** (*teleioo* – end, complete), but I press on to **take hold** (*katalambano* – seize, grasp aggressively) of that for which Christ Jesus **took hold** (*katalambano*) of me.

¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have **taken hold** (*katalambano*) of it.

But one thing I do:

Forgetting what is behind
and straining towards what is ahead,

¹⁴ I press on towards the goal to win the prize
for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ All of us who are **mature** (*teleios* - complete) should take such a **view** (*phroneo* – think, understand, attitude) of things.

And if on some point you **think** (*phroneo* – think, understand, attitude) differently,

that too God will make clear to you.

¹⁶ Only let us **live up to** (*stocheo* – walk in, follow in *c.f.* Rom 4:12; Gal. 5:25; 6:16) what we have already **attained** (*phthano* – arrive, attain).

¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers,
and take note of those who live according to the *pattern* (*typos* – stamp made by die) we gave you.

¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears,

many **live** (*peripateo* - walk) as enemies of the cross of Christ.

¹⁹ Their **destiny** (*telos* - end) is **destruction** (*apoleia* – eternal loss *c.f.* 1:28),

their god is their stomach,
and their **glory** (*doxa*) is in their shame.

Their **mind** (*phroneo* – think, understand, attitude) is on earthly things.

²⁰ But our *citizenship* (*politeuma* – *c.f.* Phil. 1:27) is in heaven.

And we eagerly await a Saviour from there,
the Lord Jesus Christ,

²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control,

will transform our **lowly** (*tapeinosis* - humble) bodies
so that they will be like his **glorious** (*doxa*) body.

^{NIB 4:1} Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and **long for** (*epipothetos* – greatly desire),

my **joy** (*chara*) and crown,
that is how you should **stand firm** (*steko* -) in the Lord, **dear friends** (*agapetos* - beloved)!

Just as Christ was glorified after he humbled himself we likewise will be glorified *c.f.* Phil. 2:6-11

Argument IV: An Appeal to the Leaders

² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche
to **agree with each other** (*phroneo* – one mind, attitude, think, *c.f.* Phil. 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 16, 19; 4:2, 10) in the Lord.

³ Yes, and I ask you, **loyal** (*gnesios* – true, genuine) yokefellow (*suzugos* - companion),

help these women who have **contended** (*sunathelo* – fight side by side *c.f.* Phil. 1:27) at my side in the cause of the gospel,

along with Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers,
whose names are in the book of life.

Paul never names his enemies – only his friends! Each woman is treated equally (both are pleaded with). Paul focuses on their past good works.

Summing Up: ⁴ Value of Virtue & Joy of Jesus

⁴ **Rejoice** (*chairō* – celebrate, be glad) in the Lord always.

I will say it again: **rejoice** (*chairō* – celebrate, be glad)

⁵ Let your **gentleness** (*epieikes* – forbearance, moderation) be evident to all.

The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be **anxious** (*merimnaō* – care) about anything, but in everything,

by prayer

and petition,

with thanksgiving,

present your requests to God.

⁷ And the peace of God,

which **transcends** (*huperechousa* – surpass excel c.f. Phil. 3:8) all understanding,

will **guard** (*phroureo* – military term) your hearts

and your minds

in Christ Jesus.

Vocabulary suggests a context of persecution

⁸ Finally, brothers,

whatever is true (*alethe* – truth – not deceit or lie),

whatever is noble (*semnos* – deserving respect),

whatever is right (*dikaios* – as in righteous),

whatever is pure (*agna* – sanctified, Holy, - not tainted),

whatever is lovely (*prospBILE* – loveable),

whatever is admirable (*euphema* – spoken well of)

--if anything is **excellent** (*arete* – virtuous, moral excellence)

or **praiseworthy** (*epainos* – worthy of commendation)

--*think about* (*logizomai* – reckon, take into account)

such things.

⁹ *Whatever* you have learned

or received

or heard from me,

or seen in me

--put it into practice.

And the God of peace will be with you.

Postscript: ⁵ On Giving & Receiving

⁴ The *peroratio* (peroration) had two major functions: 1) to sum up or recapitulate the most essential parts or points of the discourse. 2) To arouse the emotions and add greater emphasis on the major points.

⁵ The Postscript or *insinuatō* Wise rhetoricians would establish a rapport and persuaded their audience before broaching delicate or dangerous subjects, things that might offend or hurt feelings – things considered to be bones of contention.

¹⁰ I **rejoice** (*chairō* – celebrate, be glad) greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your **concern** (*phroneō* – think, understand, attitude) for me.

Indeed, you have been **concerned** (*phroneō* – think, understand, attitude),

but you had no opportunity to show it.

¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need,

for I have learned to be content (*autarkes* - *sufficent*) whatever the circumstances.

¹² I know what it is to be in need,

and I know what it is to have plenty.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed

or hungry,

whether living in plenty

or in want.

¹³ I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to **share** (*sugkoinonos* – verbal form) in my troubles.

¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know,

in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel,

when I set out from Macedonia,

not one church **shared** (*koinoneō* – fellowship, share) with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica,

you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift,

but I am looking for what may be **credited** (*karpos* – fruit *c.f.* Phil. 1:11) to your account (Lit. continuously increasing profit for your account).

¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more;

I am amply supplied,

now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.

They are a fragrant offering,

an acceptable sacrifice,

pleasing to God (*c.f.* Isa. 56:7).

¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs

according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Epistolary Closing:

²¹ Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus.

The brothers who are with me send greetings.

²² All the saints send you greetings,

especially those who belong to **Caesar's household**.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Amen.