



PHILIPPIANS

The servant mind of Christ

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ... and took upon him the form of a servant ...” ([Philippians 2:5, 7](#))

BACKGROUND

One of Paul's great God given gifts was to ascertain the spiritual temperature of the various churches. He had his ear to the ground at all times, and whether physically present with that church or not, he was receiving reports from all over. And like a good father, he was able to apply the appropriate written 'carrot or stick', knowing where they had been, where they were now and where they had to get to.

So in this particular case, he's in prison for the second time in Rome and he's writing to the Philippians, his first church he established in Europe ten years previous, after meeting with Lydia on the river bank. As such, he always had a soft spot for them and they for him, as they had sent him money a couple of times before, to help him out.

So he's sitting in prison wondering if they'd forgotten about him as he hadn't heard from them for a few years, when out of the blue Epaphroditus appears with some money they had sent for him. So he writes them this letter of love and spiritual counsel.

Now overall, Paul was pretty happy with them so this epistle has the **least rebuke** of any to the churches. They were one of the purest and 'happiest' of the New Testament churches. Although they were a **joyful lot**, he warns them of overconfidence, in that they were showing **signs of disunion** and to be on their guard against strife and **vain-glory**, to esteem each other better than themselves and to **cultivate lowliness** and unselfishness.

He warns them against **murmurings** and **disputings** and especially mentions two women in this regard. While not a theological letter as such, it is soaked in solid Christian doctrine of Christian behaviour and holiness of life. He wants all to be **humble**, of the **same mind** and urges them to their duty of **mutual forbearance, thankfulness**, constant **prayer**, **contentment** and the **proper thought life**.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

C1 = Be without offence

C2 = Lowliness of mind

C3 = Doctrine destroyers

C4 = Think on these things

Paul's depth of love for them is apparent with the word 'bowels' (v8). He thanks God for them (v3), he knows that God will perform in them a good work (v6) and his beautiful prayer for them (v9-11) is like those in other books ([Eph 3:14-19](#) and [Col 1:9-12](#)). Although Paul's first choice would be to go to heaven he realizes he is more useful to them alive here on earth (v21-24). He knows they are under persecution (v28) and he advocates they stick together and be of one mind (v27). Using the words 'joy' and 'rejoice' four times (v18,25,26) expressing himself and his desire for them.

Ch 2 = Lowliness of mind

In this chapter, Paul expounds on the **divinity** of Christ, his **pre-existence**, his **equality** with God, his **incarnation**, his **perfect humanity**, his **precious death** on the cross and his **glorious exaltation** by the Father (v4-11), to **reinforce lowliness of mind** and the **avoidance of vain-glory**. He urges them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (v12). That there be no disputings, strife, murmurings and for them to be blameless in a perverse and crooked world (v14-15). He commends both Timothy and Epaphroditus for their love and hard work toward the Philippians (v19-30).

Ch 3 = Robbers of joy

Paul warns of **evil workers** he calls **dogs** – those of the **concision** (v2). Concision is a cutting off. A characteristic of the Philippian church was their joy in spite of persecution. The dogs were trying to cut/rob the joy off from people. How would they do this?

Now there were and are today, two types of concisors – the Jewish and the Christian. The Jewish concisors would be the equivalent of the Judaizers in Paul's epistle to the Galatians where Paul asks them "*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*" ([Gal 3:3](#)). These would drag them back under Moses.

The Christian concisor the reader asks? Yes, they would, by reason of non-Pauline doctrine, get rid of the **dispensations**, the **rapture**, **eternal security**, confound **remission** with **redemption**, **blur the distinctions between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God**, **introduce Calvinism**, get rid of the inerrant, infallible, perfectly inspired **King James Bible**,

introduce **water baptisms, church memberships, church voting** and **tithing** to name a few.

They would bewitch you like the Galatians and bring you under their domination, intimidation, manipulation and control. What they do is to create two classes of people in their congregations – those having a tithing, water baptised membership of once married people and the rest.

They generally camouflage themselves with the name of a Baptist, Methodist, Uniting, Presbyterian or Lutheran church or a Grace Church. Like "Honest John's Used Cars", John wants to become honest. He hasn't got any honesty but he needs to reassure people he is. Grace Churches are similar in not having much grace. They want to acquire this elusive quality. Like Honest John they parade the name to reassure people. Mmmm! Dogs, concisors and evil workers says Paul. Stay clear!

Now Paul says "I was an evil worker of the concision and here is my resumé as proof" (v4-6), but my past life was nothing but "animal excrement" (v8) having found the righteousness of God revealed in Christ (v9)

Paul then likens himself to an athlete that strains every nerve and muscle to obtain a goal (v14). Now of course having been to heaven ([2Cor 12:1-4](#)) he knows what he is talking about (v20-21).

He uses the phrases of 'God is their belly' as they 'mind earthly things' (v19). Indeed in his warning to the Christians at Rome, they "... *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly* (Yes, you have to eat Christ the Wafer); *and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*" ([Rom 16:18](#))

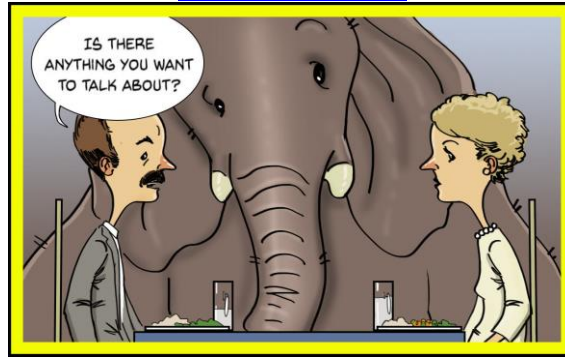
Ch 4 = Think on these things

Using the two women, Euodias and Syntyche, as examples, he urges them to be **labourers** (v3) of the **same mind** (v2) and always **rejoicing** (v4). Furthermore **being careful**, not anxious, **for nothing** (v6-7) with **topics** upon which they should dwell their minds upon (v8-9). Once again he can't help but **thank them for their generosity** (v10) and reminds their doing that twice before (v15-16).

Having supplied my necessity (v16) he prays **the Lord will supply theirs** (v17-19).

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