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July 27, 2001

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Philippians

1 Greetings from Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ.

To all of God's holy people* in Christ Jesus that live in Philippi. And to all your elders* and special helpers.*

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Prayer

³I thank God every time I remember you. ⁴And I always pray for all of you with joy. ⁵I thank God for the help you gave me while I told people the Good News.* You helped from the first day you believed until now. ⁶God began doing good things with you. And God is continuing that work in you. God will finish that work in you when Jesus Christ comes again. I am sure of that.

⁷And I know that I am right to think like this about all of you. I am sure because I have you in my heart—I feel very close to you. I feel close to you because all of you share in God's grace (*kindness*) with me. You share in God's grace with me while I am in prison, while I am defending the Good News,* and while I am proving the truth of the Good News. ⁸God knows that I want to see you very much. I love all of you with the love of Christ Jesus.

⁹This is my prayer for you:

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

special helpers Literally, "deacons," a Greek word meaning "servants." They were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

that your love will grow more and more;
that you will have knowledge and
understanding with your love;

¹⁰ that you will see the difference between
good and bad and choose the good;
that you will be pure and without wrong
for the coming of Christ;

¹¹ that you will do many good things
with the help of Christ
to bring glory and praise to God.

Paul's Troubles Help the Lord's Work

¹²Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that those bad things that happened to me have helped to spread the Good News.* ¹³It is clear why I am in prison. I am in prison because I am a believer in Christ. All the Roman guards know this, and so do all the other people. ¹⁴I am still in prison, but most of the believers feel better about it now. And so they are much braver about telling people the message* about Christ.

¹⁵Some people preach about Christ because they are jealous and bitter. Other people preach about Christ because they want to help. ¹⁶These people preach because they have love. They know that God gave me the work of defending the Good News.* ¹⁷But those other people preach about Christ because they are selfish. Their reason for preaching is wrong. They want to make trouble for me in prison.

¹⁸I don't care if they make trouble for me. The important thing is that they are telling people about Christ. I want them to tell people about Christ. They should do it for the right reasons. But I am happy even if they do it for false and wrong reasons. I am happy because they tell people about Christ, and I will continue to be happy. ¹⁹You are praying for

me, and the Spirit* of Jesus Christ helps me. So I know that this trouble will bring my freedom. ²⁰The thing I want and hope for is that I will not fail Christ in anything. I hope that I will have the courage now, like always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth. I want to do that if I die or if I live. ²¹I mean that to me the only important thing about living is Christ. And even death would be profit for me.* ²²If I continue living in the body, then I will be able to work for the Lord. But what would I choose—living or dying? I don't know. ²³It is hard to choose between living or dying. I want to leave this life and be with Christ. That is much better. ²⁴But you people need me here in my body. ²⁵I know that you need me. And so I know that I will stay with you. I will help you grow and have joy in your faith. ²⁶You will be very happy in Christ Jesus when I am with you again.

²⁷Be sure that you live in a way that fits the Good News* of Christ. Then if I come and visit you or if I am away from you, I will hear good things about you. I will hear that you continue strong with the same purpose and work together like a team for the faith (*truth*) that comes from the Good News. ²⁸And you will not be afraid of those people who are against you. All of these things are proof from God that you are being saved and that your enemies will be lost. ²⁹God gave you the honor of believing in Christ. But that is not all. God also gave you the honor of suffering for Christ. Both these things bring glory to Christ. ³⁰When I was with you, you saw the struggles I had [with people who were against our work]. And now you hear about the struggles I am having. You yourselves are having the same kind of struggles.

Be United and Care for Each Other

2 Is there any way in Christ that I can ask you to do something? Does your love make you want to comfort me? Do we share

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

death ... profit for me Paul says that death would be better, because death would bring him nearer to Christ.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

together in the Spirit*? Do you have mercy and kindness? ²If you have these things, then I ask you to do something for me. This will make me very happy. I ask that all your minds be joined together by believing the same things. Be joined together in your love for each other. Live together by agreeing with each other and having the same goals. ³When you do things, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honor to other people than to yourselves. ⁴Don't be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of other people, too.

Learn from Christ to be Unselfish

⁵In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

⁶Christ himself was like God in everything. Christ was equal with God. But Christ did not think that being equal with God was something that he must keep.

⁷He gave up his place with God and agreed to be like a servant. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. ⁸And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused him to die. And he died on a cross.

⁹Christ obeyed God, so God raised Christ to the most important place. God made the name of Christ greater than every other name. ¹⁰God did this because he wants every person to bow for the name of Jesus. Every person in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth will bow. ¹¹Every person will confess (*say*), "Jesus Christ is Lord (*Master*)."¹¹ When they say this, it will bring glory to God the Father.

Be the People God Wants You to Be

¹²My dear friends, you have always obeyed. You obeyed God when I was with you. It is even more important that you obey now while I am not there [to help you]. You yourselves must live in a way that moves you toward your salvation. Do this with respect and fear for God. ¹³Yes, God is working in you. God helps you want to do the things that please him. And he gives you the power to do these things.

¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing. ¹⁵Then you will be innocent and without anything wrong in you. You will be

God's children without fault. But you are living with evil people all around you who have become very bad. Among those people you shine like lights in the dark world. ¹⁶You offer those people the teaching that gives life. So I can be happy when Christ comes again. I can be happy because my work was not wasted. I ran in the race and won.

¹⁷Your faith makes you give your lives as a sacrifice* in serving God. Maybe I will have to offer my own blood (*death*) with your sacrifice. But if that happens, I will be happy and full of joy with all of you. ¹⁸You also should be happy and full of joy with me.

News About Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. I will be happy to learn how you are. ²⁰I have no other person like Timothy. He truly cares for you. ²¹Other people are interested only in their own lives. They are not interested in the work of Christ Jesus. ²²You know the kind of person Timothy is. You know that he has served with me in telling the Good News* like a son serves his father. ²³I plan to send him to you quickly. I will send him when I know what will happen to me. ²⁴I am sure that the Lord will help me to come to you soon.

²⁵Epaphroditus is my brother in Christ. He works and serves with me in the army of Christ. When I needed help, you sent him to me. I think now that I must send him back to you. ²⁶I send him because he wants very much to see all of you. He is worried because you heard that he was sick. ²⁷He was sick and was near death. But God helped him and me too, so that I would not have more sadness. ²⁸So I want very much to send him to you. When you see him, you can be happy. And I can stop worrying about you. ²⁹Welcome him in the Lord with much joy. Give honor to people like Epaphroditus. ³⁰He should be honored because he almost died for the work of Christ. He put his life in danger so that he could help me. This was help that you could not give me.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

Christ Is More Important Than Anything

3 And now, my brothers and sisters, be happy in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it will help you to be more ready. ²Be careful of those people who do evil. They are like dogs. They demand to cut* the body. ³But we are the people who are truly circumcised.* We worship (*serve*) God through his Spirit.* We are proud to be in Christ Jesus. And we don't trust in ourselves or anything we can do. ⁴Even if I am able to trust in myself, still I don't trust in myself. If any other person thinks that he has a reason to trust in himself, then he should know that I have a greater reason for trusting in myself. ⁵I was circumcised eight days after my birth. I am from the people of Israel* and the family group of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew (*Jew*), and my parents were Hebrews. The law [of Moses] was very important to me. That is why I became a Pharisee.* ⁶I was so excited [about my Jewish religion] that I persecuted* the church (*the believers*). No person could find fault with the way I always obeyed the law [of Moses]. ⁷At one time all these things were important to me. But I decided that those things are worth nothing because of Christ. ⁸Not only those things, but now I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Christ, I lost all those things [I thought were important]. And now I know that all those things are worthless trash. This allows me to have Christ. ⁹It allows me to be in Christ. In Christ I am right with God, and this being right does not come from my following the law. It comes from God through faith. God uses my faith in Christ to make me right with

cut The word in Greek is like the word "circumcise," but it means "to cut completely off."

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9–14). Paul uses the idea here in a spiritual sense of Christians who share in the new agreement God gave his people through Jesus.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

Pharisee Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

persecute(d) To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

him. ¹⁰All I want is to know Christ and the power of his rising from death. I want to share in Christ's sufferings and become like him in his death. ¹¹If I have those things, then I have hope that I myself will be raised from death.

Trying to Reach the Goal

¹²I don't mean that I am already exactly like God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach that goal and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that. That is the reason Christ made me his. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal. But there is one thing I always do: I forget the things that are past. I try as hard as I can to reach the goal that is before me. ¹⁴I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the life above.

¹⁵All of us who have grown spiritually to be mature (*perfect*) should think this way too. And if there is any of these things you don't agree with, God will make it clear to you. ¹⁶But we should continue following the [truth] we already have.

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, all of you should try to live like me. And copy those people who live the way we showed you. ¹⁸Many people live like enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you about these people. And it makes me cry to tell you about them now. ¹⁹The way these people live is leading them to destruction. They don't serve God. Those people live only to please themselves. They do shameful things, and they are proud of those things. They think only about earthly things. ²⁰But our homeland is in heaven. We are waiting for our Savior to come from heaven. Our Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will change our humble bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power. With that power Christ is able to rule all things.

Some Things to Do

4 My dear brothers and sisters, I love you and want to see you. You bring me joy and make me proud of you. Continue following the Lord like I have told you.

²I ask Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³And because you serve faithfully with me, my friend, I ask you to help these women do this. These women served with me in telling people the Good News.* They served together with Clement and the other people who worked with me. Their names are written in the book of life.*

⁴Always be happy in the Lord. I will say it again. Be happy.

⁵Let all people see that you are gentle and kind. The Lord is coming soon. ⁶Don't worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. ⁷And God's peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. That peace which God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.

⁸Brothers and sisters, continue to think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected. ⁹And do the things that you learned and received from me. Do the things I told you and the things you saw me do. And the God who gives peace will be with you.

Paul Thanks the Philippian Christians

¹⁰I am very happy in the Lord that you have shown your care for me again. You continued to care about me, but there was no way for you to show it. ¹¹I am telling you these things, but it is not because I need something. I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens. ¹²I know how to live when I am poor. And I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens. I have learned to be happy when I have enough to eat and when I don't have enough to eat. I have learned to be happy when I have all the things I need and when I don't have the things I need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

book of life God's book that has the names of all God's chosen people. See Rev. 3:5; 21:27.

¹⁴But it was good that you helped me when I needed help. ¹⁵You people in Philippi remember when I first told the Good News* there. When I left Macedonia, you were the only church that gave me help. ¹⁶Several times you sent me things I needed when I was in Thessalonica. ¹⁷Really, it is not that I want to get gifts from you. But I want you to have the good that comes from giving. ¹⁸I have all the things I need. I have even more than I need. I have all I need because Epaphroditus brought your gift to me. Your gift is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice* offered

to God. God accepts that sacrifice and it pleases him. ¹⁹My God is very rich with the glory of Christ Jesus. God will use his riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need. ²⁰Glory to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen.

²¹Say hello to each of God's people in Christ. Those in God's family who are with me say hello to you. ²²All of God's people say hello to you. And those believers from Caesar's* palace say hello, too.

²³The grace (*kindness*) of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

Caesar The name or title given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.