

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 273 – September 30<sup>th</sup> – Philippians 1:27-2:18**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on Philippians**

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Fee, Gordon D	<i>Paul's Letter to the Philippians</i> (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995
Hendriksen, William	<i>Philippians</i> , Banner of Truth, London, 1962
Lightfoot, JB	<i>St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ed., MacMillan, London, 1873
Motyer, J Alex	<i>Studies in the letter to the Philippians</i> , IVF, London, 1966

**Verse 27**

Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε, ἴνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε ἀπὼν ἀκούω τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου,

μονος, η, ον i) adj; ii) adv μονον only  
ἀξίως adv (from ἀξιος) worthily  
εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel  
πολιτευομαι live, conduct one's life

Means literally, perform your duties as a citizen' cf. Acts 23:1; 3:20 and 2 Tim 2:12 and also the cognate noun πολιτευμα in 3:20. Paul plays on the fact that Philippi was a Roman colony and the Philippians Roman citizens. His meaning is 'live in the Roman colony of Philippi as worthy citizens of your heavenly homeland.' "As Philippi was a colony of Rome in Macedonia, so the church was 'a colony of heaven' [Moffatt 3:20] in Philippi, whose members were to live as its citizens in Philippi." Fee

εἴτε if, whether

ἰδὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω see

ἀπὼν Verb, pres ptc, m nom s ἀπειμι be away, be absent

τα περὶ ὑμῶν cf. 1:12.

On Paul's expectation that he will hear of them, cf. 2:19.

στήκετε Verb, perf act indic & imperat, 2 pl ἵστημι pf stand firm, hold ground.

Paul's concern is that they stand fast in the face of opposition.

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

Eadie says that 'spirit' here is human spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. "The image here is that of spiritual conflict, to which unity of action on their part was indispensable."

Fee disagrees and maintains that the reference is to the Holy Spirit, cf. Eph 2:18; 4:24. He says that Paul never speaks of people possessing a common 'spirit' meaning one mind. The prepositional phrase is locative – it defines the 'sphere' in which they are to stand firm. The Spirit is the key to the unity of the church.

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'

συναθλοῦντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom pl

συναθλεω fight together with, strive together with, work together with

Cf. 4:3. Eadie (contra Luther, Bengel and Meyer) thinks that this is a reference to the Philippians working one with another rather than with the apostle.

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith, trust, the Christian faith

Lightfoot thinks ἡ πιστις here means 'The Christian faith' or 'the teaching of the Gospel'. Fee, 'the faith that is the gospel.'

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

**Verse 28**

καὶ μὴ πτυρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων (ἥτις ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἔνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ,

πτυρομαι be frightened or afraid

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

ἀντικειμαι oppose, be against

"In the light of several hints within the letter, especially the emphasis on Christ as 'lord' and 'saviour,' and of the loyalty of this colony to the cult of the emperor, it seems very likely that the (Roman) citizens of Philippi, who would have honoured the emperor at every public gathering, were putting special pressure on the Philippian believers; their allegiance had now been given to another *kyrios*, Jesus, who had himself been executed at the hands of the empire. The present context, in which Paul asserts that they are undergoing 'the same struggle' he is *now* engaged in – as a prisoner of the empire – gives us good reason to believe so." Fee

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which  
ἐνδείξις, εὖς f evidence, indication

Eadie thinks that the token or indication spoken of is this lack of alarm. Fee argues that the reference is to the Philippians conducting themselves as Paul has instructed in the previous verses – walking worthily of the gospel and having an eschatological outlook. However, it is surely better, and simpler, to understand the opposition itself as the indication or token spoken of (cf. v.29 and also Paul's argument in 2 Thess 1:5).

ἀπωλεία, ας f destruction, utter ruin  
σωτηρία, ας f salvation

Cf. 2 Thess 1:4-7. Lightfoot argues that *τοῦτο ἀπο θεου* belongs with *ἐνδείξις* not *σωτηρία*". He considers the metaphor of these verses to be taken from gladiatorial combat and says, "The Christian gladiator does not anxiously await the signal of life or death from the fickle crowd ... The great ἀγωνοθετης Himself has given him a sure token of deliverance." Eadie argues that it is *both* the token and the salvation to which it points that are of God.

### Verse 29

ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν),

ἐχαρίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s χαρίζομαι  
grant, give

Cf. v.7.

μονος, η, ον see v.27.

This clause appears to interrupt Paul's flow. Fee suggests that this is the result of dictation. Paul began to speak of them being granted 'to suffer on behalf of Christ' but interrupts himself with a 'not only' clause.

πιστεῶ believe (in), have faith (in)  
πασχω suffer

"Those who oppose them as they proclaim 'the faith of the gospel of Christ' are of a kind with those who crucified their Lord in the first place. And for believers, as with their Lord, the path to glorification leads through suffering and the cross." Fee

### Verse 30

τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες οἷον εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί  
καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί.

τὸν αὐτὸν provides the foundation for Fee's argument that the Philippians are suffering at the hands of the Roman Empire.

ἀγων, ωνος m struggle, fight

"A gladiatorial or athletic contest, as in 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; compare *συναθλοντες* v.27." Lightfoot. Paul had suffered persecution at Philippi.

οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun such as, of what kind

εἶδετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ὄραω see,  
observe, perceive, recognise

"Among the recipients of this letter ... are the jailer and his family and (perhaps) the young slave girl whose having been set free from Satan's tyranny had resulted in the first of his sufferings on behalf of Christ that they 'had seen.'" Fee

ἐμοί Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

"It is evident that he spoke from experience when he tells the Philippians of the double grace of faith and suffering." Eadie

### Philippians 2:1-4

These verses are again a single complex sentence in the Greek.

### Verse 1

Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγγνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί,

Paul's exhortation here is a continuation of the thought begun in 1:27.

"In using *εἰ*, the apostle does not doubt the existence of these graces or feelings ... but he says, If these do exist among you, put them into action, or manifest them, so as to fill up my joy." Eadie

"The 'if' clauses turn out not to express supposition, but presupposition, and should therefore be translated something close to 'since there is ...'; and the apodosis, instead of expressing the 'then' side of a supposition, takes the form of an imperative based on the presupposition." Fee

παρακλησις, εὖς f encouragement, appeal

Paul "begins by appealing to their common experience of Christ's comfort, as a direct response to their common experience of suffering for Christ in the preceding clause (1:29-30)." Fee. Fee thinks παρακλησις here bears the sense 'comfort' rather than 'exhortation' or 'appeal' which is favoured by Lightfoot and others.

παραμυθιον, ου η comfort, incentive

παραμυθιον can mean comfort, and this is the sense preferred by Fee who translates it 'solace.' Lightfoot and Eadie think that it bears the meaning 'incentive' or 'constraint' (so Lightfoot, Eadie), that which constrains behaviour.

Fee thinks that the structure here may be trinitarian and that the love spoken of is the love of God (the Father) cf. 2 Cor 13:13 (14).

κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in, participation

Fellowship with the Spirit himself and also fellowship generated by the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 13:13). "The fellowship of the Divine Spirit is the very basis of that like-mindedness, the existence and development of which the apostle covets among them... participation of the Spirit would provide similarity of tastes, pursuits and predilections." Eadie "If they have been made into a fellowship by the Spirit can they live in any other way but in fellowship?" Motyer.

σπλαγγνον, ου η one's inmost self, affections, heart

οικτιρισμος, ου η compassion, mercy

The distinction between σπλαγγνα and οικτιρισμοι is that between "root and fruit, the feeling and the act" Motyer. σπλαγγνα means deep inward yearnings.

Fee draws attention to the change in structure and suggests that the sense is 'If God's compassion and mercy have produced these same qualities in you towards me, as you know I have towards you, then complete my joy by having a single mindset among yourselves ...'

## Verse 2

πληρώσατέ μου την χαράν ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονήτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμφυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονούντες,

πληρωω fill, make full, fulfill

An expression of Paul's pastoral heart – his joy is bound up with their walking worthily of their calling and advancing the gospel in Philippi. Cf. 1:4.

φρονεω think, have in mind

τὸ αὐτὸ φρονήτε "A general expression of accordance which is defined and enforced by the following clauses." Lightfoot. It is a common mindset, common purpose – a common possession of the 'mind of Christ'. Of τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες Eadie writes, "We regard this [love] as the great or only source and accompaniment of unanimity... Offensive individualism disappears in brotherly love." The sense is the 'same love for one another' that they have experienced in God's love for them.

σύμφυχος, ου η united in spirit, as one

This compound adjective occurs here only in the NT. 'like-souled' The adjective harks back to 1:27.

## Verse 3

μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθειάν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἠγοούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν,

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition, party-spirit

Cf. 1:17. "The apostle here rebukes the passions which are so fatal to unison ... ἐριθεια is self-seeking – the restless battle to be first, no matter what opposition be encountered, or whose feelings or interests may suffer." Eadie

μηδε negative particle nor, and not κενοδοξια, ας f conceit, cheap desire to boast

"personal vanity" Lightfoot. The noun occurs here only in the NT. The adjective is used by Paul in Gal 5:26 in the context of a church where people are 'eating and devouring one another.'

ταπεινοφροσυνη, ης f humility

Lightfoot says that classical writers generally used this word in a negative sense, "grovelling", and comments, "It was one great result of the life of Christ (on which Paul dwells here) to raise 'humility' to its proper level."

"This humility is one of the distinctive features of Christianity, for it rests in absolute dependence upon God for everything." Eadie. It is "a uniquely Christian virtue." Fee

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

ἠγεομαι think, regard, consider

ὑπερεχω be of more value than, be better than, surpass

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"Humility is not undue self-depreciation, but may co-exist with fervent gratitude for gifts enjoyed, a thorough consciousness of their number and value, and the utmost desire to lay out 'the ten talents' to the utmost possible advantage. But where there is self-assertion or rivalry to secure the 'chief seat' and win applause, then the impulses of such vanity necessarily create alienation and disorder." Eadie.

"As with humility, this does not mean that one should falsely consider others 'better.' As v.4 will clarify, we are so to consider others, not in our *estimation* of them – which would only lead to the many vices Paul has just spoken against – but in our *caring* for them, in our putting them and their needs ahead of our own. After all, this is precisely how Christ's humility expressed itself, as Paul narrates in v. 8. Thus, it is not so much that others in the community are to be thought of as 'better than I am,' but as those whose needs and concerns 'surpass' my own. Here, of course, is the sure cure for 'selfish ambition and vain conceit,' not to mention 'grumbling and bickering' (v. 14)." Fee

#### Verse 4

μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every  
σκοπεω pay attention to, watch out (for),  
be concerned about

The phrase ἀλλὰ καὶ softens the contrast. The command is not to ignore all matters to do with oneself but rather to put others first in one's thinking.

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

#### Verses 1-4 Reflection

"As Barth rightly pointed out, here is a vivid, miniature expression of the heart of Pauline ethics, not simply because its predicate is grace, but because it is grounded in the character of God as that has been revealed in Christ Jesus, which is the point to be taken up next. As with so much else in this letter, here, too, is a word for all seasons. One can only imagine what might happen if we were to rethink – and re-experience – the love and encouragement that is ours through the Trinity, and on that basis also rethink – and thus reorient – our life in Christ in terms of our relationships to one another. If we ourselves were more truly characterised by the contents of this appeal, we might become a more effective people in the world." Fee

#### Verse 5

τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

Many MSS read τοῦτο γὰρ, seeking to tie these verses with what precedes them. τοῦτο "is best understood as pointing backward, in this case to vv. 2-4." Fee. The particular aspect of Christ's character which is to the fore here is his self-denying generosity and condescension which is the mark also of the Christian (v.4).

φρονεω see v.2

The 'mind' implied here is 'mind-set'.

ἐν ὑμῖν = 'in the community' [of believers].

#### Verses 6-11

The majority of modern commentators consider these verses, or at least 6-8, to be an early hymn, though several think Paul to be the author. Fee is less convinced of its hymnic origin.

Concerning these verses Eadie writes, "The example of Christ is living legislation – law embodied and pictured in perfect humanity. Not only does it exhibit every virtue, but it also enjoins it. In showing what is, it enacts what ought to be. When it tells us how to live it commands us so to live... He develops that "mind" which was in Christ and which was manifested in His self-denying incarnation and death... the extent of our Lord's self-denying grace is measured by the distance between equality with God and a public execution on a gibbet."

#### Verse 6

ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,

μορφη, ης f nature, form

μορφη has to be understood in the light of its dual use here – Christ was in the *form* of God, but took the *form* of a servant. Eadie writes, "It was not the divine nature, but the visible display of it – that which enables men to apprehend it and prompts them to adore it." Fee thinks that the word means more than appearance, "μορφη was precisely the right word for this dual usage, to characterise both the reality (his being God) and the metaphor (his taking on the role of a slave), since it denotes 'form' or 'shape' not in terms of the external features by which something is recognised but those characteristics and qualities that are essential to it. Hence it means *that which truly characterises a given reality.*"

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι)

ἄρπαγμος, ον m something to grasp after;  
something to hold on to

Fee provides a "mini word study" on ἀρπαγμός. He considers two possible meanings for the term:

- i) Moule and others suggest that Greek nouns ending in -μός usually refer not to a concrete thing but are abstract nouns carrying the sense of the cognate verb. Here the meaning is 'grasping' or 'seizing.' "Thus, Christ did not consider 'equality with God' to consist of 'grasping' or being 'selfish'; rather he rejected this particular view of kingly power by 'pouring himself out' for the sake of others. In Moule's terms, equality with God means not 'grasping' but 'giving away.'"
- ii) The noun is a synonym of its cognate ἀρπαγμα ('booty'). The meaning would be 'a matter to be seized upon' in the sense of 'taking advantage of it.'

Fee thinks both suggestions have much to commend them and, "in either case, it should be pointed out, the clause comes out very much at the same point."

Yoder (*Politics of Jesus*) thinks that Paul suggests a contrast with the "Godlikeness promised by the serpent to Adam in the garden, which would have consisted in unchecked dominion over creation. Or perhaps it refers as well to the kind of Godlikeness claimed by Caesar." Ridderbos (*Paul*) also detects a contrast with Adam.

ἡγήσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s  
ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider  
εἶναι Verb, pres infin ειμι  
ἴσος, η, ον equal, the same; ἴσα adv  
equally; το εἶναι ἴσα equality

Fee argues that the meaning is not that Christ abandoned equality with God but that he did not consider equality with God to be exemplified in 'grasping' but in 'emptying.' "In the cross God's true character, his outlandish, lavish expression of love, was fully manifested." The question at issue is 'What does it mean to be like God?'

### Verse 7

ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν,  
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ  
σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself  
κενωω deprive of power, make of no effect

Of what did Christ empty himself? Lightfoot and Eadie are typical of older commentators: He "*emptied*, stripped himself of the insignia of Majesty" Lightfoot. "He laid aside the form of God, the splendour of divinity." Eadie.

Fee, in contrast, argues that it is wrong to suppose that he must have emptied himself of *something*. "That is precisely *not* in keeping with Pauline usage. Just as ἀρπαγμον requires no object for him to 'seize,' but rather points to what is the opposite of God's character, so Christ did not empty himself of anything; he simply 'emptied *himself*,' poured himself out. This is metaphor, pure and simple." The meaning of the verb elsewhere is 'to become powerless' or 'to be emptied of significance' cf. 1 Cor 1:17; Rom 4:14. So AV, 'he made himself of no reputation' and NIV 'made himself nothing.' Fee concludes, "The concern is with divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive being, grasping and seizing, but self-giving for the sake of others."

δούλος, ον m slave, servant

Eadie understands this service to be service to God. In becoming man, the Son took on the role of Servant to the Father's will. He took on the part of obedient man which Adam had abandoned. However, the context would seem to demand also the sense that he became a servant of all – a model for our service of one another.

ὁμοίωμα, τος n likeness

"He came in the 'likeness' of human beings, because on the one hand he was fully identified with us, and because on the other hand in becoming human he was not 'human' only. He was God living out a truly human life, all of which is safeguarded by the expression." Fee

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι

There is some variation here in versification. Verse 7 ends with γενομενος in some MSS and versions.

σχημα, ατος n outward form, present form, form, likeness

εὐρεθείς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s  
εὕρισκω

"He showed Himself possessed of a true body and a rational soul – that body no phantom or disguise, but an organism like that of all men born of woman, and within it a soul that grew in wisdom as His body grew in stature, being subject to human emotions, and possessed of the usual powers of thought and will. He was 'found in fashion as a man' by those who lived with Him, who saw Him in all aspects, and in every variety of attitude and circumstance; – His mother and kinsmen; His fellow-villagers and friends; His disciples and followers; His enemies and executioners." Eadie

**Verse 8**

ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ·

ταπεινωώ humble

"From heaven to earth He descended by emptying Himself, but after being on earth, He humbled Himself by His obedience to the death ... He laid aside the form of God, and took the form of a servant; but in that servant's form He still abased Himself even to the cross." Eadie

ὑπήκοος, ον obedient

In becoming a servant, he took on not only the duty of obedient man but also of Saviour – obedience to the demand for atoning sacrifice.

μέχρι unto, as far as  
θανάτος, ου m death  
σταυρός, ου m cross

Cf. Heb 12:2

It is worth quoting here a longer section from Fee. "Here is the very heart of Pauline theology, both of his understanding of God as such and of his understanding of what God has done and is doing in our fallen world. Here is where the one who as 'equal with God' has most fully revealed the truth about God: That God is love and that his love expresses itself in self-sacrifice – cruel, humiliating death on a cross – for the sake of those he loves. The divine weakness (death at the hands of his creatures, his enemies) is the divine scandal (the cross was reserved for slaves and insurrectionists). No one in Philippi, we must remind ourselves, used the cross as a symbol for their faith; there were no gold crosses embossed on Bibles or worn as pendants around the neck or lighted on the steeple of the local church. The cross was God's – and their – scandal. God's contradiction to human wisdom and power: that the one they worshiped as Lord of all, including Caesar, had been crucified as a state criminal at the hands of one of Caesar's proconsuls; that the Almighty should appear in human dress, and that he should do so in this way, as a 'Messiah' who died by crucifixion. Likewise, this is the scandal of Pauline ethics: that the God who did it this way 'gifts' us to 'suffer for his sake' as well (1:29)."

We should not forget that he who was equal with God became accursed of God.

**Verse 9**

διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα,

διο therefore, for this reason

ὑπερυψοῶ raise to the highest position,  
highly exalt

"Paul virtually holds the copyright on ὑπερ compounds in the NT, and in the vast majority of cases they magnify or express excess, not position." Fee. Cf. Rom 8:37.

"It is the doctrine of Scripture that Christ, in dying for men, and because he did die for them, has won for himself eternal renown... Infinite condescension surely merits highest glory." Eadie

Christ's exaltation is the divine vindication of his emptying himself and humbling himself.

χαρίζομαι grant, give, bestow

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, authority

What is this 'name'? Lightfoot thinks that it is not any name in particular but rather reflects the Hebrew use of the term 'name', meaning "office, rank or dignity". If any particular name is meant, Lightfoot thinks it is most probably Κύριος. Fee also favours 'Lord as the equivalent of 'Yahweh.' However, in the light of v.10, it could be argued that the 'name' here intended is the name Ἰησοῦς ("Jesus! the name high over all..."). Thus saving grace is enthroned in the highest place in heaven. Neither should we miss the 'Last Adam' theme here. He is enthroned as the *man* Christ Jesus. "He that was known as Jesus among men, specifically as Jesus of Nazareth, He it is who in this very nature commands the homage of the universe." Eadie

**Verse 10**

ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντων γόνου κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων,

This verse is modelled on Is 45:23.

γονοῦ, γονατος n knee

κάμψη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s καμπω trans  
& intrans bend, bow (of the knee)

ἐπουρανιος, ον heavenly, celestial

ἐπιγεις, ον earthly, of the earth

καταχθονιος, ον under the earth,  
subterranean

Both Lightfoot and Eadie argue that Jesus is not the medium through whom adoration is offered to God, but is himself the object of that adoration: he is the Saviour God. All creation (the simple meaning of the three adjectives) is to acknowledge the person, work and authority of the Lord Jesus. He demands universal submission.

"There is in this language no hint that those who bow are acknowledging his salvation; on the contrary they *will* bow to his sovereignty at the End, even if they are not now yielding to it." Fee

**Verse 11**

καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

γλῶσσα, ης f tongue

ἐξομολογήσεται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s  
ἐξομολογεω agree; midd confess,  
acknowledge, praise

'The the Lord is Jesus Christ,' cf. 1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9.

Despite the occasional demurrer, there can be little question that this confession arose in the early Jewish Christian community, as the Aramaic 'Maranatha' in 1 Cor 16:22 bears striking evidence. Thus, in the very earliest Aramaic-speaking communities, the language that belonged to God alone is now being addressed to Christ in corporate invocation. One can scarcely gainsay the christological implications of this confession in the present passage." Fee

δοξα, ης f glory

πατηρ, πατρος m father

"The acknowledgement of Christ's exultation tends to or issues in the glory of God the Father." Eadie

**Verse 12**

Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε, μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε,

ὥστε so that, with the result that

In Paul's teaching, ethical demands are made on the basis of what God has done for us in Christ.

Paul is returning now to the matters that prompted him to speak of Christ's self-emptying – his concern that the Philippians live out the gospel. Verses 12-18 bring the argument that began in 1:27 full circle.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

παντοτε always

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

Whom have they obeyed? The sense here is probably obedience to *the gospel* – hence obedience to the instruction they had received from Paul, but above all obedience to Christ.

παρουσια, ας f presence

μονον adv only, alone

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου  
much, many

μαλλον adv more; rather

ἀπουσια, ας f absence

φοβος, ου m fear

τρομος, ου m trembling

Cf. 1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 7:15; Eph 6:5, also the OT background in Ex 15:16; Deut 2:25; 11:25; Ps 55:5 (54:6 LXX) and Is 19:16.

Calls for a fear, or proper awe, before God.

"One does not live out the gospel casually or lightly, but as one who knows what it means to stand in awe of the living God." Fee

ἕαντος, ἕαντη, ἕαντον see v.7

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

κατεργαζομαι work hard at, accomplish

The compound verb here carries the sense of carrying out or of making perfect.

The working out of our salvation is part of that process by which we grow in likeness to Christ. Such growth is not effortless.

In context, the command is not just to them as individuals but also concerns their corporate life – how they are to live out the gospel as a company of the people of God, cf. v.15.

**Verse 13**

θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

"work mightily', 'work effectively'" Lightfoot  
The Philippians are able to work out their salvation *precisely because* God is himself at work in them and among them.

θελω wish, will

"Not only does God empower their 'doing' (ἐνεργεῖν the infinitive of the verb just used to describe God's own activity), but also the 'willing' that lies behind the doing. This is fully in keeping with Paul's understanding of Christian ethics, which has not to do with obedience to a set of rules that regulate conduct, but first of all with a 'mind that is transformed' by the Spirit. Such a mind is 'conformed' not to this age, but to the character of God, so that behaviour is a reflection of God's will, what is good and pleasing and perfect to him (Rom 12:1-2)." Fee

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

εὐδοκια, ας f good will, pleasure

Lightfoot links this with 1 Tim 2:4. God's will is that all should be saved. Hence God is working out his saving purpose.

**Verse 14**

Πάντα ποιεῖτε χωρὶς γογγυσμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν,

χωρὶς without, apart from

γογγυσμος, ου m complaining, quarreling,  
whispering

"The word is constantly used in the LXX of Israel in the wilderness; compare 1 Cor 10:10." Lightfoot

διαλογισμος, ου m dispute, inward  
questioning, controversy

A reference, perhaps, to disputes among the Philippians. Murmuring is rebellion against God and a failure to recognise his purpose. He is at work to refine us and make us like Christ. We are to understand that we are not abandoned but worked upon. The clay is not to complain at the potter but, to change the picture, actively work with the purpose of the potter to display the form of Christ. Paul himself presents us with an example in his reaction to his imprisonment (cf. 1:12; 2:17).

### Verse 15

ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, τέκνα θεοῦ  
ἄμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ  
διεστραμμένης, ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες  
ἐν κόσμῳ

γένησθε Verb, aor midd depo subj, 2 pl  
γίνομαι

ἄμεμπτος, ου blameless, faultless

Cf. Gen 17:1.

ἀκέραιος, ου innocent, guiltless

τέκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

ἄμωμος, ου faultless; without blemish

Echoes Deut 32:5 (LXX).

μέσος, η, ου middle

Here, μέσος is used adverbially

γενεα, ας f generation, contemporaries,  
age

σκολιος, α, ου crooked, perverse,  
dishonest

διεστραμμένης Verb, perf pass ptc, f gen s

διαστρεφω pervert, distort, mislead

φαινω shine, give light; midd. and pass.

appear, be seen

"*ye appear*' not '*ye shine*' (φαινετε) as in the AV. The same error is made in Matt 24:27; Rev 2:7 ... φαίνεσθε here should be taken as an indicative not an imperative." Lightfoot. But Fee argues that this is to miss the echo of Daniel 12:3 – the meaning is 'shine.'

φωστηρ, ηρος m light, star; radiance

Cf. Jn 3:19 "They did not only enjoy the light, but they reflected it. They appeared as luminaries in the world, and its only spiritual light came from them. There was deep gloom around them, but they tended to disperse it."

Eadie

### Verse 16

λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες, εἰς καύχημα ἔμοι εἰς  
ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον  
οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἔκοπίασα.

ζωη, ης f life

"By λόγον ζωῆς we understand the gospel"  
Eadie

ἐπέχω hold firmly to or offer

Eadie understands it to mean 'hold forth', and says it "describes the mode in which believers are luminaries ... The possession of the gospel is in itself a source of individual enlightenment; but the exhibition of that gospel throws its light on others." Fee thinks that the parallel with Dan 12:3 suggests that the meaning is 'hold firm.'

καύχημα, τος n ground for boasting,  
boasting, pride

ἐμοί Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

κενος, η, ου empty, to no purpose

ἔδραμον Verb, aor act indic, 1s τρέχω run,  
exert oneself

Cf. Gal 2:2

κοπιαω work, work hard, labour

"Probably a continuation of the same metaphor, referring to training for the athletic games: compare 1 Cor 9:24-27." Lightfoot. "What purer joy can be imagined than this – what joy nearer in fulness and loftiness to His, who, on the same day, 'shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied'?" Eadie

### Verse 17

ἀλλὰ εἰ καὶ σπένδομαι ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ  
λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν, χαίρω καὶ  
συγχαίρω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν·

σπένδομαι be poured out as a drink-  
offering (of one's life), give one's life in  
sacrifice

Cf 2 Tim 4:6

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim

λειτουργια, ας f service

λειτουργία has the connotation of priestly service (cf. Lk 1:23; Heb 8:6; 9:21). This much is clear, but the picture itself is not without difficulty. Fee writes, "Pictured is the Levitical priest, whose 'service' included the offering of a sacrificed animal, and often a grain offering accompanied by a 'drink offering' of wine poured out in the sanctuary (Num 28:7). In the present application Paul is pictured as the drink offering and the Philippians (apparently) as 'serving' by offering the sacrifice, which has to do with their faith in some way. But none of this is easy to decipher, in part because of the context and in part because Paul's use of sacrificial imagery is so flexible that usage elsewhere is of little or no help here." Many see σπενδομαι as a reference to Paul's possible death on the basis of the parallel with 2 Tim 4:6 – e.g. Eadie who writes, "The apostle's death as a martyr, was felt by him to be a very likely event; and while that death would be a judicial murder, it would yet be an offering poured out on the faith of the Philippian converts." Fee thinks that this is doubtful as Paul goes on to express confidence that he will be released. He thinks that Paul "is suggesting that his imprisonment, besides being a 'drink offering' to the Lord, is to be understood as his part of their common suffering, the 'drink offering' poured out in conjunction with their 'sacrifice.' ... Thus, it seems most likely, but by no means certain, that both sides of the imagery recall 1:29-30, that God has 'graced' them not only to 'believe' in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake. Paul's present imprisonment serves as the 'drink offering,' which accompanies their own suffering in behalf of Christ."

"Thus St Paul's language expresses the fundamental idea of the Christian Church, in which universal priesthood has supplanted the exclusive ministrations of a select tribe or class: see 1 Peter 2:5." Lightfoot

πιστις, εως f faith

χαρω rejoice, be glad

συγχαρω rejoice with, rejoice together

Lightfoot argues that the verb here means 'congratulate'. Eadie thinks it means "I rejoice and give joy to you all." Fee that it means that Paul and the Philippians are able to share a common joy in being granted to suffer for the gospel (so v.18). "The joy comes from our relationship with Christ and with one another in Christ, as well as from our eschatological certainty; the suffering must be the direct result of trying to bring others in on the joy, or it deflects from Christ's suffering. Only so can we also rejoice in one another's suffering – as evidence that the proper 'sacrifices' are being offered up to God."

#### Verse 18

τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ὑμεῖς χαίρετε καὶ συγχαίρετέ μοι.

το δε αυτο in the same way