

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 276 – October 3rd – Philippians 4:2-23

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
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Motyer, J Alex	<i>Studies in the letter to the Philippians</i> , IVF, London, 1966

Verse 2

Εὐδοίαν παρακαλῶ καὶ Συντύχην παρακαλῶ
 τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ.

παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage, urge
 φρονεῶ think, have in mind

Echoes the language of 2:2

It is theoretically possible for the names to be those of men, but the αὐταῖς of the following verse removes any ambiguity: these two are women. We know nothing of who these women were or what was the nature of their disagreement. Many suppose they were 'deaconesses'. Fee considers that this appeal "is where most of the letter has been heading all along."

Verse 3

ναὶ ἐρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε,
 συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς, αἵτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ
 συνήθλησάν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν
 λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν
 βίβλῳ ζωῆς.

ναὶ yes, yes indeed, certainly
 ἐρωτῶ ask, request, beg, urge
 γνησιος, α, ον genuine, true, loyal
 σύζυγος, ου m fellow-worker, partner or
 perhaps a proper name

Lightfoot thinks it probable that Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, is intended here. Some suggest that it is a reference to the individual who would receive this letter on behalf of the church – its first reader. Others suggest the reference is to the whole church but Fee thinks this most unlikely. He thinks it probably refers to one of Paul's itinerant co-workers who was currently in Philippi – perhaps Luke.

συλλαμβανῶ sieze; midd help, assist
 ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι who, which
 εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

συναθλεῶ fight together with, strive
 together with, work together with

Cf. Acts 16:13. They may have been among the women who first responded to the gospel at Philippi. Fee comments, "Here is one of those pieces of 'mute' evidence for women in leadership in the NT, significant in this case for its off-handed, presuppositional way of speaking about them. To deny their role in the church in Philippi is to fly full in the face of the text. Here is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is 'gender-blind,' that he gifts as he wills; our task is to recognise his gifting and to 'assist' all such people, male and female, to 'have the same mindset in the Lord,' so that together they will be effective in doing the gospel."

Κλημης, εντος m Clement

Probably belongs with συλλαμβανου αὐταῖς

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
 συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker

"The clause probably functions as a gentle reminder to all who lead the believing community in Philippi to 'have the same mindset as the Lord,' even though that is not specifically said of or to them." Fee

ὄνομα, τος n name

βιβλος, ου f book, record

ζωη, ης f life

The register of the Covenant people.

Verse 4

Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε.

Paul regularly begins the concluding part of his letters with "staccato imperatives." Fee

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

παντοτε always

παλιν again, once more

ἐρῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s λεγῶ

Cf. 3:1. 'Joy' is a repeated theme in this letter – this word and its cognates appearing 16 times in all. "As they traced all blessing to Christ and to union with Him, they would rejoice in the Lord; not in themselves as recipients but in Him as Source, not only in the gifts conferred but in Him especially as the gracious benefactor." Eadie. "Joy, unmitigated, untrammelled joy, is – or at least ought to be – the distinctive mark of the believer in Jesus Christ." Fee

Verse 5

τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.
ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς·

ἐπιεικής, ες gentle, forbearing,
considerate; το ἐπιεικὲς = ἡ ἐπιεικεία
kindness, forbearance, gentleness

Cf. Psalm 86:5 where this quality is attributed to God. Eadie points out that it is "that grace which was defective in one or another, or both of the women, who are charged by the apostle to be of one mind in the Lord. For, slow to take offence, it is swift to forgive it."

Having cited 1 Peter 2:23, Fee says, "It is this 'gentle forbearance' and 'meekness' of Christ, to which Paul appealed in 2 Cor 10:1, which he here calls the believers to exhibit in Philippi."

γνωσθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s
γνωσκω

ἐγγύς adv near

Cf. James 5:8 There is some debate as to whether 'the Lord is near' belongs with what precedes or what follows. Eadie suggests that it may be a link phrase, relevant to both. Fee also thinks it may be a 'bit of both,' "perhaps something as close to intentional double entendre as one finds in the apostle? On the one hand, this looks very much like another instance of intertextuality, purposely echoing Ps 145:18, 'the Lord is near all who call upon him.' In which case it introduces vv 6-7 as an expression of 'realised' eschatology: 'Because the Lord is ever present, do not be anxious but pray.' On the other hand (or perhaps at the same time), it also echoes the apocalyptic language of Zeph 1:7 and 14 ('the Day of the Lord is near'), picked up by Paul in Rom 13:12, and found in Jas 5:8 regarding the coming of the Lord.

"On the whole it seems likely that this is primarily intended as the last in the series of eschatological words to this suffering congregation, again reminding them of their sure future, despite present difficulties. Thus it is a word of encouragement and affirmation."

Verse 6

μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ
καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετ' εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα
ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν·

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
μεριμναω be anxious, worry

On the antithesis between worry and prayer, cf. Matt 6:25; 1 Peter 5:7.

The παντι may refer to 'every circumstance' (so Fee) or 'at any time'. Maybe it embraces both.

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

"While προσευχη is the general offering up of the wishes and desires to God, δεησις implies special petition for the supply of wants." Lightfoot. For the use of the two terms together cf. Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1; 5:5.

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

"... Since thankfulness for past blessings is a necessary condition of acceptance in preferring new petitions. Great stress is laid on the duty of εὐχαριστια by St Paul; e.g. Rom 1:21; 14:6; 2 Cor 1:11; 4:15; 9:12; Ephes 5:20; Col 2:7; 3:17; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 2:1. All his own letters addressed to churches, with the sole exception of the Epistle to the Galatians, commence with an emphatic thanksgiving." Lightfoot.

αἴτημα, τος n request, demand

γνωρίζω make known, disclose, know

Verse 7

καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα
νοῦν φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ
νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

The και is "that of result, and might be paraphrased 'and then,' or 'and so.'" Eadie. Fee says that "to pray in trusting submission and thanksgiving" is "God's alternative to anxiety."

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Cf. Col 3:15. Eadie says that this is not simply the objective peace with God consequent upon reconciliation with him – since they possessed that always. "What the apostle refers to is a state of mind which has that reconciliation for its basis. The former peace has a special relation to God, the controversy between Him and the soul being terminated – the latter is more personal and absolute. This peace is but another name for happiness, for it is beyond the reach of disturbance ... To know that it is well with me now, and that it shall be so for ever – to feel that God is my guide and protector, while His Son pleads for me and His Spirit dwells within me as His shrine – to feel that I am moving along a path divinely prescribed and guarded, to join the eternal banquet in the company of all I love and all I live for – the emotion produced by such strong conviction is peace, ay, the 'peace of God.'" It is *shalom*. It is not simply individual, it is also social, cf. Eph 4:3.

ὑπερέχω be of more value than, surpass
νοῦς, νοοῦς, νοῖ, νοῦν m mind, thought,
understanding

Lightfoot thinks this phrase means 'better than every human device or counsel', and that Paul is saying that it is better to live together peaceably before God than to argue with each other and seek to get the best of each other. Eadie has a rather different conception of this peace (see above), and says, "The mind cannot rightly estimate this peace, or rise to an adequate comprehension of it." Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9. Fee says, "his peace totally transcends our merely human way of perceiving the world."

φρουρεῶ guard, hold prisoner
νοημα, τοσ n mind, thought

The mind is guarded from disquieting thoughts and the heart from upsetting emotions. The location of such protection is 'in Christ Jesus.'

Postscript to Verses 4-7

Fee writes, "Joy, prayer, thanksgiving, peace – these identify Pauline spirituality. Such lives are further marked by gentle forbearance and no anxiety. The key lies with the indicative, 'the Lord is near' – now and to come. The Lord is now present by his Spirit, who prompts prayer and thanksgiving, among whose 'fruit' in the life of the believer and the believing community are joy and peace. Here is God's ultimate gift to those who trust in Christ, *shalom* and joy.

"In a post-Christian, post-modern world, which has generally lost its bearings because it has generally abandoned its God, such spirituality is very often the key to effective evangelism."

Verse 8

Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἀγνά, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ὅσα εὐφημα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε·

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining: (το) λοιπον
adv. finally, from now on

Cf. 3:1

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
pl. as many as; ὅσα whatever things
ἀληθῆς, ες true, honest, genuine

Truth "both in reference to God and men"
Eadie

σεμνος, η, ον of good character,
honourable, respectable

"It is opposed to what is mean, frivolous,
indecorous and unworthy." Eadie

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
ἀγνος, η, ον pure, holy

Cf. Prov 15:26.

προσφιλῆς, ες pleasing, lovely

Another word that occurs here only in the NT. "In common parlance, this word could refer to a Beethoven symphony, as well as to the work of Mother Teresa among the poor of Calcutta; the former is lovely and enjoyable, the latter is admirable as well as moral." Fee

εὐφημος, ον worthy of praise
ἀρετῆ, ης f moral excellence, goodness
ἔπαινος, ου m praise, commendation; a
praiseworthy thing

λογίζομαι reckon, consider, think

Paul uses the language of Stoicism (though there are parallels with Jewish wisdom, cf. Jas 3:13-18), but his ethical instruction remains Christocentric. Fee writes of Paul, "using language the Philippians would have known from their youth, he singles out values held in common with the best of Hellenism. But as v.9 implies, these must now be understood in the light of the cruciform existence that Paul has urged throughout the letter." Fee comments on Paul's use of the verb λογίζομαι here rather than φρονεῶ. The Philippians are to *reckon* as worthy of embrace (rather than set their minds on) those things in the world which possess these characteristics. His concern is that, "even though they are presently 'citizens of heaven,' living out the life of the future as they await its consummation, they do not altogether abandon the world in which they used to, and still do, live. As believers in Christ they will embrace the best of that world as well, as long as it is understood in the light of the cross."

Verse 9

ἃ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἠκούσατε
καὶ εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί, ταῦτα πράσσετε· καὶ ὁ θεὸς
τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν.

ἐμάθετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl μανθανω
learn, find out

The language of discipleship.

παρελάβετε Verb, aor act ind, 2pl
παραλαμβάνω receive, accept
εἶδετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ὄραω trans
see, observe
πρασσω practice, do

The Gospel is to be lived.

εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace
ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

"The phrase *God of peace* is parallel to the preceding one – peace of God. In the former case the peace is described in its connection with God, and now God is pointed out as the inworker of that peace." Eadie

Verse 10

Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ
ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ
ἐφρονεῖτε ἡκαιρεῖσθε δέ.

ἐχάρην Verb, 2nd aor pass dep indic, 1 s
χαίρω rejoice, be glad
μεγάλως greatly
ἤδη adv now, already; ἤδη ποτε now at
last

"Paul's own qualifier that follows makes it clear that even though not intending these words pejoratively, he recognised that they could be taken so." Fee

ἀνεθάλετε Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 2 pl
ἀναθαλλω revive

The verb is a botanical metaphor meaning literally 'to blossom again.'

φρονεω think, have in mind

"Their care for him had been for a time like sap and life in the veins of a tree, but an inclement season had prevented it from forming foliage and blossom." Eadie

ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε 'in reference to which you were indeed continually concerned.' Fee argues that καὶ here bears an intensive force 'indeed' rather than simply 'also.'

ἀκαιρομαι be without opportunity

Another word that occurs here only in the NT.

Verse 11

οὐχ ὅτι καθ' ὑστέρησιν λέγω, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον
ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι·

οὐχ ὅτι is intended to guard against wrong inferences being drawn from what he has just said.

ὑστέρησις, εὖς f need, want; καθ' ὑ.
because of need

Paul does not deny his need, but his thankfulness is more than a response to want relieved – just as his joy is not dependent upon material circumstances.

ἔμαθον Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
μανθανω v.9

ἐν οἷς εἰμι Eadie says is not 'in whatever state I may be' but the particular 'in the condition I am in.' Nevertheless he adds, "His mind calmly bowed to the will of God in every condition in which he was placed."

αὐτάρκης, εἰς self-sufficient; satisfied

"The idea of αὐτάρκεια is 'independence of external circumstances.' Compare 2 Cor 9:8; 1 Tim 6:6." Lightfoot

Fee comments that, "On the surface, his explanation looks like a meteor fallen from the Stoic sky into his epistle." But Fee points out that Paul's sufficiency, unlike that of the Stoics, is not self-sufficiency but a sufficiency found in Christ, cf. v.13.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

Verse 12

οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν·
ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι, καὶ
χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν, καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ
ὑστερεῖσθαι·

οἶδα know, understand
ταπεινοω humble; midd live in humble
circumstances

Refers here to physical conditions rather than mental state.

περισσευω abound, excel, have plenty

ἐν παντι καὶ ἐν πασιν "A general expression, corresponding to the English 'all and every'." Lightfoot

μεμύημαι Verb, perf pass dep indic, 1 s
μυεομαι learn the secret of

χορτάζω feed, satisfy

πεινω be hungry

ὑστερεω lack; pass be lacking; midd be
in want

He had learned to accept from God every situation and circumstance.

Verse 13

πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με.

ἰσχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient
ἐνδυναμοω strengthen, make strong

"It is ... to be borne in mind that this ability came not from his commission as an apostle, but from his faith as a saint. The endowment was not of miracle but of grace." Eadie
He knows the continual provision of Christ's power through the Spirit, enabling him to face each situation with contentment and joy and to continue undaunted in the work of the gospel.

Verse 14

πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει.

πλην nevertheless, however
συγκοινωνήσαντές Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
συγκοινωνεω take part in; help

Implies fellow-feeling or sympathy. "This returns to the language of 1:7, where Paul gives reason for his thanksgiving in terms of their being 'partners/participants' together with him in his chains and in the defence of the gospel." Fee

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

"It was not the actual pecuniary relief so much as the sympathy and companionship in his sorrow that the apostle valued." Lightfoot

Verse 15

Οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππίσιοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι,

οἶδα know, understand

οἶδατε καὶ ὑμεῖς "You know as well as I"

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου 'in the earliest days of the Gospel'

ὅτε conj when, at which time
οὐδεις, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church
κοινωνεω share, take part, contribute
δοσις, εως f giving; gift

εἰς λογου δοσεως 'in the matter of giving'

λημψις, εως f receiving
μονος, η, ον only, alone

Cf 2 Cor 11:8,9

Verse 16

ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη – i.e. "and indeed, even before I left Macedonia, while I was in Thessalonica ..." Cf. 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8,9. "The sums sent from Philippi did not fully supply the need of the apostle, for he was still obliged to work; but it argued goodwill on the part of the Philippian church, and the apostle refers with gratitude to their liberality." Eadie

ἅπαξ once, one time

δις twice

χρεια, ας f need, want

εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι some MSS read μοι rather than μοι, others omit εἰς. Some have both variants.

πεμπω send

Verse 17

οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν.

ἐπιζητεω seek, desire, search for

δομα, τος n gift

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

πλεοναζω increase, grow

λογον here means 'account.'

"It is not the gift he covets, but the rich spiritual blessing which the gift secures to its donor." Eadie. Their gifts are evidence of their continuing faithfulness and fruitfulness (cf. 1:11), "which will find its full expression at the coming of Christ. They themselves will be Paul's eschatological 'reward' (2:16; 4:1); their gift to him has the effect of accumulating 'interest' toward *their* eschatological 'reward.'"

Verse 18

ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω· πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτου τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν, ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ.

ἀπεχω receive in full, have enough
περισευω abound, excel, have plenty

Cf. vv.11-13.

πεπλήρωμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s

πληρωω fill, make full

δεξάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s

δεχομαι receive

ὁσμη, ης f fragrance

εὐωδια, ας f sweet smell, fragrant aroma

ὁσμην εὐωδιας is a phrase used frequently in the LXX for the smell of sacrifices and offerings (Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18 etc.). Paul uses it in Eph 5:2, cf. 2 Cor 2:15,16.

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim
δεκτος, η, ον acceptable, favourable

Cf Rom 12:1

εὐαρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

The gift is a source of delight to God himself.

Verse 19

ὁ δὲ θεὸς μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν
κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ
Ἰησοῦ.

Paul cannot reciprocate by sending any gift to them but he reminds them that in giving to Paul they have given to God (note 'my God') and that God is no one's debtor.

πληρωω v.18

χρεια, ας f v.16

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

δοξα, ης f glory

Eadie interprets ἐν δόξῃ as "in a glorious way". ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "designates the sphere of God's action. In Christ Jesus he will supply their wants, or from the fulness in Him, His merit and mediation being the ground of it." Eadie.

"The Philippians' generosity toward Paul, expressed lavishly at the beginning of v.18, is exceeded beyond all imagination by the lavish 'wealth' of the eternal God, who dwells 'in glory' full of 'riches' made available to his own 'in Christ Jesus.' ... It is 'in keeping with' all of this – not 'out of' his riches, but in accordance with this norm, the infinite 'riches' of grace that belong to God's own glory – that God's full supply will come their way to meet their every need." Fee

Verse 20

τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς
αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

"God is glorified in the aspect or character of Father, and "our Father," implying that those whose wants are supplied by Him are His children." Eadie

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Verse 21

Ἀσπάσασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.
ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί.

ἀσπαζομαι greet

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, set apart to/by God; οἱ

ἅγιοι God's people

Lightfoot Eadie and Fee think that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is to be taken with ἀσπασασθε, cf. Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:19.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

Verse 22

ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ
οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

μαλιστα especially

οικια, ας f house, household

It is uncertain who are being spoken of here. Some think that it was members of Caesar's own family, but it is more probable that it was servants who were part of Caesar's household. In any event it is testimony to the effect of Paul's character, conduct and words while in prison that it had such an effect on those aligned with his captors.

"They have brothers and sisters in Caesar's own household, who are on their side and now send them greetings; and therefore the Saviour whom they await (3:20) in the midst of their present struggle will gather some of Caesar's household as well as from Caesar's Philippi when he comes." Fee

Verse 23

ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ
πνεύματος ὑμῶν.

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

"The unauthorised postscript is variously read, both in the MSS., Versions and Fathers; the Received Text being – τοις Φιλιππησιους ἐγγραφη ἀπο Ῥωμης δι Ἐπαφροδιτου." Eadie