

## THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

“Going First Class”

Philippians 2:1-4

### Think This Over

1. By inspiration, Paul greets the Philippians (vv. 1, 2). Then he prays for them (vv. 3, 4) and expresses thanks (v. 5). His confidence in God’s work at Philippi is expressed (v. 6) as well as their mutuality with him (v. 7).

2. Paul’s magnificent prayer for the saints (vv. 9-11) is witnessed by God (v. 8). He reminds them of his prison experience (v. 12), but courageously affirms that His chains have resulted in: 1) The furtherance of the Gospel (vv. 12, 13). 2) The preaching of Christ (vv. 14-18). 3) The giving of new meaning for life and death (vv. 19-20). 4) Providing instructions for Christian conduct (vv. 27-30).

3. Now the Apostle picks up the ideas of the immediate context (vv. 27-30, especially v. 27 about steadfast unanimity). Exhortations are herewith presented for the Philippians (particularly) and for us (all believers) to heed.

### 1. ASSUMPTIONS of the EXHORTATIONS v. 1

The “therefore” implies grammatically that the accumulation of Christian experiences warrant certain assumptions. A fourfold series of first class conditions with the accompanying verb to be ( estin) understood is a compact forcible expression.

#### a. #1 Assumption Divinely

“If there is any consolation in Christ.” The noun “consolation” ( paraklesis) is often so translated (Luke 2:25; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 7:4) but also by “exhortation” (Acts 13:15; Ro. 12:8). Hence the thought is that if there is any admonition, encouragement, or exhortation, make that assumption “in Christ.” All is derived from one’s relationship and union with Him. Without Him, the child of God has nothing (2 Cor. 5:17).

#### b. #2 Assumption Persuasively

“If there is any comfort of love.” “Comfort” is denied from a Greek noun ( paramuthuion). It is only found here in the N.T. (cf. 1 Cor. 14:3 for a slightly different form). The thought of persuasive power is latent in the noun. Any incentive or encouragement, not consolation or comfort is the idea here. The genitive of source or agent is used with “love,” hence “incentive such as love supplies.” What a role for love!

#### c. #3 Assumption Spiritually

“If there is any fellowship of the Spirit.” The noun “fellowship” is frequent in the N.T. ( koinonia). The objective genitive shows participation with the gifts and influence of the Holy Spirit. Such mighty work of the Spirit.

#### e. #4 Assumption Affectionately

“If there are any tender mercies and compassions” The first word ( spagchnia) refers to the nobler viscera, therefore to the higher (cf. 1:8) emotions. The second ( oiktirmoi) conveys compassion, pity. Together the phrase may be rendered “affectionate yearnings of the heart.” It certainly is a meaningful phrase.

Remember It is assumed that these “if” clauses are true, that is the significance of a first class condition.

### 2. DIRECTIONS of the EXHORTATIONS vv. 2-4

The basic imperative “fulfill ye my joy” is an aorist ( plerosate). The above spiritual experiences being true, Paul’s cup can be made fuller! He already had joy in the Philippians. They are to complete it by that which is still wanting. Consequently, a series of critical matters are indicated as the means to do this:

#### a. Their Thinking v. 2

The present tense accents continuous action, hence, keep on thinking the same thing or be of the same mind. This is a general expression for concord.

#### b. Their Loving v. 2

Here is unity of affection. Again the present tense verb “having” shows continuous activity. There is to be no let up. As the church is unanimous of the same mind, they will have the same love toward God and mutually toward one another.

#### c. Their Being v. 2

This is unity of sentiment. Literally the original text reads “together in soul” ( sumpsuchoi), hence souls that beat together in tune with Christ and one another. That is real harmony which will make Paul’s joy fuller.

#### d. Their Minding v. 2

General unanimity is stated above. The phrase here uses the same root ( fromeo). But this is a stronger more concrete expression pointing to “thinking the one thing.” Therefore, their thoughts are directed on one thing. It is a very powerful emphasis on concord among the believers at Philippi.

#### e. Their Considering v. 3

##### 1) Negatively

The absoluteness of the prohibition is accented in two directions: a) Strife ( eritheian). This word covers the notion of individual ambition, working by intrigue for merely personal goals. Indicates factions as a regulative state of mind. b) Vain glory ( kenodoxian). This is sinful egotism, conceit which is vain and without content on account of some self-imagined excellence.

##### 2) Positively

Instead of the negative aspects which break up the spirit of unity in a church, each is to count ( egoumenoi) or instinctively rank himself as low as possible! Humility is modest opinion of oneself, an insight into one’s own insignificance. Such a disposition promotes mutual interest, respect, and appreciation.

#### f. Their Looking v. 4

The present tense verb confirms what is throughout this section -- continuous action ( skopountes). It is acceptable to look to one’s interests, but also to the interests of others. Unselfishness towards others is the right and God-pleasing-disposition.

Conclusion Accepting the assumptions of the first class, the directions for unanimity and humility are entirely possible. Failing to accent the former will negate the latter. One is impossible without the other. O God, bend us to Thy will. Amen.