

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS  
“Strength To Do It”  
Philippians 4:10-13

Review

1. Paul had no time for the antinomian cause (3:18, 19). Those who are truly saved have a marvelous hope (3:20, 21). It is difficult, in this light, to understand the friction of the local church, but it is real (4:1-3).

2. The Apostle Paul, from his prison in Rome, is directed by the Holy Spirit, to urge the Philippian believers to unfailing joy (4:4), unending moderation (4:5), unruffled peace (4:6, 7), and an unblemished life (4:8, 9).

3. It is not to be overlooked that God’s call through Paul to the saints at Philippi would result in the “peace of God” and the presence of the “God of Peace” (vv. 7, 9). What a remarkable assurance!

4. Now the letter takes on a fresh topic, yet not wholly so. He presses for the experience of “joy,” a common theme in his writing (cf. 1:4, 25; 2:2, 17, 18; 4:1). “But” (v. 10) is a transitional conjunction leading to the new facet of the previously mentioned subject -- joy/rejoice. The ingressive aorist “I rejoiced” ( ) suggests the point at which the joy commenced. Probably it was the coming of Epaphroditus (4:18).

5. It should not be forgotten that Paul’s joy was “in the Lord” and it is described as “greatly” ( ). The question is why should Paul rejoice in his prison? His reasons are listed: Because . . .

1. Paul was Remembered v. 10

a. At this time

The text is clear by the phrase “now at the last” ( ). It might be viewed as “now at length” (cf. Lk 22:32; Ro. 1:10). The thought is there: “Finally you have done it!”

b. In this way

“Care of me has flourished” ( ) is interesting. Not forgotten by the believers at Philippi, their interest has revived for Paul’s sake. Like a sprouting blooming flower, so their consideration broke forth. Blessed remembrance!

c. By this thought

Twice the verb is used ( ). The flourishing was in the thinking of Paul. But this was due to their habitual thinking. Note the imperfect tense ( ) meaning “in which ye also had been thinking.” Paul had been constantly on their minds, yet unknown to him.

d. With this opportunity

Apparently Philippi had no way to send help to Paul. There had not been a suitable time. The imperfect middle verb ( ) points to personal interest, but the failure to find time. But now, at this immediate present time, their care of Paul burgeoned into thought in his behalf. Blessed timing (cf. Eccles. 4:1-8; Gal. 4:4).

2. Paul had Learned v. 11

a. About need

Paul is openly honest. He denies any specific need or want (

). This is incredible for a man in a Roman prison! No need?! Boldly he says “I speak not” ( ). The significance of this statement is clarified by the only other instance of the noun in the N.T. (cf. Mk 12:44).

b. About circumstances

The emphatic personal pronoun ( ) adds enormous weight to the aorist verb with perfect significance ( ). The lesson was learned -- full stop, end of story! Some people seem never to learn the lessons God teaches them.

c. About contentment

“Whatever state I am” denotes “in what things” or “in whatever circumstances” ( ). This is the lesson taught by God and learned by Paul. No sweat - of all aspects of life, this is one of the most difficult -- rejoice as you are and where you are. This is another way of saying “give thanks (imperative) for everything” (1 Thess. 5:18). The result is most wonderful -- contentment. The noun “content” ( ) is used here with the infinitive “to be” ( ) and means “to be self sufficient. This lesson learned allows one to be independent of external conditions. Now that is a huge learned lesson! It must be learned.

3. Paul was Instructed v. 12

a. By Perception

The verb “know” ( ) followed by an infinitive is rendered “know how.” Hence, Paul “knows how” (repeated twice in Greek).

1) To be abased. This is the passive voice of the verb to humble, bring low ( ). The same verb is used in the reflexive form of our Lord (2:8).

2) To abound. “To overflow” ( ) or “to be in abundance” may reflect Paul’s thoughts about what Epaphroditus had brought from the Philippians for him. In any case, Paul “knows how” to deal with discontentment/complaining and contentment/self-satisfaction. Neither poverty nor plenty really affected Paul. He humbly accepted God’s provision and was satisfied when God withheld from him.

b. By Initiation

This is the root meaning of “I am instructed” ( ). The verb was used in connection with initiation into the secret religious rites of the pagan mystery religions. Being in the perfect tense, it states Paul has been instructed (fully taught) with abiding effects in every thing and in all things (every experience of life) and in all things (every circumstance of life). That varied testings involving costly self-denial are implied is self evident. But Paul has been instructed in the secret and he has learned.

1) To be full/To be hungry

“Full” comes from a verb originally used of giving fodder to cattle, then to be fed well ( ). The opposite is “to be hungry” ( ), a verb related to a term referring to a poor man who has to work for his living. Paul knew both extremes.

2) To abound/To suffer need

These words enhance their previous reference. Don’t forget them!

Conclusion

Having examined Paul’s reasons for rejoicing, it is easy to understand his conclusion (v. 13). All he has confessed is because he is being endued with strength ( ), a present tense verb, in Him, our blessed Lord. Mark it, dear friend, Paul “rejoiced in the Lord” (v. 10); here he is “strengthened in Him” (v. 13). There is no other way, no shortcut, nothing. He is all and expects your all. God help you to submit to Him willingly.