

*Philippians,
Colossians &
Philemon*

First Baptist Church Alexandria
Bible Boot Camp
Joel Harder



Introduction to Philippians

- Originally called Krinides
 - 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea in Macedonia
 - 356 B.C. Philip II renamed the town after himself and enlarged it
- 42 B.C. Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus defeated Brutus and Cassius just west of Philippi
 - Became a military colony
- Citizens enjoyed autonomous government, immunity from taxes, and treatment as if they lived in Italy
- Luke described it as, "leading city of Macedonia" (Acts 16:12)
 - Proud city

Authorship and Message

- Paul was in prison when writing this letter
- Primary purpose was pastoral
 - Reassure and encourage
- Paul built up Epaphroditus as he sent him back
 - Recovered from illness
- “Thank you letter to the saints for their gifts” (Lightner, p. 647)



Philippians 3

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Look out for the dogs

- False teachers of the 'circumcision group'
- For the sake of argument Paul considers his qualifications
 - Circumcised on the 8th day
 - Key for their trust of God's acceptance
 - "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21)
 - People of Israel
 - Tribe of Benjamin
 - "Blow the horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth-aven; we follow you, O Benjamin!" (Hos. 5:8)
 - Hebrew of Hebrews
 - Pharisee
 - Zealot

Count it as 'Rubbish'

- v8. "rubbish" (gk. skybalon)
 - Excrement, food gone bad, scraps left over after a meal, and refuse.
 - Extrabiblical Greek: a half-eaten corpse and lumps of manure. (Hawthorne & Beare)
- Paul wasn't giving up his former life because he didn't have reason for confidence. It's easy to scoff the ways of the establishment when you don't fit it.
- Paul meant that his former advantage were not only worthless but strongly offensive and potentially dangerous. He put his most prized possessions in the garbage can.

That I may know Christ

- v 8. "know" (gk. *gnosis*)
 - knowledge that only comes by a personal relationship
 - root word of the Gnostic heresy
- v10. (gk. *tou gnonai*)
 - "It suggests that for Paul just the *coming* to know Christ outweighs all other values, that for him the significance of Christ, 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col 2:3), is so vast that even to *begin* to know him is more important anything else in all the world" (Hawthorne)
 - Compare this to the intimate knowledge we read of between a man and his wife in Genesis 4:1. Read Charles Swindoll quote (pg. 52)

Paul Longed To Know Christ...

- FIRST: in the power of His resurrection
 - To “know” the power of the indwelling of Christ to manifest itself in his life for God’s glory
 - We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rom 6:4)
 - If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.(Col. 3:1)
 - “...even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...”(Eph. 2:5-6)

Paul Longed to Know Christ...

- SECOND: growing experiential knowledge of the fellowship of Christ's suffering
 - Not to add to the merit of Christ's sufferings
 - If you could be anyone at the crucifixion, who would you be?
 - because it "seems only fair"
 - To suffer for the sake of YOUR testimony for Christ injects you into a fellowship that a believer who never suffers does not know.
 - "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

“so that...”

- This verse DOES NOT contain a purpose clause as modern English translations seem to suggest.
- It expresses “expectation” of the resurrection of the dead.
- Death is the simple fact, however it looks in your life.

Potential Pauline views of the Resurrection (v 11)

- the spiritual co-resurrection with Christ (W. E. Vine)
- hoping he would persevere faithfully until he died and thus arrive at the Master unashamed (*exanastasin*, lit. out-resurrection)
- “resurrection from among the dead” – those who died in their sins and transgressions
- Rapture: “Paul probably mean that he hoped he would live to experience the Rapture, the “out-resurrection from among the dead” before he died.” (“attain” gk. *katavtao*, to come to) (Walvord: *Philippians: The out-resurrection from the dead*)

Press on toward the goal...

- Counter point to his Jewish zeal
- MOTIVE: "make it my own" because Jesus made me His own
- Who thinks this way?

Antinomian Danger (vv. 18-19)

- Taking “justification by faith” further than acceptable by Christian tradition or orthodoxy
- *anti* (against) – *nomos* (law)
- Three characteristics in vv. 18-19
 - Give free rein to the satisfaction of their sensual appetites and do not restrain the flesh
 - Find satisfaction and take pride in things that they do which ought to cause them shame
 - Involve themselves almost totally in physical and material things, pertaining to the present enjoyment of life, to the exclusion of spiritual matter
- Ritualistic observances had taken God’s place in their lives.
- Reformationists: “We are saved by faith alone, but not by faith that remains alone.”

Philippians 4

Crown of Joy

- “For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19)
- *Parables of The Lost*
 - Luke 15
 - John 16:22-24
- What will we do with the crowns? (Rev 4:10)

Resolve Conflict Joyfully

- Entreat Euodia and Syntyche to “agree in the Lord”
- “True Companion”
- All whose names are in the “Book of Life”
- All have labored side-by-side
- Fellow workers

Taking on an attitude of Rejoicing

- Taking on the Mind of Christ
 - humility
- Giving up it all simply for the sake of “knowing” Christ
- Quickening of the heart: “The Lord is at hand”
 - His ultimate victory is ours, now and in the future
- “Think about these things”
- Learned in whatever situation to be content
 - James 1:2
- v.4: Paul is not being unrealistic, that we should never feel sad (Jesus wept)

The Secret to facing plenty and hunger

- Focus on the blessings we have in Christ and being grateful for these regardless of situation, circumstance, or feelings at the time
- v. 5: Demonstrate forbearance (gk. *epieikes*) to everyone, saved and unsaved alike
- Lay down anxiety at the feet of Jesus
 - Currently, where is Jesus?
- in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving
 - Fenelon, Middle Ages (p. 67)

Recipe for Resoluteness

- ***Rejoice in the Lord***: get beyond yourself and look to Jesus
- ***Let your gentleness be evident to all***: speak with Kindness
- ***Do not be anxious***: relax, give it to God
- ***Be thankful***: the simple act of expressing gratitude for your blessings has a way of taking the heat out of an infection
- ***Present your requests to God***: Prayer has a way of realigning us and restoring peace
 - Howard Hendricks

Epilogue

- The present gift
- The previous gift

- Parallelism in the Unity of the letter:
 - Partnership in the Gospel – 1:5 & 4:15
 - Sharers of the grace (1:7) and his trouble (4:13)
 - Reciprocal attitude of sympathy: 1:7 & 4:10

Application: Individual

- Allow Christ to Master us Completely
 - View ourselves as Captives/Prisoners
 - His ideal is our ideal
 - His power is our only provision
 - His ultimate victory is ours, now and in the future
- This is:
 - the inspiration for our ceaseless song of praise
 - the source of the present joy that comes to define our lives
- Sharing the Mind of Christ will teach us to love, serve, and sing as we live the Christian Life.

Application: Corporate

- Our Influence is in God's Truth
 - The church will be powerful in the world only to the extent that it reveals God's Truth.
 - It's influence mainly lies in its ability to proclaim and demonstrate God's truth to the world.
- Our Authority is in Conforming to the Mind of Christ
 - Humble Attitude & Submission to the Will of the Father
 - Essence: LOVE
 - Expression: SACRIFICE



Colossians

Background and Major Themes

History & Background

- Located in the beautiful Lycus Valley 100 miles east of Ephesus
- Strategic location on important trade routes
- Antiochus the Great relocated hundreds of Jewish families from Mesopotamia to the region
 - more liberal than the Jews in neighboring Galatia
 - Galatia was susceptible to the Judaizing heresy
 - Jewish-Hellenistic threat in Lycus Valley
- Paul had not visited the Valley, but heard of the spread of the Gospel through Epaphras and others

Addressing Heresies

- Not specifically named
- Pieced together through the allusions from the book
- "The most dangerous heresies the church is called on to combat from time to time are not those which openly and blatantly assail the person of our Lord but rather those which subtly detract from His dignity while giving the appearance of honoring Him" (Harrison, p. 15).
- Let no one deceive you with "fine sounding" arguments (2:4)

Full Person of Christ

○ Docetism

- *gk. Dokotheos*; doci (to seem), theos (divine)
- Gnosticism
- Hidden treasures

○ Arianism

- Jesus was a created being
- First-born: prototokos
- "Begotten" (*mesogenes*) in John 3:16
 - Of same substance
 - Not protostikos

Image of the Invisible God

- (v 15) The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
- (v 16) For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
- whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.
- (v 17) He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Head of the Church

- (v 18) And he is the head of the body, the church;
- he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
- (v 19) For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,
- (v 20) and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Thirteen Assertions of Christ

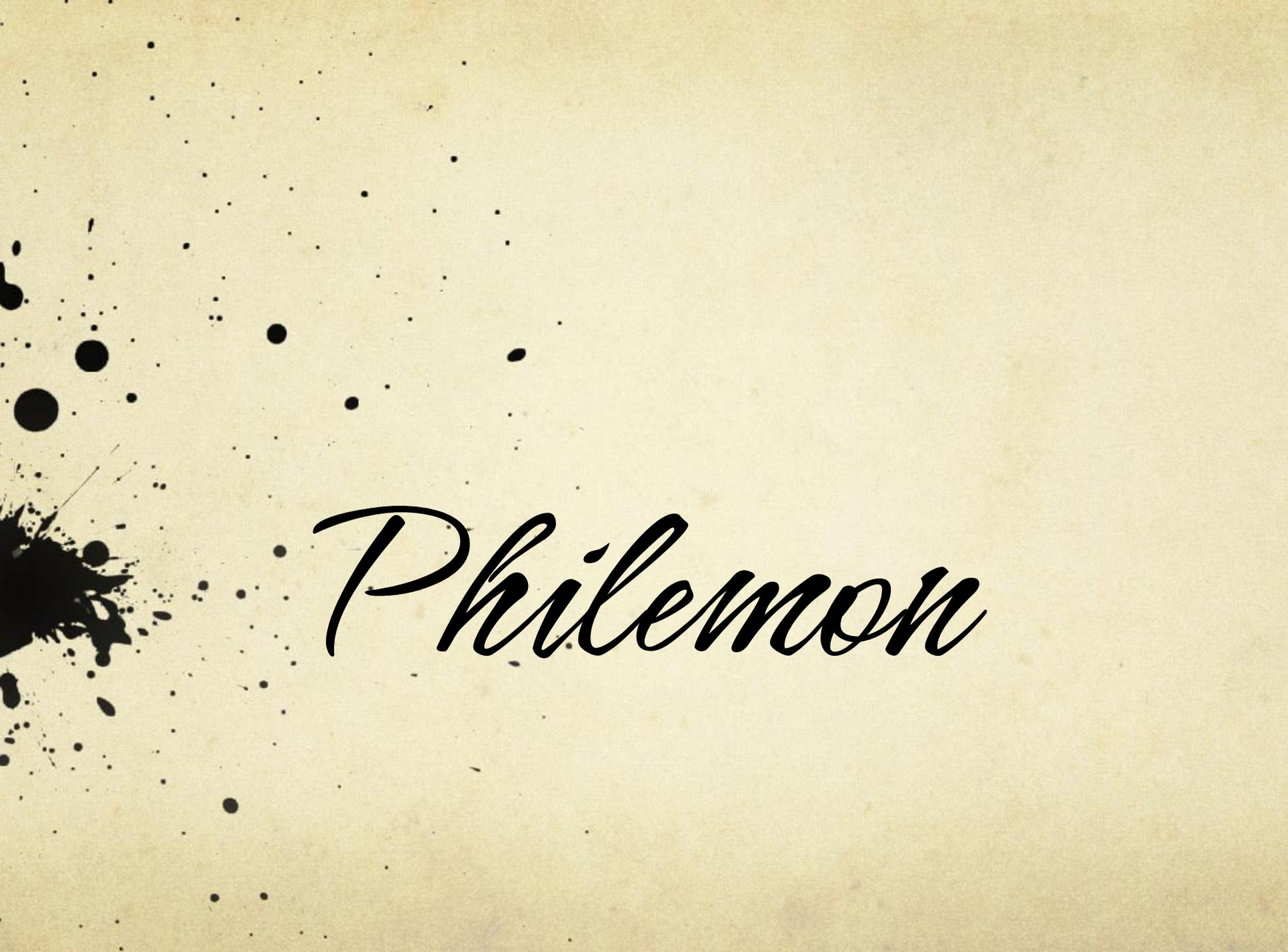
- 1. He is the image of the invisible God (v. 15).
- 2. He is the first-born of creation (v. 15)
- 3. He is the originator of creation (v. 16).
- 4. He is the agent of creation (v. 16).
- 5. He is the goal of creation (v. 16).
- 6. He is the antecedent of creation (v. 17).
- 7. He is the sustainer of creation (v. 17).
- 8. He is the head of the church (v. 18).
- 9. He is the first-born from the dead (v. 18).
- 10. He is the preeminent one (v. 18).
- 11. He is the fullness of God (v. 19).
- 12. He is the reconciler of all things to Himself (v. 20).
- 13. He is the maker of peace (v. 20).

Progressive Sanctification

- “Since then” you have been raised with Christ
 - Assumes regeneration
- Set your mind on THINGS that are above
 - Romans 12:2
- Set your heart on WHERE Christ is
 - Set your hopes, and affections
- You will appear with him when he appears
 - Driving through the mountains

Clothe Yourself

- First, put to death
 - sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
 - Wrath of God is coming
 - Romans 1 and Jeremiah 18
- Second, adorn yourself with
 - compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience
 - Bear with one another and forgive... how?
 - As the Lord forgave you.



Philemon

Philemon who?

- Particularly wealthy Colossian
 - Slave owner
 - Evidently came to faith through the influence of Paul (v 19), perhaps when in Ephesus
- On behalf of Onesimus who had become a valuable helper to Paul
 - Onesimus literally means “useful”
- Addressed to Apphia, Archippus, and the church meeting in Philemon’s house in the hopes to rally support for other Christians to encourage Philemon in his Christian responsibility.

Background Disputed

- E. J. Goodspeed suggested that the Epistle to Philemon is the lost letter to the Loadiceans that Paul mentioned in Colossians 4:16.
- John Knox agreed with Goodspeed but believed Archippus lived in Colosse, owned Onesimus, and received this epistle.
- Neither view much influenced the consensus view previously stated.

Beseech thee in love

- Paul had the authority to command Philemon... but doesn't. Why?
 - This is how God deals with us
 - This is how love behaves
- "Philemon teaches us that life in Christ changes every relationship.
- "It also teaches us that our relationships to others test and demonstrate our relationship to Christ.
- "It further teaches us that the transformation of the hearts of individuals can overcome social evils, such as slavery" (Constable, p. 4)

Racial Reconciliation is a Gospel Issue

- "God is not asking me to be like you, or you to be like me. He's asking us to be like him.
- "White born-again Christians tend to assume the body of Christ is white, with room for everyone else.
- "The cross and the Confederate battle flag cannot coexist without one setting the other on fire.
- "The kingdom of God is not about coexistence, the kingdom of God is about reconciliation.
- "Racial reconciliation is not just about making sure that we all get along with one another. It is spiritual warfare"
(Russell Moore, March 26, 2015).