Greetings from Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ.

To all of God's holy people* in Christ Jesus that live in Philippi. And to all your elders* and special helpers.*

Grace (kindness) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Prayer

I thank God every time I remember you. And I always pray for all of you with joy. I thank God for the help you gave me while I told people the Good News.* You helped from the first day you believed until now. God began doing good things with you. And God is continuing that work in you. God will finish that work in you when Jesus Christ comes again. I am sure of that.

And I know that I am right to think like this about all of you. I am sure because I have you in my heart—I feel very close to you. I feel close to you because all of you share in God's grace (kindness) with me. You share in God's grace with me while I am in prison, while I am defending the Good News, and while I am proving the truth of the Good News. God knows that I want to see you very much. I love all of you with the love of Christ Jesus.

This is my prayer for you:

that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love; that you will see the difference between good and bad and choose the good; that you will be pure and without wrong for the coming of Christ; that you will do many good things with the help of Christ to bring glory and praise to God.

Paul's Troubles Help the Lord's Work

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that those bad things that happened to me have helped to spread the Good News.* It is clear why I am in prison. I am in prison because I am a believer in Christ. All the Roman guards know this, and so do all the other people. I am still in prison, but most of the believers feel much braver about telling people the message.*

Some people preach about Christ because they are jealous and bitter. Other people preach about Christ because they want to help. These people preach because they have love. They know that God gave me the work of defending the Good News.* But those other people preach about Christ because they are selfish. Their reason for preaching is wrong. They want to make trouble for me in prison.

I don't care if they make trouble for me. The important thing is that they are telling people about Christ. I want them to tell people about Christ. They should do it for the right reasons. But I am happy even if they do it for false and wrong reasons. I am happy because they tell people about Christ, and I will continue to be happy. You are praying for

*Greeting, thanksgiving, and prayer from Paul and Timothy to the Christian community in Philippi.

holy people  Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

elders  A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called “overseers” and “pastors” (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

special helpers  Literally, “deacons,” a Greek word meaning “servants.” They were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

Good News, message  The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.
me, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me. So I know that this trouble will bring my freedom. 20 The thing I want and hope for is that I will not fail Christ in anything. I hope that I will have the courage now, like always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth. I want to do that if I die or if I live. 21 I mean that to me the only important thing about living is Christ. And even death would be profit for me.* 22 If I continue living in the body, then I will be able to work for the Lord. But what would I choose—living or dying? I don’t know. 23 It is hard to choose between living or dying. I want to leave this life and be with Christ. That is much better. 24 But you people need me here in my body. 25 I know that you need me. And so I know that I will stay with you. I will help you grow and have joy in your faith. 26 You will be very happy in Christ Jesus when I am with you again. 27 Be sure that you live in a way that fits the Good News of Christ. Then if I come and visit you or if I am away from you, I will hear good things about you. I will hear that you continue strong with the same purpose and work together like a team for the faith (truth) that comes from the Good News. 28 And you will not be afraid of those people who are against you. All of these things are proof from God that you are being saved and that your enemies will be lost. 29 God gave you the honor of believing in Christ. But that is not all. God also gave you the honor of suffering for Christ. Both these things bring glory to Christ. 30 When I was with you, you saw the struggles I had with people who were against our work. And now you hear about the struggles I am having. You yourselves are having the same kind of struggles.

Be United and Care for Each Other

2 Is there any way in Christ that I can ask you to do something? Does your love make you want to comfort me? Do we share together in the Spirit? Do you have mercy and kindness? 2 If you have these things, then I ask you to do something for me. This will make me very happy. I ask that all your minds be joined together by believing the same things. Be joined together in your love for each other. Live together by agreeing with each other and having the same goals. 3 When you do things, don’t let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honor to other people than to yourselves. 4 Don’t be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of other people, too.

Learn from Christ to be Unselfish

5 In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. 6 Christ himself was like God in everything. Christ was equal with God. But Christ did not think that being equal with God was something that he must keep. 7 He gave up his place with God and agreed to be like a servant. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. 8 And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused him to die. And he died on a cross. 9 Christ obeyed God, so God raised Christ to the most important place. God made the name of Christ greater than every other name. 10 God did this because he wants every person to bow for the name of Jesus. Every person in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth will bow. 11 Every person will confess, “Jesus Christ is Lord (Master).” When they say this, it will bring glory to God the Father.

Be the People God Wants You to Be

12 My dear friends, you have always obeyed. You obeyed God when I was with you. It is even more important that you obey now while I am not there to help you. You yourselves must live in a way that moves you toward your salvation. Do this with respect and fear for God. 13 Yes, God is working in you. God helps you want to do the things that please him. And he gives you the power to do these things.

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing. 15 Then you will be innocent and without anything wrong in you. You will be
God’s children without fault. But you are living with evil people all around you who have become very bad. Among those people you shine like lights in the dark world. You offer those people the teaching that gives life. So I can be happy when Christ comes again. I can be happy because my work was not wasted. I ran in the race and won.

17Your faith makes you give your lives as a sacrifice in serving God. Maybe I will have to offer my own blood (death) with your sacrifice. But if that happens, I will be happy and full of joy with all of you. You also should be happy and full of joy with me.

News About Timothy and Epaphroditus

19I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. I will be happy to learn how you are. 20I have no other person like Timothy. He truly cares for you. 21Other people are interested only in their own lives. They are not interested in the work of Christ Jesus. You know the kind of person Timothy is. You know that he has served with me in telling the Good News like a son serves his father. 22I plan to send him to you quickly. I will send him when I know what will happen to me. 24I am sure that the Lord will help me to come to you soon.

Epaphroditus is my brother in Christ. He works and serves with me in the army of Christ. When I needed help, you sent him to me. I think now that I must send him back to you. 26I send him because he wants very much to see all of you. He is worried because you heard that he was sick. 27He was sick and was near death. But God helped him and me too, so that I would not have more sadness. 28So I want very much to send him to you. When you see him, you can be happy. And I can stop worrying about you. 29Welcome him in the Lord with much joy. Give honor to people like Epaphroditus. He should be honored because he almost died for the work of Christ. He put his life in danger so that he could help me. This was help that you could not give me.

Christ Is More Important Than Anything

3And now, my brothers and sisters, be happy in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it will help you to be more ready. 3Be careful of those people who do evil. They are like dogs. They demand to cut the body. 3But we are the people who are truly circumcised.* We worship (serve) God through his Spirit.* We are proud to be in Christ Jesus. And we don’t trust in ourselves or anything we can do. Even if I am able to trust in myself, still I don’t trust in myself. If any other person thinks that he has a reason to trust in himself, then he should know that I have a greater reason for trusting in myself. 5I was circumcised eight days after my birth. I am from the people of Israel* and the family group of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew (Jew), and my parents were Hebrews. The law of Moses was very important to me. That is why I became a Pharisee.* It was so excited about my Jewish religion that I persecuted* the church (the believers). No person could find fault with the way I always obeyed the law of Moses.* At one time all these things were important to me. But I decided that those things are worth nothing because of Christ.

8Not only those things, but now I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Christ, I lost all those things I thought were important. And now I know that all those things are worthless trash. This allows me to have Christ. It allows me to be in Christ. In Christ I am right with God, and this being right does not come from my following the law. It comes from God through faith. God uses my faith in Christ to make me right with

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.
Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.

cut The word in Greek is like the word “circumcise,” but it means “to cut completely off.”
circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9–14). Paul uses the idea here in a spiritual sense of Christians who share in the new agreement God gave his people through Jesus.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.
Israel The Jewish nation (people).
Pharisee Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
persecute(d) To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.
All I want is to know Christ and the power of his rising from death. I want to share in Christ’s sufferings and become like him in his death. If I have those things, then I have hope that I myself will be raised from death.

Trying to Reach the Goal

I don’t mean that I am already exactly like God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach that goal and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that. That is the reason Christ made me his. Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal. But there is one thing I always do: I forget the things that are past. I try as hard as I can to reach the goal that is before me. I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the life above.

All of us who have grown spiritually to be mature (perfect) should think this way too. And if there is any of these things you don’t agree with, God will make it clear to you. But we should continue following the truth we already have.

Brothers and sisters, all of you should try to live like me. And copy those people who live the way we showed you. Many people live like enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you about these people. And it makes me cry to tell you about them now. The way these people live is leading them to destruction. They don’t serve God. Those people live only to please themselves. They do shameful things, and they are proud of those things. They think only about earthly things. But our homeland is in heaven. We are waiting for our Savior to come from heaven. Our Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our humble bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power. With that power Christ is able to rule all things.

Some Things to Do

My dear brothers and sisters, I love you and want to see you. You bring me joy and make me proud of you. Continue following the Lord like I have told you.
PHILIPPIANS 4:14–23

14 But it was good that you helped me when I needed help. 15 You people in Philippi remember when I first told the Good News* there. When I left Macedonia, you were the only church that gave me help. 16 Several times you sent me things I needed when I was in Thessalonica. 17 Really, it is not that I want to get gifts from you. But I want you to have the good that comes from giving. 18 I have all the things I need. I have even more than I need. I have all I need because Epaphroditus brought your gift to me. Your gift is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice* offered to God. God accepts that sacrifice and it pleases him. 19 My God is very rich with the glory of Christ Jesus. God will use his riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need. 20 Glory to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen.

21 Say hello to each of God’s people in Christ. Those in God’s family who are with me say hello to you. 22 All of God’s people say hello to you. And those believers from Caesar’s* palace say hello, too.

23 The grace (kindness) of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
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