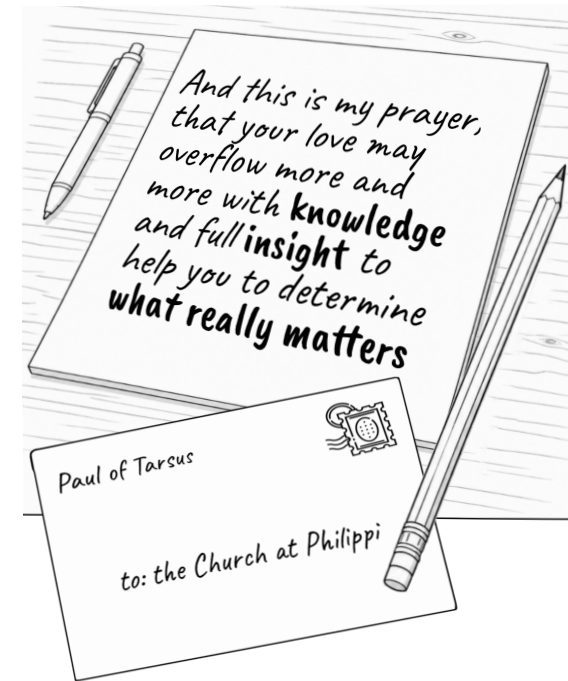


PAUL'S LETTER to the PHILIPPIANS



Philippians 2 & 3, Lesson 4

"I want to know the Lord and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death."

Philippians 3:10

REVIEW and CONTEXT:

It is apparent that Paul is offering wisdom to the church at Philippi concerning their trials of living in community as Jesus-Followers. From the context we can surmise that there are some in the community who are using the gospel for recognition within the body of Christ, as they are misusing Spirit's gifts for their own physical, monetary gain, or influence. Trials come in disagreements over how to live under Roman oppression within a Roman community. Chapter three brings up the trials brought on by Jewish Jesus Followers who insist that all converts must be circumcised and live by the Torah.

Today's lesson will focus on Paul's context: "What really matters" while zeroing in on his understanding of how to actually behave within community. As always, Paul is not writing new rules for the church. His words are not meant to bring guilt or shame.

Community is what matters to Paul, not individual salvation. How we express our love for and faith in Jesus is the revelation of Jesus in our midst and the revelation of Jesus to everyone we encounter. Therefore it is imperative that we live with the same attitude of Christ. It is within this context we'll zero in on a few sentences of the first three chapters.

Read Philippians 1:9-11 (*Greek insights in bold*)

1:⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure (*lit.: exposed by sunlight*) and blameless (*without offense*), ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness (*equity and justice*) that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Read Philippians 1:27-29

1:²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, [...] standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind (*lit.: breath. Soul, life, self, inner being*) for the faith of the gospel [...] ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege [...] of suffering for him as well.

Read Philippians 2:2-4

2:² ...be of the same mind (*lit.: to think*) having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind (*attitude, to set one's mind on*). ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others.

Read Philippians 2:6-8 substituting "you" for Christ:

⁶ do not regard that you are created in the image of God as something to be grasped (*something to be seized, or striven for*)

⁷ but empty yourselves, taking the form of a slave (*as someone who belongs to another*), serving humanity

⁸ humble yourselves, regardless of your circumstances

Read Philippians 2:12b-16

^{12b} work on your own deliverance(s) with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may be blameless and innocent children of God [...] ¹⁶ holding forth (*paying attention to, giving heed to*) the living word...

1. Discuss Paul's message and concerns in light of Greek insights and how we attain the desire he had for the Philippians.
2. How does this speak to us in our everyday lives?
3. Libation: Recalling the act of pouring out something precious over a sacrifice, spend a little time parsing Phil. 2:17 in light of:
 - a. Paul is **being** poured out, not pouring himself
 - b. Paul being poured out over the "sacrifice and service" of the Philippians

Read Philippians 3:1-6

4. Discuss Paul's argument of "confidence in the flesh." *Keep in mind Paul is speaking of flesh as circumcision and following the law of Torah for salvation, adding religious "works" as necessary for salvation..*

Read Philippians 3:7-11

VOCABULARY:

Zémia (ζημία): Loss, damage, forfeit

Skubalon (σκύβαλον): discarded waste, table scraps thrown to dogs, or excrement

5. "What really matters" to Paul in these verses?

Read Galatians 2:16-21; Colossians 3:1-4

6. How do these passages from two other New Testament epistles relate to what Paul is expressing about Jesus' death and resurrection, and how it affects our lives?