

/// Every Remembrance of You

Philippians 1:2 – 5

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is languishing with Paul in a Roman prison cell while we learn more about his second missionary journey, and how he crossed over into Europe; and how the church at Philippi was the first to be established at that time. As far as I can tell from reading the record, Paul never even gave an inkling of a thought of traveling to Europe. Paul's plan was, very definitely, to go down into the providence of Asia Minor; which was the heart of the Roman Empire at that time. Every facet of Greek culture culminated there, it had a delightful climate, and it was ripe for evangelism. The Holy Spirit deliberately prevented Paul from traveling in that direction on his second missionary journey; although he did go there later – and, of course, the church at Ephesus was founded at that time. Apparently, millions turned to Christ on Paul's third missionary journey, too. However, his second missionary journey — and the church at Philippi — was unplanned. If you have not read our previous report in Philippians, I suggest you go back and do so now.

Our expedition through the entire Word of God does not outline books of the Bible as a conventional Bible study would; however, in this epistle, which is really a four chapter thank you letter to the church, I would be remiss not to point out that the first chapter records the **philosophy** for Christian living. Chapter two brings us the **pattern** for Christian living. Chapter three presents the **prize** for Christian living, and chapter four gives us the **power** for Christian living. This book of the Bible is utterly critical for any serious student of Scripture to understand completely; and each of those chapter topics will be brought to a central focal point in a single verse in each chapter – which we will point out at the appropriate times....

2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

~ We didn't get past verse one in our last report; and verse two, which is part of the introduction, is rather typical of Paul's writing style when

addressing the churches. “*Grace*” and “*peace*” are very common words for us today. They were also a common, formal greeting in the Roman world. On any street in Asia Minor these words would have been heard. Today, we say, “*have a blessed day*” – and it means the same thing. God is saying that to us believers today, too; He is saying, “*have a good eternity!*” We can all thank the Lord He has provided a way that we can have a good eternity. Many people tell me to “*have a good day*” today – but they don’t contribute to my success in that endeavor in any way. It’s a nice thing to say; but God has made a way that this can be *real* in our hearts and lives – and it is *only* done by and *in* His marvelous grace.

“*Peace*” always follows grace; peace *NEVER* precedes the grace of God. We hear so much talk about peace in this world; and it is a religious word. The first origin of “*peace*” was “*shalom*” – and you would have heard that all over Jerusalem. Well, Jerusalem is supposed to be the city of peace but, as we know, it has never been a city of peace; it has always been the city of war. Even right now it is certainly the most controversial little dot of real estate on the world map; however, “*Salem*,” as Jerusalem was referred to in ancient Bible times, means “*City of Peace*.” When the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, returns to establish His Kingdom here on earth, there will be peace on the earth and Jerusalem will be the capital city.

Today, the only genuine and lasting peace available to mankind is that which comes to God’s children through His marvelous grace. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. By grace we are saved through faith. The lost sinner can have peace with God when they accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. The penalty for our sins was bore on the cross and He was raised from the dead for our justification. Even so, faith and grace are both gifts from God. Most people want to bring something to the table of salvation – but, my friends, you don’t have anything to offer God. Whatever you have is already His. Frankly, the only thing that Andrew C. Hunt has ever brought before the Lord is sin; and some personal problems that were all the result of said sins. That’s what’s real. I have a notion the same holds true for you, too, my dear readers.

In Christ – and in Him alone – will God receive us; and only then can we experience true rest and comfort in this world from the trials, tension,

trouble, lies, hypocrisy, hate, and all manner of things that are just plain wrong. Only those who trust and obey the Lord Jesus Christ will ever know real and lasting peace in their hearts. So, “*grace*” and “*peace*” just happen to be two extremely important words. Further, Paul says this is all from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ – but what about the Holy Spirit? Was Paul a Trinitarian? Yes, Paul was a Trinitarian, but the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, because the Spirit of God was already in the church at Philippi and indwelling them as believers. That makes our introduction highly accurate....

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

~ Paul never said this to the church at Galatia or to the church at Corinth. These are some of the tenderest feelings recorded in the Word of God. Every time Paul thought about the church at Philippi, it caused him to thank God for them. If you do not have a church about which you feel this way, then I highly suggest you ask the Lord to lead you to one. I’m not sure why so many self-professing believers are so against the church. Of course, you’ll never find a perfect church – mainly because *YOU* are there. I dare say that if you are not interested in worshiping the Lord with like-minded believers, then there is a *VERY* high likelihood you aren’t saved.

I am not demanding that going to church is part of salvation – because I just got finished saying otherwise – *BUT* – it may be indicative of whether or not a sincere transformation has taken place in your life. Now, don’t bother writing me back and telling me you’re saved but won’t or don’t go to church – because I’m not going to argue with you. I will tell you that without my personal church, you wouldn’t be reading this report – or *ANY* safari reports. So, I can say that I also thank God for a local community church He has led me to. It is truly a blessing in one’s life to have such a congregation. Let me just reiterate one point, though: you aren’t going to find a sincere, Christ-centered, Bible-believing church that loves and cares about you without praying and asking for the leading of the Holy Spirit; it just isn’t going to happen....

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

~ Paul didn't just pray sometimes for these people; and he didn't just pray for one little group of them – but “*you all*” – and that means all of them in the church at Philippi. Paul prayed for the total corporate church, and he did so *ALWAYS*. Well, the request Paul made was likely for their growth and spiritual knowledge. To understand that Paul did all of this with joy – considering where Paul was at this time – should be a profound theological lesson. Let's understand the word “*joy*” occurs nineteen times in this epistle — and this has been subtitled the epistle of joy — but the Lord Jesus is mentioned *more* than *FORTY* times! That's an average of ten times per chapter. Only in Christ can we ever have any joy. He must come first. Paul was suffering tremendously. Rejoicing in our suffering is not easy to do, friends.

The church today is trying to produce joy in their congregations by all manner of external means. They say they have a program that people can come and enjoy. Or, they have a nice dinner — and people always enjoy that! Well, those things are wonderful, to be sure; but they aren't the source of joy. Our joy does not depend on our outward circumstances; but, rather, upon the inward condition of our heart. We could say this boils down to a proper attitude towards life; although I do not really care for such allow level psychological term. If you are complaining about adversity — or the chastisement of the Lord — then, my friend, there isn't going to be any joy for you. You might have a little bit of fun at that church dinner, but you will not have joy. Only when you find yourself in the center of the direct will of God, irrespective of where and what that means for you, will there be joy and happiness in your life.

Combine Paul's physical suffering with the fact of being chained down in an ancient Roman prison cell and, I'll admit, it seems literally impossible for him to have joy. The conditions Paul was enduring were disagreeable to being happy, to say the least. The Roman jailer wasn't interested in reformation or “*corrections*.” No, friends, prison in Rome was about severe punishment and ultra-harsh torture. Our modern day “*Department of Corrections*” is *ENTIRELY* incorrect on every level; and it is one of the main contributors to an abjectly lawless society. Let's just keep this real: this country, America, is a nation of criminals and perjurers of truth; and the reason is because we're trying to make sweet and nice people out of

individuals who don't understand anything other than punishment – but I digress....

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

~ We have talked about “*fellowship*” before in this Spiritual Safari; but we haven’t enlarged upon it. “*Fellowship*” is a word that is utterly misused in the church — and everywhere else today. The world has adopted the word “*fellowship*” into their vocabulary and they, likewise, abuse it and, ultimately, relegate it into meaninglessness. The Animal Clubs – such as the Lions, Elk and Moose Lodges – almost always have a banner that says something like, “*Food, Fun and Fellowship!*” Unfortunately, nothing of the kind ever transpires there. The food is rubber chicken with peas as big as bullets. The fun is stupid jokes that even I could tell – if I had an obscene mind and mouth; and the fellowship means they pat each on the back and ask how business is going. Well, they’re usually engaged in fraud, so business is never good; and, even when it is good, it never seems to be good enough. That’s not fellowship, friends.

The Greek word for fellowship means to share the things of Christ Jesus. So, we can have fellowship with each other if we are centered on and around the Person of the resurrected Christ; and we can have fellowship with the Father when we come to Him in the Name of His Son. However, there are three very definite elements that must enter into the equation of fellowship: (1) spiritual communication; sharing the truths of Christ (2) sympathetic cooperation; working together for the cause of Christ and (3) sweet communion; partnering with those who teach the Word of God in sound doctrine to the world. Now, I hate to tell you this, but if all three of those are not fully functional and real in our life, then, my friend, you can forget about fellowship. Paul had communicated the Gospel to the church at Philippi and, in return, the church had sent physical help for Paul in his time of need. So, they had fellowship together.

Alright, we’re going to leave off right here in this leg of our expedition. I hope you will pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment, and then read the entire epistle to the Philippians in one sitting. I promise you it will be a blessing to your heart. I also hope you can continue on with us from here as

we search the Word of God for the Lord Jesus Christ on every page in our
Spiritual Safari ~

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