"BE ENCOURAGED;
GOD CAN STILL USE YOU!"

(Overview of Philippians)

7-23-2025

Introduction:

Though time has gone by, ***God can and will still use you, if you let Him!***

> *2 Timothy 2:21 - If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

I. God is <u>not done</u> with you yet (Philippians 1:6)

II. <u>Change</u> (Growth) is still possible (Philippians 1:9)

III. You have <u>someone worth living for</u> *(Philippians 1:21)*

IV. You still have a <u>life</u> of Salvation worth <u>living</u> out (Philippians 2:12-13)

V. You still have a reason to <u>Rejoice</u> (Philippians 3:1, 4:4)

VI. God still answers <u>Prayer</u> (Philippians 4:6-7)

VII. God's <u>Power & Provision</u> are still available (Philippians 4:13,19)

VIII. It's still all about His undeserved <u>Grace</u> (Philippians 4:23)

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> *2 Timothy 2:21 - If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

I. God is <u>not done</u> with you yet (Philippians 1:6)

Paul could pray with an attitude of <u>joy</u> because he had a <u>confidence</u> that God was working in their lives.

the phrase: "<u>good work</u>" includes both:
1) Salvation - God's work <u>for</u> them (in their hearts).
2) Service - God's work <u>through</u> them (from their hearts

God finishes everything He starts.
It is God who works <u>in</u> and <u>through</u> believers (cp.2:13) God is at work <u>completing</u> or <u>maturing</u> the good work He begins in believers.

II. <u>Change</u> (Growth) is still possible (Philippians 1:9)

Paul knew that his prayer for the Philippians could effect change. Change in their capacity and ability to love God, Truth, and Others.

"God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us" (Rom.5:5).

love is the "spiritual lubrication" that keeps the machinery of human relationships running smoothly (without friction)

GROWTH IS NEEDED IN LEARNING <u>WHAT</u> TO LOVE (v.9b)

"Judgement" = insight, perception, discernment. A deep insight, good judgment in making proper decisions.

1. SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT IN LOVING (v.10a)
"approve...excellent"
to discern the mind of God and love like Christ (cp.v8)

Biblical love is not blind! It is discerning.

The heart (loving) and mind (thinking) work together so that we have discerning love & a loving discernment. Wiersbe p.26.

2. PURE MOTIVES IN LOVING (v.10b)
"sincere" - some translate it "tested by sunlight" It describes one who is not afraid to stand in the light, because you have nothing to hide! Your love is genuine. No false motives. Cp.2:3 "let nothing be done through strife or vain glory..."

   a. Motivated <u>by</u> Jesus Christ (the source of love) (v.11a)

   b. Motivated <u>for</u> God's glory & praise (the purpose for loving) (v.11b)

III. You have <u>someone worth living for</u> *(Philippians 1:21)*

Note context: Paul now turns to the possible outcome of his trial. The

prospect seems bright; he expects to be set free. But he considers also the other possibility. With both possibilities in mind Paul trusts God's faithfulness, and is willing to accept whatever God gives.

"for" (v.19) explains how Paul could continue to rejoice (v.18).
Paul's trust is seen in his confidently saying: "I know"

He says I know that this (**trial** by Caesar) will turn out (result) in my salvation (deliverance from bondage) either by death or freedom.
- Paul depended on the prayers of others
- Paul depended on the supply (provision) of the Holy Spirit.

"Christ shall be magnified in by body"

"Magnified" = To make big, large. Paul is saying: "My body will be the theater in which Christ's glory is displayed" (Ellicott)

Our problem is that we are not humble enough to let Christ display himself thru us, rather we tend to want to display ourselves thru Him.

Does Christ need to be magnified? Yes and No.
- No - Because our magnifying Him does not increase who he is.
- Yes - Because our magnifying Him does increase how other perceive Him to be.

For Paul Living was Christ (that's it!)

Before the Damascus road. (Acts 9), Paul's life consisted in nothing more than living against Christ. Now it was just the opposite!

Christ was Paul's beginning of life, his continuing of life, his end of life, his inspiration of life, his task of life, his strength for life, and his reward of life - Barclay.

If Christ were to be taken out of life, for Paul there would be nothing left.
Appl. If Christ was taken out of your life what would be left? What would be missing?

"For Me to live is Christ" does not mean to live to confess Christ, be like Christ, nor to live for Christ. But Paul's life **was Christ**!

IV. You still have a life of Salvation worth living out (Philippians 2:12-13)

"Not as in my presence only" - it is sad to see some ministries fall apart after the change of church leadership. The reason: the ministry was built around a personality, not around God's Word.

Paul is not teaching salvation by works (cp. Ro. 13:11; Salvation is not only a point and time but it is a life).Paul is writing to saints (1:1).

NOTE: He does not say "work for it", but "work it out." The point is - You already have it, so use it!

Just as we mentioned before, when you receive a gift it should not just sit on a shelf. God did not save you to sit on a shelf. But to grow and serve.

"Your own salv." = you must work out your own Christian life (and do God's will) not what somebody else wants you to do (illus. Tim Hoff - did not go into family business because God called him to preach).

No two flowers are exactly the same; no two snowflakes are the same--and God has a special will just for you to fulfill.

"With fear and trembling" - Why? Because many people are not working their salvation out though they may think they are.

Heb. 12:28-29 - "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."

This attitude of "fear and trembling" necessitates that you: 1) Be serious - it's not your own life you're spending if you belong to God. "You are not your own . . ." I Cor. 6:19

2) Be careful - Not reckless (Don't be flippant or haphazard with the priceless, sacred spiritual life God gave you).
Illus. of a surgeon with a delicate operation.

"Fear and trembling" is the awareness that God is watching. Illus. of a boss looking over your shoulder.

Faith in God's promises and obedience to them is what releases God's power. Illus. Man with the withered hand could not stretch it out, but when he obeyed - God worked! (MT. 12:13). `

Ex. also Peter`s walking on the water. (Mt. 14:22-23).

YOU WILL HAVE **DIVINE ENERGY** (v. 13)

Compare God's working in (energizing) believers with Satan's working in ()energizing) unbelievers. Eph. 2:2

GOD PROVIDES THE DETERMINATION ("will")

When you yield, God's will becomes your will and God's work becomes your work.

We must yield our heads, our hands and our hearts to God.

There are problems in life, but God will help us to "work them out."

Illus. - A man went to Mr. Spurgeon one time and said, "You require too much of flesh and blood!" "I require nothing of flesh and blood," replied Spurgeon. "I am preaching to people who have the Holy Spirit indwelling them."

GOD PROVIDES THE STRENGTH ("work" - do)

No believer can live the Christian life by his own strength. We fail because we (in pride) lean on talent and ability. What was Christ's example? (v. 7) He surrendered his all to his father in humility.

"Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 124:8).

**SEE Col. 1:29 Heb. 13:20, 21.

"God which worketh" - Phil. l:6 - "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

You are a tool that God wishes to use, but some of you are not plugged into the power that is available and necessary.

"His good pleasure" (satisfaction). What matters more to you -- God's pleasure? Or your pleasure?

In latter days people will be "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

V. You still have a reason to Rejoice (Philippians 3:1, 4:4)

REJOICE IN THE LORD (V. 4)

The most important relationship is between you and the Lord.

"Always" = consistently and continually.

> We tend to look to gain inner joy and peace from job, possessions, other people, etc. If our inner contentment depends on anything else other than the Lord, it will be inconsistent.

It's <u>not</u> always easy to rejoice! But it <u>is</u> always easy to rejoice <u>in the Lord</u>!

He is always a consistent reason to Rejoice!

> When one loses the joy of his salvation (Ps. 51), he--though he is rich--lives like a spiritual pauper.

Isaiah 26:3-4 - "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"

"Perfect peace" = lit. "peace, peace"

> Habakkuk said that even when barrenness strikes the land, and famine brings disaster: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (3:18)
>
> "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." (Ps. 16:11).

VI. God still answers <u>Prayer</u> (Philippians 4:6-7)

> Worrying can cause: "headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even coordination." (Wiersbe, p. 113). It also causes insomnia. Trusting God beats taking sleeping pills.

God has a cure for worry (anxiety). And it is not prescription drugs, nor is it seeing a psychiatrist, nor checking into Bellevue Hospital!

It is faith, trust, reliance upon the Great Physician -- Christ!
Most of what we worry about never comes to pass.

"Take no thought for tomorrow . . ."

Do what you can about the problem and leave the rest with God!

"In everything" = prayer is not just for emergencies. It is for small problems before they grow into big ones.

1) "Prayer" = a worshipful asking
2) "Supplication" = an earnest asking
3) "Thanksgiving" = an appreciation for what God has done and will do (this involves faith). Anyone appreciates a "Thank you" (cp. Lk. 17:11-19 - the 10 Lepers)

4)"Requests" = specific praying. Not just "God bless the missionaries."

Why do we worry (fear and become discouraged)?
Answer: Because we don't know how we will handle the problem at hand. You are taking upon yourself something God never intended! You are trying to deal with the problem by your own strength!

You must give it to God!

Hymn: "All your anxieties, all your care, bring to the mercy seat, leave it there. Never a burden He cannot bear, Never a friend like Jesus."

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Ps. 56:3).

"Nothing is too great for God's power; nothing is too small for His fatherly care" (Vincent, p. 134).
He who worries does not pray, and he who prays does not worry" (Blair, p. 108).

2. God's Reward (v. 7) - He will guard your heart and mind with incredible peace

Man's "peace treaties" (peace agreements) are often broken.

Martin Luther King and Henry Kissinger received the Nobel Peace prize. But can equal rights fighters or diplomats bring lasting peace? No! Only the Prince of peace can!

This is not speaking of peace <u>with</u> God (justification) (Rom. 8:1) but the peace <u>of</u> God which comes after salvation.

<u>Inner rest</u> can only comes to you when you are absolutely sure that you are trusting in one who is <u>trustworthy</u>.

ILLUS: Contrast the differences of peace between stockholders and those who invest their $ in a bank.

God's peace <u>protects</u> us. With <u>inner</u> protection.

His peace stands like military guards at the door of the believer's heart and mind to keep out invaders who would seek to make your life miserable.

VII. God's <u>Power & Provision</u> are still available (Philippians 4:13,19)

Philip. 4:13
I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

"I can do all things"

Circumstances tend to change (alter) our service.

"Fair-weather Christianity" - When things are good, we serve. When things are bad, we split.

"I can do" = lit. "I am strong enough to do" . . . "I have the ability to do"

Present tense - indicates <u>continual</u> ability (strength)

Get your eyes off yourself and realize that in yourself you can do nothing; in Christ you can do all things!

"Through Christ which strengtheneth me"

ILLUS: of getting behind a little boy and helping him hold the baseball bat and hit the ball. When the ball is tossed, WHAM! "We hit it hard" The little fellow would jump up and down, thinking he had knocked a home run.

"Through Christ which strengtheneth me" = lit. "by the one who is <u>infusing me with power</u>" . . . "by the one who is <u>putting strength</u> into me."

He <u>charges</u> us up with power (ILLUS: charging up battery)

Eph. 6:10 - "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*"

I Tim. 1:12 - "*And I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, in that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*"

II Tim. 2:1 - "*Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*"

It is said in Heb. 11:34 that heroes of the faith in O.T. "out of weakness were made strong!"

Cp. Acts 9:22 - "Paul increased the more in strength"

Psalm 23 teaches about the sufficient power and blessing God provides:

Read each clause and state implication -

I shall not lack provision
" " rest
"" comfort
"" encouragement
"" forgiveness
"" companionship
"" protection
"" food
"" care
"" joy
"" affection
"" anything in this life & eternity

v.19
Philip. 4:19
But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

David knew the secret of this principle in v. 19. He could say: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread."

You can't out-give God! See verse 19 -

Lit: "But my God will fill every one of your needs . . ."

If you fill someone else's needs, your own needs will be filled!

His wealth is in Christ!

In Christ dwells all richness (Col. 1:27; 2:3), and those in union with Him are linked to the source and supply of limitless divine wealth.

God's resources are unlimited!

"He is possessor of Heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:22)
"The cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps. 50:10)
"He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph.1:3)

VIII. It's still all about His undeserved Grace (Philippians 4:23)

Philip. 4:23
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

- even saints need grace. Grace to live the Christian life. Grace to please God. Grace to bear fruit. We are saved by grace and we must have God's continual supply of grace to live for Christ.

Paul usually introduces his letters and concludes them by wishing God's grace to be upon the brethren.

When it comes to being anything for God or doing anything for God, our success is ultimately dependent upon His grace.

Trust His Grace to carry you through!