

The Church That Lives
Worthy of the Gospel of Christ
(Philippians)

James Kim

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Introduction

For me, "Philippians" is something special. The reason is that when I studied Th.M. (Master of Theology) at Fuller Theological Seminary, I wrote my thesis based on Philippians 2:1-4. Before I started writing the thesis, I went up to Professor Seyoon Kim, who was my supervisor at that time, and told him that I was going to write my thesis on Philippians 2:1-4. When he heard it, he told me that there was nothing much to write on that passage. Nevertheless, I wrote my thesis based on that passage because I was interested in the ecclesiology. So in order to write a thesis based on Philippians 2:1-4, I read many articles and books regarding that passage and the book of Philippians as a whole. As I was doing it, I got more interested in the book of Philippians. In the process, I read the whole commentary "Paul's Letter to the Philippians"(New International Greek Testament) written by the theologian Gordon Fee. Not only I read the whole book about 500 pages or so, I also wrote the summary of that book. I did not know it at the time, but now I look back and I don't know how I read and summarize about 500 pages. Not only that, I preached the whole book of Philippians every Sunday in my church during the Sunday morning worship. The reason for this is that not only I wanted to learn about the Biblical ecclesiology (or community) that is written by my favorite apostle Paul but also I wanted to apply what I learned from the book of Philippians to my church so that my church could become like the Church in Philippi.

Finally, after meditating and preaching on the whole book of Philippians, I was able to sort it out and to compose all my writings on the book of Philippians. In the meantime, I thought about the title of this book. It was then I remembered what the theologian Gordon Fee wrote in his commentary regarding the theme of Philippians - "The Gospel." Although I agree with him, I thought that the theme of Philippians is also living a life worthy of that gospel of Christ. The base of my thought is Philippians 1:27 – "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ," My personal thought is that we should focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the same time, I think what we need to emphasize is we must live worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian church believers and emphasized to them not only the gospel of Christ but also living the life worthy of His gospel. So I have titled this book "The Church That Lives Worthy of the Gospel of Christ." My small hope and prayer is that not only the church that I am serving now but also all the church throughout the world live life that are worthy of the gospel of Christ. May the Lord build His Church that lives worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

May 2019,

Pastor James Kim

(Praying for the Lord's church to live a life that is worthy of the gospel of Christ)

“Every time I remember you”

[Philippians 1:1-6]

How much do you think of the person whom you love? How many times a day do you think of your beloved family members? Do you think about them around a thousand times a day? Maybe ten thousand times a day? Perhaps we have never count the numbers how many times a day we think about our loved ones. That’s why we are not familiar with the question, ‘How many times a day do you think of your beloved ones?’ So maybe if we could do our best to answer the question, we would say: ‘I think of my loved ones in countless numbers a day.’

I meditated on Psalms 144 during the Morning Prayer last Tuesday and I wondered why we Christians were happy people. We are happy people because God whom we trust (Ps. 144:15) is "my loving God" (v. 2). David, who wrote Psalms 144, experienced God's love through grace because God gave him victory in battle (v. 10) and He delivered him from the hands of foreigners (vv. 7, 11). David, who experienced that love of God, confessed: “O LORD, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him? Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow” (vv. 3-4). When I meditated on this David's confession “the son of man that you think of him?”, I remembered Psalms 139:17-18: “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.” The Bible says that the number of precious Lord's thoughts for us outnumbers the grains of sand. Do you feel God's love for you when you hear this word of God? The Bible tells us that God loves us so much that His thoughts towards us cannot be counted. Even though parents love their children and think about their children thousands of times a day, they cannot think about their children when they are sleeping at night. But God who watches over us neither slumbers nor sleeps (121:4) and thinks about us countless times a day. What is man that God cares for us and He thinks of us so many countless times a day?

When we look at Philippians 1:3-4, the servant of Christ Jesus Paul wrote to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi with the overseers and deacons (v. 1) as follow: “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.” Here, Paul said two things to the overseers and deacons and all the saints in the Philippian church:

First, Paul said “I thank my God every time I remember you.”

Look at Philippians 1:3 - “I thank my God every time I remember you.” Do you thank God every time you think about your beloved family members? If you are, why do you give thanks to God when you think about your beloved family members? Why is that? I reread the letter I wrote to my beloved son on May 4, 2008 before celebrating Children's Day, and I saw the following letter at the beginning: “Dear our son Dillon, Daddy and Mommy are very thankful to you. Thank you for being our son. Thank you for being nice to us and your sisters. Thank you for being who you are.” I also reread the letter I wrote to my beloved daughter and this is what I wrote to her: “Mommy and Daddy thank God for bringing you into our lives.” The reason why I wrote to her like that was because she is precious gift of God to us.

Why did Apostle Paul give thanks to God whenever he remembered all the saints in Philippi? I think Philippians 1:2 gives us the ultimate reason: “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, the ultimate reason why Paul gave thanks to God whenever he remembered the saints in the Philippian church was because of God’s grace and peace. Here, the word “grace” means an undeserved gift to those

who deserve to be destroyed and that underserved gift is eternal life in Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23). In other words, God's grace to the saints in the Philippian church was that God's redemption and salvation in Christ Jesus. As a result the blessing that the Christ's church enjoy is "peace." That is, because God in Christ gave grace to the sinners and they were reconciled to God in Christ and enjoy spiritual peace (Park Yun-sun). When Apostle Paul thought about this grace and peace of God that was given to the saints in the Philippian church, he couldn't but give thanks to God. That was why Paul wrote to all the saints of the Philippian church, saying that the ultimate reason why he gave thanks to God whenever he remembered them was because of God's grace and peace that was given to them in Jesus Christ. When Apostle Paul thought about God's grace of salvation, he couldn't but gave thanks to God whenever he remembered the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi.

This is what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 – "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." The Bible says that giving thanks in all circumstances is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. We must obey this God's will. Why then should we give thanks to God when we think of ourselves or our church? The reason is because God forgave all our sins and saved us Jesus Christ. In other words, we must give thanks in all circumstances whenever we think about God's grace of salvation that He has given us. When we think of the grace of this salvation, we must give thanks to God for all the days of our lives and forevermore.

Second, Paul said, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy."

Look at Philippians 1:4 – "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." After expressing my gratitude when I wrote to my beloved son, this is what I wrote to him: "Daddy and Mommy are praying for you, Dillon. Our prayer for you is that you may know who Jesus Christ is and believe in Him. He is your Lord and Savior. It is our prayer that you may understand and experience His love for you all the days of your life so that you may love Him also. Our prayer for you is that you may live your life according to the meaning of your name 'Dillon' (Truthful and Faithful). Jesus is the Truth. And He is Faithful. May the Lord bless and gracious to you so that you may imitate our Lord Jesus Christ."

Apostle Paul didn't only think about the saints in the Philippian Church, but he also prayed to God for them. In other words, he prayed for them as he was thinking about them. And as he was thinking about them and praying for them, not only he gave thanks to God but also had joy. Why did he give thanks to God and prayed with joy for them? There were two reasons for this:

- (1) The first reason was 'because of their partnership in the gospel from the first day until now' (v. 5).

The first reason why Paul thanked God and prayed with joy was because the Philippian church saints were involved in Paul's evangelism ministry. How did they involve in Paul's evangelism ministry? Look at Philippians 4:15-16: "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need." The saints of the Philippian church participated in Paul's evangelism ministry by sending him aid "again and again" when he was in need. In a sense, the Philippian church saints were sponsoring Paul's evangelism ministry materially. That was why Paul, who had received the support from them, was grateful and joyful to God whenever he remembered them and prayed for the saints in the Philippian church.

- (2) The second reason was because Paul was confident that God who began a good work in them would carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (v. 6).

The second reason why Paul thanked God and prayed with joy was because he had confidence in the Lord. What was his confidence? He was confident that God who began the good work, that is salvation, would surely carry it on to completion (Park Yun-sun). This confidence was never based on the Philippian church saints. Rather, this confidence was based on God. Since Paul had this assurance and conviction that God who loved and chose the Philippian church saints would surely bring their salvation complete, he always prayed with joy and thanked God every time he remembered them.

This is what Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:13 – “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.” The reason why God is faithful even though we are faithless is because God is the faithful God and He cannot deny Himself. So the work of salvation that the faithful God has begun for us will be completed even though we are unfaithful. Therefore, the conviction of salvation that we have is based on God, not on us. The faithful God who has begun the work of salvation in us is now saving us and will bring our salvation to completion on the day when the Lord Jesus comes back. Therefore, like the Philippian church saints, we must participate in evangelism ministry with this confidence and assurance of salvation.

Last week, when our church celebrated its 34th anniversary, the message we received as we worshiped God was ‘Let us please God more.’ And a week later today as we worship God, I told my church members that the retired pastor Kim will be headed toward a mission field tonight and Deacon Kim will be headed toward Egypt for a mission. I believe that Deacon Kim devoted his life in evangelism and mission as he moves around different countries every three years or so. So let us pray for them as we remember them in our prayers. And as we pray for them, let us ask our faithful God to use them to not only preach the gospel of Jesus Christ but also to start His work of salvation and bring it to completion. Also, let us participate in their mission work as we support them materially as well. In addition, let us pray to God for our church missionaries and their families and ministries whom our church is supporting now. As we pray for them, their families and their ministries, let us pray with thanksgiving and joy in our hearts, believing that God who has begun the work of salvation through them to those who are in the mission fields will carry it on to completion. With this faith and conviction, let us remember and pray for them so that the gospel of Jesus Christ and the evangelism and mission work may spread more throughout the world. May God bless them all.

“I have you in my heart”

[Philippians 1:7-11]

What do you think when you think of your loved ones in your heart? Especially when the beloved one are far away, or even have already passed away, what memories come to your mind when you think of them? I personally think that we, the parents, should instill good memories of the Lord's love to our children. The reason is that if those memories are written in their heart then even when we die, our children can love each other and love their neighbors. In that respect, we must make many good memories with our loved ones in the Lord. Especially we need to make lots of good memories with those whom we are working together for the Lord, His church and His kingdom. If we do so, we will be able to thank God for the grace and love that He has given to us through fellowship with them in the Lord even after we have to be parted with them. Do you have this thanksgiving? Are you thanking God for the grace and love God has given to you through the fellowship in the Lord with those whom God has brought into our lives?

Last week we thought about two things that Apostle Paul said to the Philippian church saints based on Philippians 1:1-6: (1) First, “I thank my God every time I remember you” (v. 3), and (2) Second, “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy” (v. 4). Why did Paul always thank God and prayed to God with joy when he remembered the Philippian church saints? The ultimate reason was that God had given them the grace of salvation in Jesus Christ (“Grace and peace”, 1:2). More specifically, we learned two reasons why Paul thanked God and prayed for them with joy: (1) The first reason was ‘because of their partnership in the gospel from the first day until now’ (v. 5), and (2) The second reason was because Paul was confident that God who began a good work in them would carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (v. 6).

As Apostle Paul wrote a letter to all the saints in the Philippian Church, he expressed his love for them as follows: “... since I have you in my heart ...” (1:7). Basically, he said to them ‘You are in my heart.’ So I want to think about what Paul did for them in love so that we may learn and apply in our lives and our church.

First, Paul always thought about the saints in the Philippian church in his heart.

Look at Philippians 1:7 – “It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.” Whenever Paul thought about the Philippian church saints, he thanked God (v. 3). And in all his prayers for all of them, he always prayed with joy (v. 4). Why was that? We have learned that there are three reasons for this: (1) The first reason was that God had given them the grace of salvation in Jesus Christ so that they reconciled with God (v. 2). (2) The second reason was because the Philippian church saints were participating in Paul’s evangelism ministry (v. 5). Paul thanked the Philippian church saints for supporting Paul’s needs materially again and again for his evangelism ministry (4:15-16). (3) The third reason was that Paul was convinced and confident that the faithful God would fulfill the salvation work that He began in the saints of the Philippian church until “the day of Christ Jesus” (v.6). Then Paul told the saints in Philippian church in verse 7, “It is right for me to feel this way about all of you” In Modern English Version, it says “It is right for me to think this of you all” Here we can see that Paul always thought of the beloved Philippian church saints in his heart. And whenever he thought of them in his heart, he thanked God (v. 3). Why did Paul thank God? The reason was that the saints of the Philippian church were all partakers of grace with Paul (v. 7). Here, what is the “grace” that Paul spoke about? That grace refers to the Philippian church saints’ participation in the gospel (v. 5), especially how they gave aids to Paul’s need (4:15)

when he was in the prison of Rom ["my imprisonment" (1:13)]. When Paul thought about this, he said to the saints of the Philippian Church: 'You are all who have participated in the grace of God. So I thank God whenever I always think of you in my heart.' But Paul didn't thank God just for this reason. Another reason he thanked God was that all the saints in the Philippian church were partakers of grace with Paul in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (v. 7). Here, I think the grace that the saints of the Philippian church partook in the defense and confirmation of the gospel refers to their participation in the suffering and adversity of Paul's evangelism ministry. I think that was why Paul said in Philippians 1:29, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" ["For God has graciously given you the privilege not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him" (The Passion Translation)]. The reason why Paul always thanked God whenever he thought about the saints of the Philippian church was because they were suffering for Jesus for the faith they had in Jesus Christ and for preaching His gospel with Paul. And Paul says this is the grace of God. In other words, it is God's grace to suffer when they preached of the gospel of Jesus Christ by faith. In this grace of God, the saints of the Philippian church partook with Paul, so Paul always gave thanks to God whenever he thought of them in his heart.

Do you have any of those beloved people whom you always think in your heart who, like the Philippian church saints, participated in the grace of God with you? Do you have any of those beloved ones who suffer for Jesus while preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ? When I think of my church, there are people who love God and who love people so they preach the gospel of Jesus Christ with passion, hard work and even willing to suffer His sake and His gospel's sake. They are those who refuse to live in the United States comfortably, carry the gospel of Jesus Christ, and go to other nations with different languages and cultures. They are those who serve Him with thanksgiving in their hearts but without a name or fame. They are those who are grateful for the grace of God's salvation and who cannot but offer their lives to the Lord and serve Him and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever they go. And they are not afraid of any adversity, difficulty or suffering in the preaching of the gospel, but rather they regard it as the God's grace. I hope and pray that we can follow their example and partake in the grace of God.

Second, Paul longed for the Philippian Church saints with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Look at Philippians 1:8 – "For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus." Paul wrote to the saints in Philippian church and said, 'You are in my heart. I thank God whenever I think of you. It is right for me to think this way. The reason is that all of you are partakers of grace with me.' Then, in verse 8, Paul said to them, "For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus." When we look at this part of the letter, we can at least know little bit how much Paul loved the saints of the Philippian church in his heart. And he expresses the love to them through the letter like this. In order to express his love for them was true and genuine, Paul said, "For God is my witness." What did he mean? Paul meant that God knew that his heart toward the saints in Philippian church was true and genuine love.

Is our love toward our neighbors true and genuine? Do we love our neighbors with the affection of Jesus Christ? This year out church theme is "With affection of Jesus Christ." What does it mean by longing for our neighbors with affection of Jesus Christ? It means to yearn for them with the love of Jesus Christ. Here we can think about yearning for our neighbors in two ways:

- (1) Yearning for our neighbors means that we should be compassionate to our neighbors with the love of Jesus.

Look at Jeremiah 31:20 – "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly still remember him; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have

mercy on him," declares the LORD." Whenever our heavenly Father God speaks and reproves us, who are His beloved and delightful children, He thinks deeply. Also, our Father God's heart toward us is compassionate. His heart yearns for us. He will surely have mercy on us. As we embrace the heart of our Heavenly Father, we also should love our neighbors by having compassion, mercy and sympathy for them.

(2) Yearning for our neighbors means that we should be jealously desires our neighbors with the love of Jesus.

Look at James 4:5 – “Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us’?” The Scripture says that the indwelling Holy Spirit jealously desires us. Also the Holy Spirit bears the fruit of love so that we may be able to love our neighbors as we jealously desire them. Therefore, we must love our neighbors as we jealously desire them. Here we should keep in mind that there is not only bad sinful jealousy, but also good jealousy. Just as God loves us with good jealousy, we must love our wives with good jealousy in our marriage. This is true couple love. Likewise, we must love our neighbors.

Third and last, Paul prayed for the Philippian church saints.

Look at Philippians 1:9-11: “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” What do you think is the best expression of love you can do for your loved ones? Don't you think it is a prayer? If we love and care for our neighbors with the affection of Jesus Christ and have a compassion for them, what will we do first for our neighbors? We will just kneel down and pray to Heavenly Father for our neighbors. We will pray diligently to our Heavenly Father for our neighbors. We will pray every day until our prayers are answered.

That's why Apostle Paul today. He prayed for his neighbor, the Philippian Church saints (v.4). He didn't pray only once or twice. In Scripture, Philippians 1:4 says, "In all my prayers." It means that Paul always thought about them (v. 3) and prayed for them. And whenever he prayed for the Philippian church saints, he always prayed with thanksgiving and joy (vv. 3-4). This was 'because of their partnership in the gospel from the first day until now' (v. 5). Moreover, Paul prayed to God with confidence in his petition to God for the Philippian church saints. The conviction was that the God of the covenant of truth who had already begun the good work of salvation in saints of the Philippian church would carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (v. 6). Paul, who prayed for the Philippian church saints with this confidence, thanksgiving, and joy, prayed especially for 'love' (v. 9). What kind of love? It was a love that might abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight (v. 9). What was Paul's purpose for asking this love for the Philippian church saints? Look at verse 10: “so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.” The purpose why Paul prayed for love that abounded more and more in knowledge and depth of insight was because he wanted the Philippian church saints to be able to discern what was best in order for them to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. In other words, Paul's purpose of praying for the Philippian church saints was so that they could discern God's will (Park Yun-sun). Therefore, Paul wanted the saints of the Philippian church to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ (v. 10). In other words, Paul asked God for them so that they might not fall (Park Yun-sun). And Paul desperately wanted the saints of the Philippian church to be filled with the fruit of righteousness (v. 11). He prayed that by faith they would be filled with the fruit of good works as those who received God's righteousness (Park Yun-sun).

We should also offer these prayers to our Heavenly Father for our neighbors. We should ask Him for them so that they can be abounded in the fruit of love. We should pray that we may become more and more abound in

knowledge and depth of insight. Therefore, we must be able to discern what is best and to be established as true and incorruptible Christians and to live the worthy life of the gospel.

Would you say to someone you love, like Paul, “I have you in my heart”? Don’t you want to say to the beloved ones whom you always think and whom you have been praying for with the affection of Jesus Christ and will pray until you die, “I have you in my heart”? Now Jesus, who loves us, is saying to us “I have you in My heart.” Because we are in the Lord’s heart, the Lord always thinks of us, and His thoughts are so numerous that there are more than sand. Also, the Lord longs for us very much. And now the Lord is praying for us at the right hand of the throne of God. The reason is that the Lord loves us as much as giving up even His life on the cross for us. So with thanksgiving in our hearts, may we be able to love our neighbors with His great love.

I sincerely pray that there is the greater progress of the gospel

[Philippians 1:12-19]

You will know that the Pope came to Korea before. How effective do you think it was? One example is Kia Motors Soul. The reason is that Kia Motor has gained a huge indirect publicity effect because the Pope rode a Kia automobile Soul because he wanted to ride a frugal automobile that was not bulletproofed in order to get closer to the public during the visit. In particular, Kia Motor Soul car's main sales market was limited to North America (80% of Soul's demand was in the United States), and since the Pope rode the Soul car during the visit to Korea, the car's name and image was transmitted all over the world (Internet). In addition, Kia said that the average daily contract number of Kia Soul rose 32.5 per day from the 11th day before the Pope's visit to the 19th, the day after the departure of the pope, by 62.5% (Internet). In addition to this effect of Kia Motor Soul, I think there would be more interest in Catholic due to the pope's visit. Actually, I had a conversation with a brother in Christ who was working near Gwang-hwa-mun in Seoul, Korea last week through KakaoTalk, and he told me that when he talked to his atheist co-worker in hi company his co-worker told him that he liked the Pope. His co-worker also said 'Christianity is very selfish' and 'Christian pastors do a lot of bad thing, but Catholic priests do less.' The brother in Christ whom I talked to worried that many non-believers might join the Catholic church. And he told me. Then he told me, "Now the trust of Korean Christianity is at the bottom." And I think there are people who say that they are sick of Christianity so they are converting to Catholicism. What do you think of this? Do you think that the trust of Korean Christianity is at the bottom now? I encouraged that brother by saying, 'We have to be trustworthy people first', 'We must act instead of just talking', 'We must be selfless instead of selfish', 'Let's focus on character', 'Let's reach out to those who are alienated'. How can we Christians recover our trust again? I think the first thing we must do is to shed tears of repentance. It is because there is no restoration without true repentance. So we have to change ourselves. We will never be able to give confidence to the world unless we change.

In order for us to be a light and salt in this world, we must first listen to 1 Timothy 4:15 and obey His Word: "Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress." To make our progress visible to all, we must set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (v. 12). Furthermore, we must become a good example to those who do not believe in Jesus. Another word we should listen to and obey is Philippians 1:25: "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith." There must be progress of our faith. Our faith must grow. We must eat (hear) the word of Jesus Christ and continue to grow in faith (Rom. 10:17). What is the purpose? The purpose is so that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ may be preached through us. In other words, there must be progress of the preaching of the gospel through the people of faith.

In today's text Philippians 1:12, Paul writes to the Saints in the Philippian Church: "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel." I would like to receive two lessons from God as we meditate on the verse 12-19 under the heading "I sincerely pray that there is the greater progress of the gospel":

First, I want to think about Paul's circumstances.

Look at Philippians 1:12 - "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel." What was "my circumstances"? Look at verse 13: "so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else." When we

look at this verse 13, we can know that the Paul's circumstance was his imprisonment. In other words, when Paul was writing this letter to the Philippians, he was imprisoned in Rome. Isn't this surprising? While Paul was in prison, whenever he remembered the Philippian church saints, he thanked God and offered prayer with joy (vv. 3-4). How could he do that? How could he thank God for them when he was in prison? How could he pray with joy when his circumstance wasn't joyful at all? I don't think ordinary people can be thankful and joyful if they are in the Paul's circumstance. And I don't think those of us Christians with little faith will not be able to pray for those whom we love with joy if we are in a jail. Paul, however, prayed in the middle of the night and praised God (Acts 16:25), when he was put in the inner cell and fastened his feet in the stocks (v. 24) with Silas. How could Paul and Silas pray to God and praise Him in such circumstance? They were unjustly imprisoned. When they came to Philippi (v. 12) and were going to the place of prayer, they met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future (v. 16). The girl followed Paul and Silas, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved" (v. 17). She kept this for many days so finally Paul became so troubled that he said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" And that moment the spirit left her (v. 18). "When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities" (v. 19). "The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison" (vv. 22-23). So Paul and Silas were in prison unjustly. But they prayed in the middle of the night and praised God. How was this possible?

We often get driven by our situations. Especially when we are faced with situations that we cannot handle, we are often influenced by them. If we are to be put in prison unjustly like Paul, we will probably grumble than be thankful. How can we not complain and grumble if we unjustly put into jail even though we didn't do anything wrong and commit crime? This is our human nature. How can we, like Paul, thank God and pray for those whom we love with joy when we are in prison? How can there be joy in that kind of circumstance? In the Old Testament Exodus 14, when the Israelites were imprisoned in front of the Red Sea (Exod. 14: 3), the Israelites were terrified and cried out to the Lord when they saw Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and the Egyptians approached (v. 10). And they blamed Moses: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (vv. 11-12) Does this make sense that the Israelites blame Moses for bringing them out of Egypt? Does it make sense that they wanted to serve the Egyptians in Egypt because they were in the crisis? Our human nature is to complaint and grumble than give thanks in times of adversity and crisis. But if we truly believe in God, shouldn't we pray, praise, and thank God?

If it is hard to put ourselves in Paul's circumstance (his imprisonment) or in the Israelites who were hemmed in by the desert, let's think of it as cancer. Let's say we went to the hospital and our doctor said we have a cancer. How would we react? The emotional response seen by patients diagnosed with cancer can be divided into three stages (Internet): (1) The initial stage of the reaction is when a patient is diagnosed with cancer, he or she experiences negative, distrust, or despair. And some patients may think their doctors made a wrong judgment about the test or treatment method because of their severe anxiety. (2) The second stage is called emotionally agitated. In this stage, the patients think about cancer or death repeatedly, and it is said that it is difficult to maintain daily life because of depression, anxiety, insomnia, anorexia and difficulty in concentration that continue 1 or 2 weeks. (3) The third is the adaptation stage in which the patients accept the diagnosis and treatment process, and each patient finds his or her own way of coping and returns to daily life. As they go through these three stages, the cancer patients have a common psychiatric problem. It is said that 50 to 70 percent of cancer patients experience adaptive disorders resulting from insomnia, anxiety, and depression due to difficulties with cancer. In addition, 10 to 20% of cancer patients are accompanied by depression requiring treatment. In this case, they suffer from a variety of physical symptoms such as decreased mood, reduced motivation, insomnia, and a lack of eating or more sickness here and there in their bodies. In addition, they have fear of death, anxiety about cancer recurrence and metastasis.

And their fear and anxiety of future uncertainty and changes will increase. They consider even a minor physical change as a major disease. In rare cases, they show paranoia that their families may wish them to die, or they may be deluded that the therapist is deliberately doing the wrong treatment. How then should we Christians react when they are diagnosed with cancer? Pastor John Piper, who was diagnosed with prostate cancer, said, "Do not waste your cancer." And then he tells us in nine ways how he should not waste cancer, but I just want to share five of them (Piper): (1) If we don't believe that cancer is God designed for us, we will waste cancer. (2) In 2 Corinthians 1:9, God's design is clear: "Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead." (3) What God has designed is to deepen our love for Christ. If we die, we aren't winning the cancer. When we do not value Christ, cancer is winning. (4) Through cancer, God wants to create in us deep love and caring heart for others. (5) Cancer is a good opportunity to witness Christ (Lk. 21:12-13). What do you think of this? Do you see cancer as a good opportunity to witness Christ?

We must, like Paul, consider whatever circumstances that we are in as a good opportunity to witness Christ. We must be concerned about how we can use our circumstances to witness Jesus Christ for the progress of the gospel. We must prayerfully consider how we can glorify God and please Him through our circumstances. We should not be self-absorbed in ourselves because our circumstances are too hard. Rather, we should be concerned about saving the souls of those around us whatever circumstances that we are in and make every opportunity to witness the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second and last, I want to think about the progress of the gospel through Paul's circumstances.

Look at Philippians 1:12 – "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel." Paul wrote to the saints of the Philippian Church and said that there is something he wanted them to know. It is the fact that although he was in prison, it turned out for the greater progress of the gospel. How was this possible? If Paul, a gospel preacher, was in prison, he could not go out and preach the gospel. How could there have been progress of the gospel? Look at verse 13-14: "so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear." Although Paul was imprisoned, there were two reasons for the progress of the gospel:

- (1) There was a progress of the gospel because the whole praetorian guard knew well that Paul's imprisonment was because of Christ (v. 13).

Not only the whole praetorian guard knew well that Paul's imprisonment was because of Christ but also "everyone else" knew that Paul was in chains for Christ (v. 13). As a result, there was the progress of the gospel. This was how much Paul's imprisonment for Christ's sake had been known externally to others. Dr. Park Yun-sun said: "If the suffering of the believer is due to Christ, it has the greatest value. And if it is revealed that such relational suffering is for the sake of Christ, to those who know it will know that the gospel of Christ is very precious and true (Park Yun-sun). When I think about what Dr. Park Yun-sun, I remembered Dr. Kent Brandley, who was infected with Ebola virus during his medical activities in Liberia, West Africa. Three months before he left for Liberia for his medical mission, he said, 'If a hard day comes, I will recall the God's calling again.' This was a confession that he would be led by the God's calling while trusting and relying on God even though he was serving Africa and at the moment of trials (Internet). What a beautiful confession is this? Without light and without a name, he served as a doctor in Liberia in Africa and became infected with the Ebola virus, so that the whole world knew about him that he was also a believer in God, being led by God's calling and obedient to his calling. Those who are attracted to God's

calling are beautiful. God's people who obey God's calling are beautiful. Through these people, God is going to fulfill God's will and receive glory. These people obey God's calling and manifest Jesus Christ wherever they go. Wherever they go, they go to the place where the Lord calls them and shine the light of Jesus Christ. To these committed Christians there is a confession of faith like Apostle Paul: "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." I hope and pray that this confession of faith will be with us.

(2) There was a progress of the gospel because most of the brothers in the Lord had been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly (v. 14).

Look at Philippians 1:14 – "Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly." Isn't it amazing that even though Paul, a spiritual leader was in prison, the saints of the Philippian church had been more boldly speaking the word of God without fear, rather than being afraid? This isn't the normal response. If Paul, their spiritual leader was in the prison, the normal response that we expect from the saints of the Philippian church would be afraid of those who opposed Christ and His gospel and would be silent instead of speaking the word of God. But since they spoke the word of God more courageously and fearlessly, it is clear that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Park Yun-sun said: 'Even though the persecution of Paul was terrible, the Holy Spirit had made Paul strong enough to endure the terrible persecution. Therefore, the Christian believers should have good faith and see the power of God to overcome it instead of seeing the terrible fact of persecution' (Park Yun-sun). Because of this trust in the saints of the Philippian church and their trust in the Lord, they were able to proclaimed the word of God more courageously and fearlessly, even in Paul's imprisonment (v. 14). However, all those who boldly proclaim the word of God in this way didn't have the pure motive. Look at verses 15 through 17: "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains." Paul knew that not only there were some who preached Christ out of good will and in love but there were some who preached Christ out of envy and rivalry and selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they could stir up trouble for Paul while he was in chains. Here, I think those who preached Christ out of envy, rivalry and selfish ambition might have envied Paul and hated him. One thing for sure was that they didn't preach Christ with pure motive. Actually, they preached Christ from false motive (v. 18). Nevertheless, in a letter to the Philippian saints, Paul wrote: "But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice" (v.18).

This was Paul's joy. His joy was not only to preach Jesus Christ but He was preached by the Philippian church saints. He rejoiced because Christ was preached, whether from false motives or true. Of course, I don't Apostle Paul here wasn't agreeing about preaching the gospel with false motive. How can we know this? We can know this by looking at Philippians 2:3 – "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit" Although it seems like Paul didn't care about those who preached Christ "out of selfish ambition" in Philippians 1:17, he said in 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition." But because it was Christ who was preached, Paul rejoiced. And another reason why Paul rejoiced was because he knew that through the Philippian church saints' prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what had happened to him would turn out for his deliverance (v. 19). Shouldn't we have this joy?

Not long ago, I was informed by CNN Internet News that Dr. Kent Brandley and Nancy Wright Ball, who were infected with Ebola virus during his medical activities in Liberia, West Africa were discharged from the

hospital (Internet). After hearing the news, I saw a video of Dr. Kent Brandley's speech as he was discharged from the Internet. I saw him confessing that 'God saved my life'. My heart was touched by his speech. Especially when I heard his prayer during the nine days when he was lying in bed and as he was getting worse and worse, my heart was blessed. This was his prayer: "As I lay in my bed in Liberia for the following nine days, I prayed that God would help me to be faithful Even in my illness, and I prayed that in my life or in my death, He would be glorified." Not only his prayer touched my heart, what sister Nancy Wright Ball said before she was discharged touched my heart as well. And that one word was "To God be the glory!" We cannot fully understand what these brother and sister in Christ went through when they were infected with the Ebola virus, a fatal infectious disease with a mortality rate of 90%. Of course, we cannot fully understand their hearts and minds in those situations where they were at the crossroads of life and death. But what we can clearly know is that they didn't lose their faith even at the crossroads of life and death but also they wanted to glorify God whether they live or die. In particular, I saw a glimpse of God's work of using Dr. Kent Brandley's speech at the official press conference to make the progress of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world when he said 'God saved me,' 'God has answered they prayers of so many people through this world' and his dedication to glorify God whether through life of death. Therefore, we are rejoicing and rejoicing like Apostle Paul as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

‘My circumstances have turned out ...’

“Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel” (Philippians 1:12).

How do I look at the situation I am facing now? Is this the situation I expected? Perhaps the situation that I face now is a situation that I didn't want or expected. So now I am dissatisfied with my situation. And now I am struggling because of my dissatisfied situation. It is painful and I am distressed. I wonder how long I have to stay in this hard and painful situation. So when I look at my situation, I become discouraged and even despair. There is no hope. What should I do?

Today I read Bible Philippians 1:12. In reading, I came to think about Apostle Paul saying “my circumstances have turned out” First, I thought about the Paul's circumstances. The circumstances are explained in the next verse by Paul as “my imprisonment” (v. 13). In other words, Paul was in prison. If I am in prison like Paul, how will I react? If I go to mission that is a communist state or a Muslim country and go to jail for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, how will I react? The words of Acts 16:25 came into my mind: “But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Although Paul and Silas were in the inner prison and their feet were fastened in the stocks (v. 24), they prayed and sang hymns of praise to God (v. 25). Can I pray and praise God like Paul and Silas, if I have been sent to prison in the mission field? Perhaps I would ask God at least to rescue me from prison. But I don't know I can praise God so that even other prisoners will hear my singing. Perhaps I will not sing praise by my strength. But if God gives me grace, then I believe that the indwelling Holy Spirit will enable me to praise God even in such circumstances. The reason is that after my first baby died, my wife spread her ashes in water and the indwelling Holy Spirit enabled me to praise God His saving love. Since God gave me this faith, with the same faith I will accept any circumstances, whether I wanted it or expected it, as I acknowledge God's sovereignty instead of denying that circumstances. And even though I don't know what the sovereign will of God is, I certainly will believe that there is God's good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom. 12:1) and I will be comforted by the fact that I am in His sovereign will. In the midst of that, I will pray and wait patiently God's given patience with the expectation that God causes all things to work together for good to me (Rom. 8:28). The reason for this is that in Philippians 1:12, Apostle Paul said that his circumstances had turned out for the greater progress of the gospel.

When I meditated on Philippians 1:12, I realized two things. One is that even though Paul was bound, but the gospel of Jesus Christ couldn't be bounded. So with faith that the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be bounded in any difficult circumstances I will pray that there will be progress of the gospel through “my bonds”. Another one is the fact that God's sovereign will was accomplished through others, even without Paul. So I came to think again that I should get rid of thought that the Lord needs me to accomplish His will. God accomplished His will of the progress of the gospel through the two groups when Paul was in the prison. One group of people was “most of the brethren” who trusted in the Lord because of Paul's imprisonment and had far more courage to speak the word of God without fear (v. 14). They preached Christ from good will (v. 15). Also they did it out of love, knowing that Paul was appointed for the defense of the gospel (v. 16). They preached the gospel in truth (v. 18). Yet another group of people preached Christ even from envy and strife (v. 15). They proclaimed Christ out of selfish ambition, thinking to cause Paul distress in his imprisonment (v. 17). They proclaimed Christ in pretense (v. 18). But since Christ was proclaimed, whether in pretense or in truth, Paul rejoiced (v. 18). In the end, Paul rejoiced greatly because his circumstances of imprisonment had turned out for the greater progress of the gospel (v. 12).

I hope and pray that whatever circumstances we are in it may turn out for the greater progress of the gospel. I pray that Christ will be preached through our circumstances now. Through whatever we are going through now, I hope and pray that there is progress of the gospel, so that there is progress and joy in our faith (v. 25).

‘My earnest expectation and hope’

[Philippians 1:20-26]

We live with hope. We cannot live without hope. Because we have hope, we eat, drink and work with anticipation. The hope that some of us have is hoping that ‘it will get better’ and strive to overcome the current adversity and painful environment. Others are enduring their lives with the expectation that “I will be able to succeed someday,” and endure, persevere and fight the current difficult reality. There is hope for something in us, so we are enduring day by day. If this hope in us dies, we are actually living a dead life even though we are alive. If the hope in us will be cut off, then how will you respond?

In today's text Philippians 1:20-21, Paul wrote to the saints in the Philippian Church: “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.” What was Paul’s earnest expectation and hope? If we sum it up in one word, it was to exalt Christ in his body, whether by life or by death (v. 20). What does it mean by Christ will be exalted in his body? Here, the Greek word for ‘to be exalted’ means ‘to be magnified’ (Park Yun-sun). In other words, the eager expectation and hope of Paul was to magnify Christ in his body. Then, if Paul desperately wanted to magnify Christ in his body, what supposed to happen to Paul's body? Shouldn't it get smaller? To understand this statement a little easier, for example, Paul's name should be made smaller and lower, so that the name of Jesus Christ could grow and become greater. A more biblical example is what John the Baptist said in John 3:30 – “He must become greater; I must become less” (NIV) [“He must increase, but I must decrease” (NASB)]. This reminds me the words of verse 3 of the hymn “Call'd of God, We Honor the Call”: “.Hon-or, glo-ry, pow-er and praise, Lord, to You, You on-ly are due! Shame and scorn and cross You car-ried; Grant us grace to car-ry them too, With-out name or fame, but, oh, Lord, Joy and thanks, to serve be-fore You With-out name or fame, but, oh, Lord, Joy and thanks, to serve be-fore You! A-men.”

Indeed, Paul served the Lord with thanksgiving. How can we know it? We can know this if we look at 1 Timothy 1:12-14: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” Paul couldn't help but thanked Christ Jesus because the Lord showed him mercy and grace abundantly and appointed him to be the apostle to the Gentiles even though he was the blasphemer, the persecutor, the violent man and the worst sinner. That was why Paul served the Lord in thanksgiving. He wanted to preach only the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at 1 Corinthians 1:17 – “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” Because he did not regard his life as a precious thing to end the work of witnessing the gospel of the grace of God, which is His mission to him, he continued to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of all his troubles and suffering (Acts 20:24). For him, his life mission of preaching the gospel, which was the Lord's calling to him, was more important than his own life. So when Paul was writing this letter to the saints of the Philippian church and said that although he himself was locked up in prison because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he wanted the saints in the Philippian church to know that because of his imprisonment, there was the progress of the gospel (Phil. 1:12). Also, he wrote and told them he rejoiced because even though he was abound in prison, the gospel of Jesus Christ couldn't be abound and actually was preached so that there was the progress of the gospel. Then in verse 20, Paul told them what his earnest hope and expectation was. That was to exalt Christ in his body. Paul's earnest expectation and hope was not to be ashamed of anything, but to have sufficient courage to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (v. 20). He believed that this was the Lord's mission that was given to him and that faithfully fulfilling that mission would exalt Christ. To what extent did Paul want to exalt Christ was that he wanted to do so whether by life or by death (v. 20). The reason he so desperately wanted it was because for to him, to live was

Christ and to die was gain (v. 21). Since to live was for Christ and to die is gain, Paul didn't spare his life but gave it all to the Lord's calling in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ boldly so that He might be exalted.

Do you believe that preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is more valuable than your life? If you believe so, do you think it is good to die in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is more precious than your life? Do you believe that since to live is Christ to die in Christ is beneficial? If you believe so, you will give all your life in preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ so that Christ will be exalted. In fact, Paul desired to depart and be with Christ (v. 23). He was torn between the two (v. 23). What are those two? They are "living in the body" (v. 22) and "to depart and be with Christ" (v. 23). Haven't you been in this situation in which you are torn between these two? Haven't you ever been in this situation in which you need to live in this earth and fulfill the Lord's mission even though you want to go to heaven and be with Christ? Of course, I don't believe that the Lord will call us from this earth until we have completed the mission that the Lord has given us. Sometimes, however, when we find it too hard and painful to fulfill our mission, we sometimes feel that we want to be called by the Lord to heaven quickly. Especially when we think about the truth "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:4) our hearts are more eager to go to heaven because there is too much sorrow, pain and deaths in this earth. Paul didn't know what to choose between living in the earth and being away from this world and being with Christ (Phil. 1:22-23). If he thought only for himself, he wanted to leave the world and be with Christ which was much better than living in the earth in the flesh (v. 23). But Paul knew that it was more necessary for him that he remained in the body for the sake of the Philippian church saints (v. 24). Why was it necessary for Paul to remain in the body for their sake? It was because Paul's presence was for them "for their progress and joy in the faith" (v. 25).

Every time I think about this, I am more convinced that we Christians should have a clear purpose for life. What is the purpose of our existence? It is only to glorify God and enjoy Him forever (Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 1). Then, how can we glorify God and enjoy Him forever? It is, just like Jesus, obeying God's will until death (Phil. 2:8). For Paul, he didn't spare his life in witnessing the gospel of God's grace, the mission he received from the Lord. So even though he was in prison, he rejoiced (v. 18) because his imprisonment actually turned out for the greater progress of the gospel (v. 12). He told the Philippian church saints that it was more necessary for him to remain on in the flesh for their sake (v. 24) and he was convinced that he would remain and continue with them all for their progress and joy in the faith (v. 25). And the purpose was "so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again" (v. 26). In other words, Paul went to Philippi and was with the saints in the Philippian church, so that their proud confidence in Paul might abound in Christ Jesus (v. 26). While in prison, Paul rejoiced to hear that there was progress in the gospel, and he wanted the saints of the Philippian church also to rejoice over Paul. This joy was the joy of the progress of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the joy of the progress of the faith of the Philippian church saints. I hope and pray that this joy is with us as well.

The Scripture Acts 4:12 clearly states: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." That was why Paul wanted to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. To what extent he wanted to preach the gospel, he said in 1 Corinthians 9:16 – "Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" Paul had nothing to boast about. He only wanted to boast the Lord Jesus Christ. He only wanted to and compelled to preach the gospel of Christ. And he said "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." Why did he so desperately want to preach the gospel? Why did he devote his life for the progress of the gospel? It was because he wanted to be faithful in fulfilling the mission that he received from the Lord so that always Christ be exalted in his body, whether by life or by death (Phil. 1:20). I hope and pray that all of us can be faithful to the mission of preaching the gospel, so that we may be living in exalting Christ whether we live or die.

"My Je-sus, as Thou wilt! All shall be well for me; Each chang-ing fu-ture scene
I glad-ly trust with Thee. Straight to my home a-bove I trav-el calm-ly on;
And sing, in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done. A-men."
(Hymn "My Jesus as Thou Wilt, verse 3).

Conducting in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? (1)

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

Don't you have some expectations when you pray for your beloved children? I am sure one of the expectations is that perhaps you want your children to love each other and to be in peace with each other. I am sure no parents want to see their children fighting before their death. All the parents want to see their children live in peace and harmony. Especially as a father of three children, when I pray for my three children, I expect them to grow up in faith in Jesus Christ, working together in the Lord's church for His glory. I hope and pray that my three children work together in one church as they help each other and do the work of the Lord. But if I they get married later and serve in different churches and do the work of the Lord, I hope that they will help each other indirectly. Someday I will tell my children this.

In today's text Philippians 1:27, Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the saints in Philippian church while he was in the Rome jail, saying to them, “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” and he wanted to hear that they were standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. There are four things we should think about:

The first is "stand firm".

When I think about what retired pastor Kim of our church who has been doing mission for many years wants to hear, I think he wants to hear that all our church members are standing firm in faith. Especially, when he hears those church members who are standing firm without being shaken in their difficulties and hardships, I am sure he will be thankful to God and happy. When we look at Philippians 1:27, Paul wanted to hear from the saints of the Philippian church that they were standing firm (v. 27). Especially, Paul wanted to hear that they stand firm in the midst of suffering from their opponents (vv. 27-30). That was why Paul said to the saints of the Philippian church: “Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.”

The Bible says “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13) and “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (15:58). How can we stand firm in the midst of trouble? We can stand firm by faith (2 Cor. 1:24). We can stand firm in our faith when we hold to the traditions which we were taught (2 Thess. 2:15). In this way, it is God who makes us stand firm in Christ (2 Cor. 1:21).

The second is "one spirit".

Do you think that your church members work together for the Lord and His church in one spirit as they help each other? Maybe it is not easy for some people to answer this question entirely "yes." In fact, it is so difficult to have one spirit even in a family such as in a couple relationship, parent-children relationship and sibling relationship. If so, then I doubt that the church members can have one spirit and work together for the Lord and His church. In today's text Philippians 1:27, when Apostle Paul said to the saints of the Philippian church "one spirit," the meaning of the word is “understanding” (Park Yun-sun). If this interpretation is correct, Paul told the Philippian church saints to understand one another. When you look at your church, do you understand that church members are different from each other? Do you have fellowship in the Lord as you understand each other? I am sure we can

meet people whom we cannot understand. Since the married couples are different from each other, I am sure the church members are very different from each other. However, the Scripture Philippians 1:27 tells us to stand firm in one spirit and to strive together with one mind for the faith of the gospel. In particular, Paul exhorted Euodia and Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord (4:2). It was because these two women didn't have one spirit in serving the Philippian church.

How can we work together in one spirit? I looked up the answer in Philippians 2:2-3: "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." In order for the members of the church to cooperate together in faith for the sake of the gospel, we must all have a humble heart. Only when we all have the humble heart of Jesus can we work together in one spirit, understanding each other and doing the Lord's work. But if there is an arrogant heart in us, we can never work together in unity to do the Lord's work. If we think that "I am better than him/her" then we can never work together in unity to accomplish the work of the Lord. Therefore, if we want to work together with one spirit and to help each other, we must guard our hearts from pride. In particular, we must guard against spiritual superiority. I hope and pray that we imitate Jesus' humble heart so that we can stand firm and work together for the Lord and His church.

The third is "one mind".

Here the word "one mind" refers to "will and desire" (Calvin). Apostle Paul wrote to the saints of the Philippian Church that he wanted to hear that they were standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (v. 27). In other words, he wanted to hear that they were doing the Lord's work with the same will and desire in the humble heart of the Lord and in fulfilling His will. That was why Paul spoke to the saints of the Philippian church to be "one in purpose" (2:2). How can we have one in purpose and help each other and do the work of the Lord? If we do everything according to our own thoughts and wills, we cannot serve the Lord's church in one mind and one will. We will do our own work according to our own minds and thoughts. But if we all lay down our mind and our will and pursue the Lord's mind and will together, we will be able to cooperate with the Lord's work in one mind and one will. Therefore, all of us must lay down our will and pursue the Lord's will together. To do so, we must pray to God: "yet not as I will, but as You will" (Mt. 26:39).

The fourth and the last is "for the faith of the gospel".

What does this mean? What does "the faith of the gospel" mean? In order to understand its meaning, we must look at Philippians 1:20, which we have already meditated on. Apostle Paul confessed that "Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (1:20). When we think of this confession, we can say that the faith of the gospel is the Christ-centered life. In other words, the Christ-centered life is thoroughly the gospel center life. "The gospel is all for Paul. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is everything for Paul's life. This shows how he was captured by the gospel of Christ. For the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul jumped in without thinking what he was getting into. 'Faith of the gospel' means the gospel-centered life. ... Faith is the gospel and the gospel is faith. Faith is revealed by the gospel and the gospel is revealed by faith. Paul has professed his gospel-centered life as the faith of the gospel" (Internet). Apostle Paul exhorted all the saints of the Philippian church to stand firm in one mind and one will for the sake of this faith of the gospel. That is because it was conducting in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (v. 27).

Conducting in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ is to stand in unity and work together for the faith of the gospel. We must listen to this word of Paul and must work together. We all need to stand firm in one spirit. And with one mind we must strive together for the faith of the gospel. We all need to help each other and join forces. We must lay down our pride and imitate Jesus' humble heart. By doing so, we must live Christ-centered life. All of us should diligently lay down our will before the cross and pursue only the Lord's will. We must live or die in order to fulfill the Lord's will alone.

Conducting in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? (2)

“in no way alarmed by your opponents--which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God” (Philippians 1:28).

There is a book called "Power Leadership" by Pastor John Maxwell, who wrote many books on "Leadership". The book tells the story of an "Ace Pilot" of the United States named Eddie Rickenbacker. He recorded 300 battle hours (the largest number of hours among the US pilots) until the end of World War I, met with 134 enemy planes and shot down 26 of them. So he has received an Medal of Honor, eight Special Merit Cross Medals and a French Legion of Honor. Because of the courage that he showed, the press gave him the title "American Ace of Aces." One day when he received a question about his courage in the battle, he said: "Courage is to do what you are afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you are scared" (Maxwell).

What are you afraid of? Studies conducted in Canada show that what people are most afraid of in the world is, surprisingly, a presentation in front of others, "public speaking" (41%). This was followed by "fear of heights" (32%), money problems (22%), deep water (22%), illness (19%), death (19%) and "darkness" (8%). 'The reason people are more afraid of the presentation than death is that perhaps they never has experienced death, but they already have experienced the fear of presentation before. When the presentation is over, we don't remember what we said, we forgot what we supposed to say, our words are evasive, our audience say they couldn't understand what we said and we feel shame, frustration and get discourage. If we experience this level of fear, we can experience "Anthropophobia, Social Phobia. The definition of this symptom is a symptom of fear that feels as if we are afraid and anxious about social situations such as talking to strangers or speaking to others, so tend to avoid such situations.' A more specifically, this symptom is anxious and afraid to meet a person or to sit in the same place with someone so avoid them because of an obsessive idea that we cannot talk to the other person as well as because there is obsessive idea about how they think of us.

Just imagine it. Think of it from the perspective of the saints in the Philippian church. When they were reading the Apostle Paul's letter to them (the Book of Philippians), they certainly knew that Paul was in prison because of Jesus Christ and his gospel. If so, the saints of the Philippian church would certainly have expected that they, too, would be persecuted if they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, just like Paul, in prison. If they had anticipated it, or if they knew that they would be persecuted when they preached the gospel, the human instinct was to fear and avoid the persecution so they would not proclaim the gospel publicly or they would try to preach it secretly. But as we have already meditated, Philippians 1:14 says, "Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly." This was a never the work of man. This was the work of the Holy Spirit through the saints of the Philippian church. Apostle Paul, who knew this, wrote a letter to the saints of the Philippian church, saying, "... Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice" (v. 18). After this, Paul continued to write letters to the saints of the Philippian church and talked about his earnest expect and hope (vv. 20-26). In other words, his earnest expectation and hope was that he would not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ would even now, as always, be exalted in his body, whether by life or by death (v. 20). Paul considered his life worth nothing in fulfilling his mission, that was testifying the gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24). He earnestly desired to bear witness to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ whether he lived or died. Not only did he know that he would be persecuted in preaching the gospel, but he was actually persecuted. Nevertheless, Paul didn't feel ashamed of the gospel, but boldly proclaimed it. And many of the saints of the Philippian church were more boldly preaching the word of God without fear (v. 14). Since Paul heard this, he wrote to the saints of the Philippian church, "in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice" (v. 18). Then Paul said in in Philippians 1:27, "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." Then Paul said to the saints of the Philippian church what it is to conduct

themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, for the second time, today in verse 28, “without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.” Why did Paul tell them so? Paul wanted to see the saints of the Philippian church who were not afraid because of the enemies. At least, Paul wanted to hear that the Philippians church saints were not afraid by those who oppose them. Knowing that they have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly because he was in prison, Paul wanted to see them conducting themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. That was why Paul told the saints in the Philippian church to conduct themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (v. 27) “without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you” (v. 28). In the second half of verse 28, Paul comforted the saints of the Philippian church: “... This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved--and that by God.” What does it mean? Paul was comforting the saints of the Philippian church: ‘Your persecution is a testimony of destruction to those who persecute you, but a testimony of salvation to you. It is a testimony of your salvation that you endure and overcome the persecution by faith. God will give you the strength so that you can endure and overcome their persecution.’ Knowing that the saints of the Philippian church were persecuted like Paul himself because of Jesus Christ and His gospel, Paul wanted to hear them they weren’t afraid of those who opposed them and persecuted them so he wrote to comfort them. It is the testimony of our salvation that we are being persecuted because of Jesus and His gospel. God will give us strength and courage to endure the persecution and suffering. Therefore, we must not fear those who oppose us and oppose Jesus Christ and His gospel.

I recently received a message from a pastor’s wife through KakaoTalk, and it said ‘Super Emergency – The prayer request that I received from a local missionary in the Middle East today’. And I saw a website address so I opened it. When I opened it, there appeared on the website two emails from a missionary friend in the area under attack by an IS (Islamic State). Those two emails were about the missionaries who had decided to remain there even though the United Nations had already withdrawn from the area that was occupied by IS. The reason the missionary family decided to stay there was because their children were martyred. According to one missionary, IS was very systematic and deliberately visited every house and forced the children to deny Jesus. But so far no one had denied Jesus and died. Perhaps the IS people cut their heads and killed them. But I think the IS people didn’t kill their parents while they killed children who refused to convert to Islam. So those parents seemed to remain in the area with their willingness to be martyred just like their children. One part of the email is written like this: ‘The missionaries decided to remain for those Christian parents even if it could cause their own death even it could cost their lives. They were very frightened and didn’t even know how to start a ministry for the parents who had seen their children martyred. But they believed that God had called them to be His voice and His hands at this time and here. Nevertheless, they were seeking us to pray for them, asking God for courage to live worthy of His calling in such a dangerous situation so that if God calls them as well as the slain children, they will also be able to bear martyrdom.’ We must be afraid of not having faith to overcome the dreadful situation instead of be afraid of that dreadful situation. Rather than fearing those who oppose us, we must fear that there is no faith in us to boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must fear our God, rather than fear those who hate us because of Jesus Christ and His gospel and those who oppose and afflict us. No matter how dreadful situation we may be in, as we fear God and as we are encouraged by the help of God, we must not only boldly defend our faith but also spread the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with our lips and our lives as well. May we be able to conduct ourselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Conducting in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? (3)

[Philippians 1:27-30]

What do you think of "suffering"? This is what the Scripture Psalms 119:71 says: "It was good for me to be afflicted" How is suffering beneficial to us? There are at least two reasons:

(1) First, the benefit of suffering is to remind us of our wrongdoing.

Look at Psalms 119: 67 – "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word." There are many times when we do not know the fact that we are doing wrong (going the wrong way) before suffering. Of course, it is true that there are times when we know that it is a deliberate wrong way and we still go astray. Many times, however, we are spiritual blind and deaf, and often don't walk on the narrow path of the cross that the Lord has walked, but we go to the left or to the right. Then, through the suffering that the Lord gives us, we realize that we aren't walking of the narrow path of the cross but have been going astray. Like a shepherd who uses his staff to strike his sheep that is going the wrong way and make it to go the right way, the Lord uses the suffering as His staff of discipline to turn away from the wrong way and to lead us to walk in the right way. This is what Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 53:6 – "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; ..." When we walk through the wide path of the world, not the narrow path of the Lord, the Lord gives us suffering so that we may realize we have been going astray.

(2) Second, the benefit of suffering is to make us to keep the word of the Lord.

Look at Psalms 119: 67 – "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word." Here we should think about how the suffering makes us to keep the word of the Lord in six ways:

- (a) The suffering makes us to believe in the Lord's commands. Look at Psalms 119:66 – "Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands." The suffering that awakens us to the way we are walking on the wrong path and makes us do the U-turn makes us to believe that only the Lord's commands are true. Every day we choose to take one of two paths: the narrow path of the Lord or the broad path of the world. In other words, we live every moment of the day, either by choosing to follow the Lord's commands, or by choosing either Satan's words or the world's words. The suffering not only helps us to realize that we have made a wrong choice but also through a consequence of our wrong choice and the Lord's discipline of love, it helps us to believe and choose the right path of the Lord's way and His commands.
- (b) The suffering teaches us "knowledge and good judgment." Look at Psalms 119:66 again – "Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands." How many of us a Christians who have lost their good judgment and walked in the wrong path of ignorance? The loss of spiritual judgment brings confusion instead of conviction. This will eventually prevents us from walking the way of the Lord's commands consistently but makes us to wander to the way of the world and the path of confusion. But the Lord delivers us from the swamp of the loss of ignorance and good judgment through suffering. And eventually the Lord leads us to the Word of God, giving us good spiritual discernment and knowledge of the will of the Lord.

- (c) The suffering enables us to taste the goodness of the Lord. Look at Psalms 119: 68 – “You are good, and what you do is good” The greatest benefit or blessing of the Lord's goodness which we taste through suffering (Ps. 34:8) is experiencing our good God who works even our suffering for the good of those who love him (Rom. 8:28). Especially when we are in most difficult situation, going through the hardest time, and when we are tired and exhausted, the glory of God is manifested in the midst of our extreme pain and suffering. That's why we can praise God “God is so good, God is so good, God is so good He so good to me” in the midst of sufferings.
- (d) The suffering makes us to hate the lies of the arrogant. Look at Psalms 119: 69 – “Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies,” Before we suffer, the lies of the proud are so clearly heard in our ears that there are many times we have walked the arrogant's path of lies. Aren't we Christians who are confused walking the path of lies because we have received the lies of the arrogant and consider those lies as the truth and choose the wrong way? Aren't we running the path of false success and of glory and material universalism that the worldly arrogant show us? But after suffering, we hate the false path of all the arrogant because we have come to know the true path and the way of the Lord through suffering. It is the narrow path of the cross that the humble Jesus showed in the Bible. And the end of the path is death. Isn't the end of the narrow path different from the end of the way of the world? Do you feel spiritual charm to the climax of the narrow path which is death? Do you feel spiritual charm to the fact that such sinners like us can die for the Lord and His glory? Not every Christians can accept this truth in their hearts. Those who have arrogant hearts cannot receive and defend this truth. But the Lord is planting this truth in our hearts through sufferings. And in that process, the Lord makes us to hate the lies of the arrogant through sufferings.
- (e) The suffering removes fats in our hearts. Look at Psalms 119:70 – “Their heart is covered with fat” Nowadays, obesity is becoming a big problem in the United States. So many people are trying to lose their weights by doing diet and exercise. Some people even do surgery to remove fat. While so many people are trying to get rid of their fat, we Christians should also try to get rid of the fat in our hearts. If there is a fat in our body, it is very uncomfortable and we can get an adult disease. Likewise, we have fat in our hearts, we will sin against God. And if we take a consequence of our sins lightly, then there is better chance that we will be guilty of great sins. I think the suffering is the best and essential spiritual medicine to remove the fat from our hearts. We must remove fat from our hearts even through suffering.
- (f) The suffering helps us to understand the greatest value of the Word of God. Look at Psalms 119:72 – “The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.” Through the 40 years in the desert during the time of Exodus, the Lord wanted to teach the Israelites that “man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Dt. 8:3). Likewise, as we live in this desert-like world and walk the narrow path of Jesus Christ and go through many different kinds of sufferings, we must learn that we must live on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. We must realize that the value of the Word is more precious than our lives. How can we compare the eternal Word of God with our limited life in this earth? The suffering teaches us that the value of the Word is much greater than wealth. In one word, Hebrews 5:8 teaches us the benefit of suffering as follow, “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.” The benefit of suffering is that we learn to obey Him.

In today's text Philippians 1:27, Apostle Paul tells the saints of the Philippian church, “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” We have already been taught in two ways, how to conduct ourselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ: (1) First, it is to stand firm in one spirit, with one

mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (1:27), (2) Second, it is not afraid because of those who oppose us (v. 28).

Third and last, conducting ourselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ is to suffer by faith for Christ's sake.

Look at Philippians 1:29 – “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” What do you think of "suffering"? In July 2009, one of our church deacons sent me an e-mails and this was what he wrote: ‘Suffering surely prevents us from mistaking this life for our rest.’ What does it mean? The more we suffer in this world because of our faith by believing in Jesus, the more we realize that this world is not our eternal resting place, but rather a place to stay for a while and then leave. And as we realize more and more that this world is not our eternal resting, the more we like the ancestors of faith in Hebrews 11 seek “for a better country – a heavenly one” (Heb. 11:6), the eternal resting place. In that sense, I cannot help but agree that suffering certainly prevent us from mistaking this life for our eternal rest.

In Philippians 1:29, we see that Paul wrote a letter to the saints of the Philippian Church and said to them: “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” What does it mean? It can be summarized in two ways. One is that the grace God has given to saints of the Philippian church was to believe in Jesus. We believe in this truth. We believe that it is the whole grace of God that we have come to believe in Jesus. And the basis of our faith is Ephesians 2:8 – “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.” The Bible speaks clearly that faith is the gift of God. It is the gift of God that we have been saved by faith in Jesus. The Bible clearly says that it is not from us. This truth is the truth that we all believe and accept. However, it seems that we are not accepting another truth that is being spoken in the second half of Philippians 1:29. The truth is that the grace God has given us is to suffer for Christ's sake. We may ask that if we believe in Jesus, we must be blessed instead of suffering. When I think of this question, Job 2:10 came into my mind: “He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.”

The fact is that it is the great gift of God's grace is to believe in Jesus. Not only that, we received the blessing of eternal life in Jesus Christ. The God, who loves us and chose us before the foundation of the world, regenerated us in His time and made us to believe in Jesus and saved us. We have already received this amazing blessing. Also we have received this wonderful blessing that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us sanctifies us to make us holy like Jesus. We also became God's heirs and we are able to call God ‘Abba Father’. Thus we have already received every spiritual blessing from God (Eph. 1:3-6). Then, shouldn't we not only be blessed by God, but also to suffer for Jesus Christ and His gospel? The apostle Paul did it. He suffered much for Jesus Christ and His gospel. He what thankful to God for considering him faithful and appointing him to His service even though he was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, that is the chief sinner (1 Tim. 1:12-15). That was why Paul considered his life worth nothing to him, if only he might finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus had given him – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24). He continued to live with all the tribulation and suffering, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 2 Corinthians 6:4-5, Paul said to the believers in the Corinthian church: “Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger.” And in Galatian 6:17, Paul said that “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” In this way, Paul, who suffered so much for the sake of Jesus Christ and His gospel, said in Philippians 1:29 that suffering for Jesus Christ is the grace of God. Do we really believe that the suffering we receive for Jesus Christ is the grace of God? Do we consider God's grace when we suffer for the gospel of Jesus Christ?

When we are blessed by God, it seems that God looks big. But when we are afflicted, the same God appears so small, and our suffering seems very big. Then we must make suffering profitable for us. We must learn to obey like Jesus through suffering. We must learn to obey what the Bible tells us which is to only conduct ourselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27). Therefore, we must conduct ourselves in the

manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. We must work together in one mind and one spirit. And we should not be afraid of those who oppose us in any way. And we must suffer by faith for Christ's sake. May God's grace be with you.

The church that makes the Lord's joy complete

[Philippians 2:1-4]

Pastor Rick Wren, pastor of Saddleback Church, made this claim: 'The most important issue of the 21st century church is church health, not church growth. The issue is not about whether the church members are small or big but it is church health.' He suggests five ways to measure church growth: (1) The church needs to grow warmer through fellowship, (2) The church needs to be deepened through discipleship, (3) The church should become stronger through worship, (4) The church should be broadened through ministry, and (5) The church needs to grow through evangelism. And he said, 'Percentage of church members mobilized for ministry and missions, rather than the number of church attendants, is a more accurate measure of the health of the church.' When I heard about this, I thought about whether our church is a healthy church or not. But I would like to use the term 'The Biblical church' rather than 'The healthy church'. In other words, I am thinking about whether our church is the biblical church or not. What kind of church is the Biblical church?

The Scripture Acts 2:42-43 tells us in four ways what the Biblical church is: (1) First, the Biblical church is devoted to the teaching of the Word of God. When Apostle Peter preached the Word of God, 3,000 people received Jesus. As the young believers, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). The Biblical church members are learning the Word of God earnestly and faithfully. (2) Second, the Biblical church is devoted to the fellowship. Fellowship is sharing and giving to others what they have. The Biblical church members are helping each other as they share and give. (3) Third, the Biblical church is devoted to the communion. Through the communion, the saints of the church receive the grace of the Lord as they humbly receive by faith the bread and wine that symbolize Jesus' flesh and blood. (4) Fourth, the Biblical church is devoted to the prayer. The first century Jerusalem church was committed to various prayers. They imitated the prayer of the group numbering about 120 believers (1:4) even when they expanded to 3,000 believers. The numerical growth of the Jerusalem church meant an increase number of the prayers. The Biblical church members are devoted to prayer.

As we look at Philippians 2:4, Paul wrote a letter to the saints of the Philippian church, saying, "Make my joy complete." And he taught them four ways in which they could fill his joy. I am going to apply these four lessons to our church. So, under the title of "The church that makes the Lord's joy complete," I want to think about these four lessons and hopefully we can make the Lord's joy complete by obeying those four Biblical principles.

First, there is encouragement in Christ in the church that makes the Lord's joy complete.

Look at Philippians 2:1 – "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, ..." Here, what does "encouragement" mean? In the original Greek language, "encouragement" means "exhortation", "encouragement" and "comfort." So in Philippians 2:1, the word "encouragement" means earnestly exhort or admonish or encourage for the purpose of firmly establishing the Philippian church saints' faith (Zodhiates). Apostle Paul used this word many times in his letters besides today's text, one of which is 2 Corinthians 8:4 – "they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints." Then in Philippians 2:1, what was Paul urgently pleading the Philippian church saints? What was he urgently encouraged them to do? It was "being of the same mind" (v. 2). Look at Philippians 2:2 – "make my joy complete by being of the same mind ..." Here, "being of the same mind" refers to "one mind"(1:27). In other words, Paul's encouragement in Christ to the Philippian church saints was for them have the one and same mind. The reason was because that was conducting themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (v. 27). Unfortunately, the Philippian church saints weren't conducting themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. How can we know this? We can know this by looking at Philippians 4:2 –

“I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.” In the Philippian church these two women were not in the same mind. That was why Paul wrote to the saints of the Philippian church to have one mind (1:27) and the same mind (2:2). And in Philippians 4:2, Paul specifically mentioned these two women’s name Euodia and Syntyche and told them to agree with each other in the Lord. I think these two women served the Lord and His church out of selfish ambition or vain conceit (2:3). Because of their selfish ambition or vain conceit, Euodia and Syntyche couldn’t agree with each other in the Lord.

What is “vain conceit”? The Naver dictionary defines this: ‘Vain conceit is going far enough where there is hollow and just mere outward glory or outward show that is more than necessary.’ If there is anyone in the church who has vain conceit, then it is inevitable that contention will arise. A good example of this is in Numbers 16. Korah and On rose up before Moses, together with 250 leaders of the Israel congregation and were against Moses and Aaron (vv. 1-3). What they said to Moses and Aaron was “You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD’s assembly?” (v. 3). “When Moses heard this, he fell facedown” (v. 4). And he said to Korah and all the multitude, “You Levites have gone too far!” (v.7) Then Moses said to the Korah and the Levites: “Isn’t it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the LORD’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them?” (v. 9) What did Moses mean? The Korah and the Levites considered God’s grace small. Although God had separated them from the rest of the Israelite community and brought them near Himself to do the work at the Lord’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them, they regarded it small. Though they were not to regard it small but they did and they tried to get the priesthood too (v. 10). Because the Korah and the Levites regarded their duty small, they had gone too far in asking for the priesthood to Moses and Aaron. After all, they weren’t only against Moses and Aaron, but also God (v. 11). The result was the death of Korah and all those who were against Moses and Aaron (vv.33, 35). We must be careful to think too highly of ourselves. And we must be careful not to go too far in words and actions. We must think, speak, and act appropriately before God. We must not do anything out of selfish ambition or vain conceit (Phil. 2:3). We must never take lightly the ministry that God has given us by grace. Instead, we should serve joyfully, humbly and voluntarily with gratitude for the ministry that God has given us because He loves us and set us apart to serve.

What was Paul’s sincere encouragement to the saints of the Philippian church who weren’t conducting in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? In other words, what kind of mind that Paul was thinking when he encouraged them to have the same mind, one mind and be like-minded? Look at Philippians 2:3 – “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” The mind that Paul was thinking when he thought about the Philippian church saints was humble mind. And humble mind is considering other better than ourselves (v. 3). How is this possible? How can we consider others better than ourselves? For example, when we look at another person and actually our faith is stronger than him and our Christian life is much better than him, how can we consider him better than ourselves? I looked for the answer in Romans 5:20 – “... But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” As we realize how great our sins are before our holy God, we are bound to realize how great the grace of God is toward us. In doing so, we cannot help but confess humbly, like Apostle Paul: “For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1 Cor. 15:9). Actually, Paul was not in the least inferior to those “super-apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11). Nevertheless, he confessed, “I am the least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9). Then Paul confessed in Ephesians 3:8, “Although I am less than the least of all God’s people ...” Then, toward the end of his life, Paul confessed: ‘I am the worst sinner’ (1 Tim. 1:15). The more humble we are in front of God than in front of people, the better we can consider others better than ourselves. In doing so, we can “serve one another in love” (Gal. 5:13). Also, we can be devoted to one another in brotherly love and honor one another above ourselves (Rom. 12:10).

When we all hear Paul’s gentle exhortation and have humble heart, our churches can have the same mind and glorify God with one mind and one in spirit. The humble heart that we must bear is “the heart of Christ Jesus”. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:5 – “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” When all the members of our church have the Jesus’ humble heart, we will be able make the Lord’s joy complete.

“O Mas-ter, let me walk with Thee In low-ly paths of serv-ice free;
Tell me Thy se-cret, help me bear The strain of toil, the fret of care.
(Hymns “O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee”, verse 1).

Second, there is comfort from His love in the church that makes the Lord’s joy complete.

What do you do when you desperately need comfort in your trouble? Maybe we try to rely on our close family members or friends. So we share and pour out what is in our hearts to them. However, no matter how much we try to get close to them and get comfort from them, we feel that we are strangers and aliens to our own family members and close friends (Ps, 69:8). Instead of getting comfort from them, we may be discouraged by them.

When we look at Numbers 32:7, we see those who discouraged the Israelites. They are the Gadites and Reubenites. How did they discourage the rest of the tribes of Israel? They did so by asking Moses not to make them cross the Jordan (v. 5) but to give them the lands of Jazer and Gilead (v. 1) that were suitable for their livestock (v. 4). When Moses heard their words, he said to the Gadites and Reubenites, “Shall your countrymen go to war while you sit here? Why do you discourage the Israelites from going over into the land the LORD has given them?” (vv. 6-7) So the Gadites and Reubenites discouraged the rest of the ten tribes. But Moses said that not only them but their ancestors also discouraged the Israelites (vv.9, 14). Their ancestors’ hearts were made melt (Deut. 1:28) because of the bad report by the ten spies about the land of Canaan they had explored (Num. 13:32; 14:35, 36) and thus they cried and wept aloud (Num. 14:1). After all, the Gadites and Reubenites’ ancestors were discouraged because they believed in the bad report by the ten spies and not believed in the good report by Joshua and Caleb. In fact, those ten spies didn’t trust God and thus made the bad report that discouraged the Gadites and Reubenites’ ancestors. Likewise, the Gadites and Reubenites discouraged the rest of the Israelites because they had forgotten the responsibility of the whole community of Israel and only sought for their selfish desires. In conclusion, like their ancestors, the Gadites and Reubenites discouraged the Israelites because they didn’t follow God wholeheartedly (cf. v. 24).

If we don’t follow God wholeheartedly, then we can make everyone in our communities discouraged. If we don’t believe in God completely and distrust Him, we can make our brothers and sisters in Christ discouraged. Also, when we don’t faithfully bear our community responsibility as well as personal responsibility, then we can discourage other members of the church community. We need to be the comforters, not the discouragers. Just as the Holy Spirit is comforting us, we must comfort our neighbors as we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Look at Philippians 2:1 – “... if any comfort from his love” Here, Paul is talking about Christ’s love. What Paul was saying to the Philippian church saints was for them to comfort each other with Christ’s love. Why did Paul encourage them to do so? We can find the reason in Philippians 1:30 – “since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.” It was because the Philippian church saints, like Paul, were struggling for the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, they were suffering (v. 29). Because they were suffering like Paul because of those who opposed them, Paul told the Philippian church saints to comfort each other with Christ’s love. And then he told them to have the same love (2:2). What does it mean? It means that when the Philippian church saints were suffering, all the saints should love each other and comfort each other with the same love of Christ. How then does Paul tell the Saints of the Philippian Church to love one another and comfort one another with the same love of Christ? Look at Philippians 2:4 – “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” The way to comfort each other with the love of Christ is to look to the interests of others. In other words, Paul told the saints of the Philippian church to love and comfort each other by looking at other’s interests. The exhortation to look at other’s interests rather than our own interests means that our neighbor’s love shouldn’t selfish love for self-interest but selfless love. In particular, I think what Paul wanted the Philippian church saints to have was the same mind in the Lord as they seek the interests of other brothers and sisters in Christ with the altruistic love of Christ, rather than seeking their own interests. The reason I think this way

is that in Philippians 4:2, Paul mentioned two names, Euodia and Syntyche and exhorted them to "agree with each other in the Lord".

What will happen to the church if we all pursue our own interests and care for our own work in the church? What will happen to the church if we all think of ourselves, speak and act in our own ways, and serve the church in our own ways? Such church can never be the church that pleases the Lord. Beside this, we cannot feel the love of Christ in the church if we pursue only our own self-interest. What does the Bible say love is? The Bible 1 Corinthians 13:5 says love is not self-seeking. When Paul said to the Philippian church saints to have the same love and love and comfort each other means not to seek their own interests but to seek the others' interests (Phil. 2:2, 4). Then how can we seek the others' interests? In his book, "A Spirituality of Caregiving," Henry Nouwen said: The word 'kara', the etymology of 'care', means 'to grieve, to mourn, to suffer, to share the pain' ... Care is crying with people who are ill and confused, lonely, isolated, and forgotten. That is, it is to realize that their pain is in my heart. Caring is entering into the world of broken and helpless people and sharing the fellowship with weak people there. And caring is staying beside those who are suffering even the situation doesn't improve' (Nouwen). How much will we be comforted if we care for each other? This is what Rev. John McArthur said regarding the word "comfort" in the phrase "if any comfort from his love" in Philippians 2:1: "The Greek word translated "comfort" portrays the Lord coming close and whispering words of gentle cheer or tender counsel in a believer's ear" (MacArthur). When we try to comfort our brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of Christ just like Jesus did, I think we should also go near to them and whisper words of gentle cheer or tender counsel to their ears.

Several years ago I meditated on Acts 15: 35-41, under the heading "The ministry of comfort." I meditated on three things as to how we should do the ministry of comfort: (1) First, we must have a true meeting in the Lord to fulfill our ministry of comfort. It means to have meeting in the Lord to check each other's spiritual condition in the Lord. (2) Second, we must not argue with one another in order to fulfill our ministry of comfort. That is, we must reconcile each other. Paul and Barnabas had sharp disagreement about whether to take Mark with them or not on the Paul's first missionary return visit and they parted company (Acts 15:36-40). The lesson we learned here was that we should learn to control our zeal for the Lord. Our enthusiasm should not be derailed to such an extent that it cannot be governed (Calvin). (3) Third, we need to strengthen the church in order for us to take up our ministry of comfort. How can we strengthen the church? As we listen to God's Word and as our faith grows, the church can stand firm. This is true ministry of comfort. When we are faithful in this ministry of comfort, we will be able to make the Lord's joy complete.

Third, there is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in the church that makes the Lord's joy complete.

One day I had a conversation with the leaders of our church English ministry. And I asked them why many your people who go to college leave the church. One of the brothers in Christ then said that it seemed to be a habit when he started not coming to the church once or twice. Yet another brother in Christ said that it might be because there is no 'socializing' in the church. And then he used the word "fellowship." It seemed to me he was using those two words (socializing and fellowship) interchangeably or a similar way. What do you think? My personal opinion is that one of the Christian terms that is being abused in the church is "fellowship." How this word "fellowship" is being abused is that many believers misunderstand "fellowship" as some "activity." But fellowship is not an activity but a "relationship" (Jerry Bridges). As we first build relationship with God through intimate fellowship with Him (vertical fellowship), we must also build relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ through our fellowship with them (horizontal fellowship).

When we look at Acts 2:42, the Bible says that the early church believers devoted themselves in "fellowship." Here, the word "fellowship", "koinonia" in Greek, has two meanings. The first meaning is to share. The second meaning is to give what you have to others. The fellowship we are dealing with is not simply a fun conversation with people and eating food together. It doesn't mean that we are playing games in a Christian atmosphere or just talking about what happened last week. That's what we did before we were born again. There

was something new sharing. That is, 'to have time to share what we have learned in the God's Word and to pray together', 'to intercede in prayers for other saints who are going through their own difficulties,' and 'to share our own possessions with others.' Then what is the "fellowship" in Acts 2:42? There is a definite article in front of the word "fellowship" in the original Greek language – "the fellowship." What does "the fellowship" refer to? It refers to the "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." When there was the work of the Holy Spirit in full on the day of Pentecost, not only that about 3,000 people repented and were baptized, but also they shared the Holy Spirit who dwelt in them. They devoted to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In the community of the Holy Spirit, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is natural. Therefore, the early church of Jerusalem was not just a humanistic community where people came together in unity, but it was the community of fellowship with the Holy Spirit as the center and core (Yoo Sang-sup).

Look at Philippians 2:1 – "... if any fellowship with the Spirit" Apostle Paul writes a letter to the saints of the Philippian church and urged them to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this exhortation is the unity of the church. Although there are different kinds of gifts in the church, different kinds of service and different kinds of working (1 Cor. 12:4-6), "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit" (v. 11). In the Lord's church, "God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be" (v. 18). "God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other" (vv. 24-25). Therefore, we must make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). How then can we do so? In today's text Philippians 2:2, Paul said to the saints of the Philippian church to "united in spirit." What does it mean? It means "one-souled" and describes people who are knit together in harmony, having the same desires, passions and ambitions (MacArthur). In Philippians 1:27, which we have already meditated, Apostle Paul told the saints of the Philippian church to conduct themselves in the manner worth of the gospel of Christ by standing firm in one spirit and contending one man for the faith of the gospel. Here, "one spirit" means "will and desire" (Calvin). Paul was encouraging the saints of the Philippian church to do the Lord's work with the same will and desire in fulfilling His will with the one mind and the humble attitude.

How can we work together for the Lord and His church as we are "being one in spirit and purpose" (2:2)? If we each do everything according to our own thoughts and wills, we cannot serve the body of the Lord in one mind and one spirit. We will each do our own work according to our own minds and thoughts. But if we all lay down our will and pursue the Lord's will together, we will be able to cooperate with the Lord's work in one heart and one will. Therefore, all of us must lay down our will and pursue the Lord's will together. In order to do so, we must pray to God according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit: "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). Not only we must pray like this, we also need to having spiritual marking out a pillar around its bottom with a gauge for chiseling. The first thing the constructors usually do when they build a tradition Korean house is to place a main prop. Here, the main prop refers to a stone under the pillar. When they put the main prop, then they put the pillar on the main prop. However, there is one process that must go through when setting up the pillar on the main prop. It is difficult to put the pillar on the main prop, even if they choose the stone that is wide and flat. If they want to put the pillar on the main prop, they have to do a line work so that the surface of the foundation stone and the surface of the pillar fit well. The method of marking out the pillar around its bottom with the gauge for chiseling is simple. It is to cut and polish the face of the pillar and then put it on the foundation stone. It isn't to grind the foundation stone, but to always trim the surface of the pillar that is built on it and then match it with the foundation stone. The standard is not the pillars, but the foundation stones. And the better they do this, the safer and stronger the house will be (Internet). Here, I thought about spiritual marking out the pillar around its bottom with the gauge for chiseling. It is to conform our lives to the words of the Lord who is the Rock (Mt. 7:24). In other words, it is to do the will of our Heavenly Father instead of just crying out "Lord, Lord" (v. 21). The important thing here is that the standard of our lives is the Lord and the Lord's will, just as the standard of the tradition Korean house is not the pillar but the foundation stone. That means that as the pillar matches the foundation stone and not other way around, we must conform our will to the Lord's will instead of Lord's will to our will. As the disciples of Jesus Christ, we must live according to the will of the Lord upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, we will be able to make the Lord's joy complete.

Fourth and last, there is affection and compassion in the church that makes the Lord's joy complete.

This year's theme for our church is "With the affection of Christ Jesus." And the passage in the Scripture is Philippians 1:8 – "For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus." This year's goal is to love your neighbor with the affection of Christ Jesus. In order to do so, we all need to long for our neighbors with the affection of Christ Jesus (v. 8), have mercy on them (Jer. 31:20) and jealously desires them (Jam. 4:5). Not only that, we must pray for them as we always thinking of them with the affection of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:9-11). All of us should participate in the gospel with the affection of Jesus Christ (v. 5). Looking back over the past several months, how much do we think we have reached this goal? Did we really have mercy on our neighbors while jealously desire them? Did we always remember and pray to God for them? Did we participate in the gospel with the affection of Christ Jesus? Have we at least looked after our neighbors and prayed with compassion and helped them?

Look at Philippians 2:1 – "... if any affection and compassion." Here the word "affection" is the same Greek word as "affection" in Philippians 1:8. As Paul wrote to the saints of the Philippian church in the jail that he longed for them with the affection of Christ Jesus (1: 8) he exhorted them to long for each other with affection (2:1). Look at 1 John 3:17-18: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." If we love and long for our neighbors with the affection of Jesus Christ, I am sure we will not only shut our hearts to help them but also will not be able to do so. Rather, we will help the needy neighbors with actions and in truth. The way this affection can deepen in the relationship of the brothers and sisters in Christ is to accept and obey each other with the love of Christ. A good example of this is found in 2 Corinthians 7:15 – "His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling." When Titus visited the Corinthian church, the Corinthian church saints received and obeyed him with fear and trembling. As a result, Titus' affection abounded all the more toward them. Also, Titus' spirit had been refreshed by them (v. 13). In other words, Titus has gained strength and courage because of the love and comfort of the Corinthian church saints. Looking at Titus, Paul was not only comforted, but he rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus (v. 13). Then what does "compassion" mean, which Paul spoke in Philippians 2:1? In Latin, "compassion" is derived from the words "pati" and "cum" and it means to suffer together. This is what Henry Nouwen said in his "Compassion": 'Compassion tells us to go to a place where there is hurts and suffering and share the broken pains, fears, chaos, and anguish' (Nouwen). Jesus said "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Lk. 6:36). The mercy of our Father in Heaven is to love the enemy, and to show mercy to those who do not know the grace and to the wicked. Jesus has given us mercy by redeeming our sins. Since we have experienced His mercy, we should be merciful to our neighbors and give to the needy (Mt. 6:2-4; cf. Jam. 1:27) and forgive those who did evil to us (Mt. 18:35). In doing so, Jesus said to us "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (5:7). And the Lord will have mercy on us, forgive us and deliver us.

Apostle Paul's reason in Philippians 2:1 in telling the saints in Philippian church to have "affection and compassion" was because he wanted them to live with one purpose with affection and compassion. Look at Philippians 2:2 – "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." This word "intent on one purpose" in one word in Greek and it appears again in Philippians 2:5 – "Have this attitude in yourselves" Here, the word "Have this attitude" means to have an attitude or frame of mind think in such a way, purpose, be inclined (Friberg). In other words, Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to aim for the purpose of having the mind of Christ Jesus and to move toward that purpose. And the mind of Jesus is not only the humble mind but also is affectionate and compassionate. So Paul earnestly encouraged the Philippian church saints to long for, love and comfort each other with this mind and to have true fellowship in the Lord.

Shouldn't we listen to this Paul's exhortation as well? Shouldn't we all have this affection and compassion of Jesus Christ as well? We too should long for, love and comfort each other with this affection and compassion of

Jesus Christ and enjoy true fellowship in the Lord. In doing so, our church will be able to make out Lord's joy complete.

We must make our Lord's joy complete. In order to do so, we must exhort one another in Christ. And the exhortation is to have the same mind. And to do that, we must do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Also, we must love each other and comfort each other with the love of Christ. We should look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others. We must love others with selfless love of Christ for their own benefits. And we must seek the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We must be united in spirit with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must lay down our own will and seek and share the will of the Lord. We must move forward with intention on one purpose in affection and compassion. We must do so with the purpose of glorifying God only. I hope and pray that our church will be able to make our Lord's joy complete as we intent on glorifying God with one mind and one spirit according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One in spirit

“then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” (Philippians 2:2).

A women ministry is important in the church. Just as women who were around Jesus and who loved and served Jesus, they are many precious women in the church who love the Lord and who serve His church faithfully. We cannot but acknowledge especially their sacrificial services and devoted prayer life. Their service and prayer make the church beautiful and also make the church strong in the Lord. Their gentleness like a mother (1 Thess. 2:7) and warm hospitality brightens the church. But one of the dangers in the ministry of women in this regard is the strife (Phil. 2:3, KJV). Of course, we cannot distinguish between men and women in regard to strife. It is sinful nature in us that makes us to strive. I think there was strife within the Philippian church (2:3). It was strife between Euodias and Syntyche (4:2). That was why Paul exhorted them to have the same mind in the Lord (v. 2). That's right. All the saints in the church must have the same mind in the Lord. As a result, we the church must show the world the body of Christ is one. We must keep the unity of the church. Especially, we must keep the unity of the church in diversity.

We can have strife in the church because of our selfishness (1:17). And in that strife we may have vain conceit (2:3). We can fight against each other because of our pride. Apostle James said, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?” (Jam. 4:1) We can fight each other because of our lust and envy (v. 2). We can hate our brothers and sisters in Christ in our hearts and commit murder (Jam. 4:2, 1 Jn. 3:15). Therefore, Philippians 2:2 is a very appropriate and important word for us. We the church should listen to these words from Paul. Apostle Paul exhorted three things:

First, we must have one mind.

How is this possible? Each of us has our own mind. So how can these various minds be one? There is only one way. It is to bear the mind of Jesus. Look at Philippians 2:5, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (KJV). If all of us have the mind of Jesus, we can have the same mind and one mind. We must have a humble mind that humble ourselves like Jesus. We should keep the unity of the church “with humility of mind” regarding one another as more important than ourselves (v. 3).

Second, we must have the same love.

Such love is only God's love. We must love each other with God's love. The Scripture Romans 5:5 says that “the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” That is, in us who believe in Jesus, we have the love of God with the Holy Spirit. We must become more and more filled with that love of God. In other words, we must become more and more filled with the fruit of the Spirit that is love (Gal. 5:22). For this we must pray to God like Paul: “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment” (Phil. 1:9). And we must love one another with the love of God that is abundant. And we must comfort each other with the love of God (2:1). And in that love we must have fellowship (v. 1). We should look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others (v. 4). In doing so, we will be able to keep the unity of the church in diversity.

Third and last, we must be on in spirit.

In order for us to be one in spirit, we must have one will. To do so, we must lay down our will and bear the will of the Lord. In other words, the will of the Lord must be our will. We must pray like Jesus, "... Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mk. 14:36). We must strive to lay down our will and fulfill the will of the Lord. Just as Jesus fulfilled the will of Heavenly Father even to the point of death on the cross, we must live our lives and fulfill His will until our death. And the Lord's will is to live worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27). We must stand firm in one spirit, "with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (v. 27). As we do so, we will be able to keep the unity of the church.

Apostle Paul and his spiritual son Timothy were the one who stood firm in one spirit and worked together for the faith of the gospel (2:19-22). These two co-workers were "likeminded" (v. 20, KJV). In other words, Paul and Timothy had the one mind and one spirit. The sender Paul and the one who was sent Timothy had the same will of the Lord and worked together for the faith of the gospel of their beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. They also had the same love. In other words, they loved their brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of God. They were genuinely concerned for the Philippian church saints' welfare (v. 20). They sought after those of Christ and not their own interests (v. 21). Not only the Philippian church leaders but also we must imitate both Paul and Timothy who had Jesus' mind and His love and did their best to fulfill His will. And we must keep the unity of the church and glorify God.

The cause of strife in the church

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; ...” (Philippians 2:3, KJV).

One of the causes of strife in the church is vain glory (Phil 2:3)

If there are people in the church who have selfish ambition and are pursuing vain glory, there will be strife in the church.

A good example is the "the congregation in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38).

If the wilderness church is a Presbyterian church,

then the pastor of the church is Moses and the elder is Aaron.

And in the wilderness (Presbyterian) church session

there is a pastor Moses, a teaching elder, and an elder Aaron, a ruling elder.

But “Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites--Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth--became insolent and rose up against Moses.

With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council” (Num. 16:1-2).

I think Korah was the leader of the group that was against the session of the wilderness church.

I don't know why people within the church are making a party strife.

How foolish they are who had been won over to the opposition party.

This group of the opposition said to Moses and Aaron:

“You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them.

Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?” (v. 3)

“When Moses heard this, he fell facedown” (v. 4)

(What can the pastor do except crying out to God).

And then Pastor Moses gave this rebuke to Korah and to all his crowds:

“You Levites have gone too far!” (v. 7)

How did Korah and all his crowds go too far?

They looked down on the grace of God.

They lightly regarded the precious duty that God had separated them from the rest of the congregation of Israel, to serve the people of Israel in the tabernacle of God (v. 9).

So they sought Aaron's priesthood (v. 10).

Because they regarded their duty that God had given them as small and light,

their thoughts, words from their mouths and their actions went too far in going against Moses and Aaron.

The reason was their selfish ambition and vain glory.

The Bible says that they did not only went against Pastor Moses and Elder Aaron

but also against God who had established the wilderness church (v.11).

Just as there were people like Korah and his crowds in the wilderness church who went against Moses and Aaron, they are people in our present churches (especially big churches?) who are against the Lord and a session of the churches.

They have selfish ambition and are pursuing vain glory.

They make their own party by recruiting other church prominent members and go against the session.

As a result, there is conflict and strife in the church.

And usually all this starts with one person who is against the Lord and against the session.

It is surprising to see that such one person can cause such a great problem in the church.

Why is he causing such a big problem in the church? What is his intention?

The Scripture James 4:1-2 comes to my mind:

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want.

You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.”

Now he is fighting and quarreling with the church session because of his desires that battle within him.

And the reason he does so is because he want something in his greed.

What does he want?

Maybe he thinks too much about himself that he wants to be exalted in front of the congregation of the church.

Maybe he wants the vain glory.

But even he wants it he cannot have it because he has covetous heart.

So he is quarreling and fighting more and more.

Here who is “he?”

Who is now full of vain glory in the Presbyterian Church, quarreling and fighting in the church, over-thinking, speaking and acting too far?

Isn't he a church elder, a church pastor?

It is a serious problem indeed.

I think the big problem in the Presbyterian Church is not church laymen but church pastors and elders.

Why are the elders so displeased with the pastor?

Did Elder Aaron, who spoke well, despised Moses and kicked him out of the wilderness church?

How about the pastor? Why does the pastor dislike elders?

Did Pastor Moses whom the Lord spoke face to face (Exod. 33:11) discipline Elder Aaron and depose his eldership because he made the Israelites getting out of control? (32:25)

If the pastors and elders who are session of the Presbyterian Church don't have the same mind but quarrel and fight, how can the church be peaceful?

Dear pastors and elders,

the church saints are hurting now.

They are leaving the church now.

Now the church is being criticized.

Not only to the people of the world are criticizing the church,

but also to the saints within the church are criticizing the church as well.

Now we are hurting the heart of the Lord who is watching His church.

Dear pastors and elders,

Please stop fighting.

Please reconcile and be in peach with each other.

Please have the same and one mind.

I hope and pray that you will have the humble mind of Jesus (Phil. 2:3, 5).

We must have the mind of Christ Jesus

[Philippians 2:5-11]

Are you healthy? I am sure all of us are interested in health. I also began to exercise for my health since I was in my late 30's. However, the more I live my Christian life, the more I realize how important the heart health than the physical health. This is the Word of God that gave me that enlightenment: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Prov. 4:23). How can we guard our hearts? How should we manage the health of our hearts? Before I wrote this short writing under the title "We should guard our hearts well": 'When doubts about God begin to come into our hearts, that doubt turns into distrust, and the distrust to dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction to complaint and grumbling and finally disobedient to God's command. Therefore, we must keep our hearts better than our physical health.' Is your heart healthy now? When our hearts are healthy, the church can be healthy. And a healthy heart is a heart that believes God completely and a heart that loves God. It is also a healthy heart that loves brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of God. I think Apostle Paul had healthy heart. That why he wrote to the Philippian church saints "I have you in my heart" (1:7), "being of the same mind" (2:2) and "maintaining the same love" (v. 2).

In the meantime, Paul wrote to them in Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Based on this Word, I want to think about what kinds of Jesus' mind that we should have in three ways under the title "We must have the mind of Christ Jesus":

First, the mind of Christ Jesus which we all need to have is not regarding equality with others.

Look at Philippians 2:6 – "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." On October 28, 2014, the World Economic Forum (WEF) announced that Korea ranked 117th out of 142 countries surveyed regarding the gender equality rankings. The Korea ranking has fallen six places from 111 last year. The gender equality rankings rank the gender gap by employment, school opportunities, health, and political advancement and Korea ranked one of the lowest. Iceland ranks first in gender equality rankings followed by Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and other Northern Europe countries. In Asia, the Philippines ranks the highest which is ninth, with China ranked 87th and Japan ranked 104th (Internet). Why is Korea so low in gender equality rankings? The main reason for the inequality is "stereotype of sex role" (47.8%). The next reasons are "physical differences between men and women" (22.5%), "differences in social and human relationships" (10.8%), and "gender differences in housework and in burden of raising kids" (9.3%) (Internet).

What does the Bible say about gender equality? If we read the Bible, we may think that the Bible seems like discriminating against women. For example, in 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church and said, "women should remain silent in the churches." This biblical statement can give the enough impression of the women in the church was being discriminated. But fact is not. According to Professor Lee Sang-won of the Chongshin Theological Seminary in Korea, we should not miss here is that Paul's command to "remain silent" is not given to women alone. It is the command given to all the saints of the church. We can know this from the previous verse 33 that says "As in all the congregations of the saints." Why then did Paul tell the Corinthian church saints to "remain silent" to all the saints? The reason was that there were many people who received the gift of tongues in the Corinthian church. So they spoke in tongue in public worship where many people gathered and the church was so disordered. So Paul told all the saints to remain silent. However, among the people who received the gift of tongues, since most of them were especially the female saints, so Paul told the women saints to remain silent. In other words, what Paul meant was if they wanted to speak in tongues, they should do so quietly in a place that was not disturbed by others. But it wasn't a command that never let a woman speak in the church or teach fellow

believers (Internet). The Scripture Genesis 1:27 says that God created “man” in his image, that is He created "male and female." This means that God created man and woman equally. But God has given man and woman different personalities, characteristics and functions for each sex. That is why God created man and women so that they might work together to full God's calling. As an example, God has given them a calling to be fruitful and increase in number (v. 28), which could never be achieved by man or woman alone. The sperm supplied by the man and the egg supplied by the woman must meet to give birth to the baby. They must have a baby in order to be fruitful and multiply according to the command of God (Internet).

The God we believe is the Holy Triune God. That is, God Father, God the Son Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit is one in essence (same three persons). The answer to the Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 6 “How many persons are there in the Godhead?” is “There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory” (Internet). God the Father, God the Son Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit, who are equal and one being but three persons of different roles (the Unity of the Godhead). So how does the Trinity God's role differ? A good example is the plan and work of the salvation of the Triune God. In saving us, the Father God has made a plan of salvation, God the Son Jesus has fulfilled the plan of salvation, and God the Holy Spirit applies the salvation (cf. Romans 8:1-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14, 1 Peter 1:2) (Packer). The God of the Bible we believe in is God, the Holy Trinity, who achieves the cooperative work of the trinity in order to save us. We believe in God the Father, in God the Son Jesus, and in God the Holy Spirit (Cf. Apostle Creed). However, in Philippians 2:6, the Bible says that Jesus Christ “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God.” Here, Jesus “did not consider equality with God” means that even though Jesus was equal in glory to the Father God, He didn’t consider that glory equal with the Father God (Park Yun-sun). Then why did Paul exhort the saints of the Philippian church to have the mind of Jesus Christ in verse 5 and then told them in verse 6 that Jesus didn’t consider himself equality with the Father God in glory? I looked for the reason in verse 3: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” When Paul told the saints of the Philippian church to “consider others better than yourselves”, he meant to have the mind of Christ Jesus and to consider equal with others (vv. 5-6). In other words, Paul told them to have the humble heart of Christ Jesus, who did not consider equality with the Father God even though He is being in very nature God, and consider others better than themselves even though all of them were equal.

In Galatians 3:28, Paul said: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In Christ Jesus, we are all sons and daughters of God. And we, the sons and daughters of God, are one in Christ Jesus. Whether we are a man, a woman, a South Korean, an American, a South American, a boss, an employee, a rich man, or a poor man, we are all one in Christ Jesus. There is no discrimination in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:12, Col. 3:11). We must not discriminate against each other. We must not show favoritism (Jam. 2:1). If we show favoritism, then we are sinning against God (v. 9). But we have to discern. What should we discern? We must discern between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean (Lev. 10:10). And with this kind of discernment, we have to live a life separated from the world. We must not be divided with our own brothers and sisters in Christ within the church and be united with this world. We must stop sinning against God and we must do our best to keep the unity of the church in Christ. In order to do so, we should not consider equal with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in our humble heart of Christ Jesus. We should consider them better than ourselves.

Second, the mind of Christ Jesus which we all need to have is to serve others by emptying ourselves.

Do you know the fairy tale "The Prince and the Pauper"? The prince and the pauper met each other and changed their clothes. Later the prince tried to return to the prince while living the beggar. But the beggar became a prince and was leaning about politics little by little. The prince who wasn't accustomed to beggars at the beginning told many people that "I am a prince". But they considered him crazy. At that time, the pauper gradually became accustomed to the life of the prince and did his work in the country little by little. He also said to the people "I am

only a pauper", but the people say, "The prince is mad!" and they tried to serve him better. Then, at the end of the story, the prince and the pauper met each other and the prince became king. The prince became king in the end because he didn't lose himself in any difficulties (Internet). The reason why I thought of this fairy tale story was that in Philippians 2:7, Apostle Paul said that Jesus "being in very nature God" emptied Himself, "taking the very nature of a servant." Of course, the prince had a life of pauper and Jesus taking the very nature of the servant cannot be compared and the difference is like between heaven and earth. But I thought that it would help us to understand at least little bit about Jesus' incarnation.

Look at Philippians 2:7 – "but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." God the Son Jesus came into this earth with the body of man is called "incarnation." The incarnation, based on John 1:14, means "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." This Word is from before the creation of the world, and was with God and is God himself (Jn. 1:1). According to John's testimony, all the creatures that exist are created through this Word (v. 3). This Word is now in the flesh and dwelt among the people, which is a true light and the life of all (v. 4). This Word that was in the flesh came to us is Jesus Christ. And we call this Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The concept of incarnation means that God worn the human body, that is, He emptied Himself and became like man in all conditions. The incarnation is one who created all creatures became one of them (Internet). Here in Philippians 2:7, the word He "emptied Himself" means not that Jesus emptied God's "identity", such as God's character or essence, but He had given up the glory of God. In other words, it means not that Jesus Christ didn't give up His divinity but He left the heavenly glory (Park Yun-sun). Jesus, being in very nature God came to this earth, took the very nature of a servant (vv. 6-7) and it means even though Jesus is the Lord, He came down to the low place as the servant of all things (Park Yun-sun).

Isn't this amazing that Jesus the Lord came down to the low place as the servant? Why did Jesus come down to the low position of servant? Look at Matthew 20:27-28: "and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In spite of Jesus being our Lord, Jesus became our servant to serve us and to give his life as a ransom for many. Here, the word "ransom" refers to "a sum of money or other payment demanded or paid for the release of a prisoner" (Internet). In other words, Jesus died in the cross on behalf of us who have sinned to death and of all our sins in order to free us from slavery of sins. Jesus, our Lord, has come to this world to serve us, even though He ought to be served by us. Jesus called His disciples and said: "... If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mk. 9:35). Now the Lord is also speaking this to us. The Lord is telling us to be a servant. How can we serve our neighbors?

In 2007, our church motto was 'The Serving Church.' We prayed that our church can be the serving church in which we serve the church humbly, serve our family with joy and serve our neighbor voluntarily. And in the first week of the year, I preached at the special Morning Prayer meeting with a focus on service. On the third day of the week, I preached with a focus on Ephesians 6:5-7. And after the Morning Prayer meeting, one of the deacons of our church wrote this e-mail and sent it to me: 'In our own life --- our home, our society, our work or our church --- we have people to serve. How should we serve them? We have to serve them with obedience. The reason we don't obey them is because our will and our claim are so clear and strong. The failure to obey our bosses, school teachers, parents, church pastors, and adults is because we don't have or are lacking in slavery consciousness. It is also because we don't serve the Lord as our Master in our lives and lack the obedience training for Him' (Kim).

Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:5 that he and Apollo were "servants." Here the word "servant" in Greek is "diakonoi" and the English word "deacon" is derived from it. The meaning of this word is 'servants'. Then, in 1 Corinthians 4:1, Paul referred to himself and his co-workers as "servants of Christ". Here the word "servants" in Greek is "huperetes", which literally means "under rowers" under the ship. According to Pastor John MacArthur, the slaves who plowed under the boat at that time were the ones who did the most dirty work, that no one was envious of them, and that they were the most despised. The word that had this meaning later came to point to someone who would submit completely to all authority (MacArthur). After all, Paul told the saints of the Corinthian church who were proud of Paul, Apollos and Peter, that he and his co-workers were the Lord's slaves who were

submitting to the Lord completely (Park Yun-sun). We are the slaves of the Lord who must be obedient to the Lord's command. We must have this consciousness of slaver. But it seems that we have 'master consciousness' rather than 'slave consciousness'. We can know this by seeing whether we are obeying God's Word and serve the Lord or we are disobeyed His Word and being served by others. We need a sense of service. We must have the consciousness of the servant. With that consciousness, we should not assume that we are equal to our brothers and sisters in Christ, but that we should humble ourselves and serve them as we consider them better than ourselves.

A few years ago, before my beloved daughter wanted to have the earrings, I told a story from Exodus 21:1-6. If we look at that passage, we see the God's law (v. 1) that if a Israelite bought a Hebrew servant and that servant served the master for 6 years, the servant should go free in the 7th year (v. 2). But if the servant declared, "I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free" (v. 5), "then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life" (v. 6). I told this bible story to my daughter, and thankfully she knew this story already. So I told her, 'If you want to be have the earrings, make a commitment to be a slave to Jesus, our Lord, like the slave in the Bible. Then I will allow you to have your earrings.' When I think of this Bible story, I think of the gospel song "Pierce My Ears": "Pierce my ear, O Lord, my God Take me to Your door this day. I will serve no other gods, Lord, I'm here to stay. For You have paid the price for me With Your blood You ransomed me. I will serve You eternally, A free man I'll never be." One day when I was singing this gospel song in Morning Prayer meeting, I remembered the crucified Jesus. Jesus was crucified and died for such sinner like me who supposed to be destroyed forever and to be slave of sins forever. But because Jesus died on the cross for me, now I am saved and free from sin. Now I became a slave to the Lord. Like the slave in Exodus who refused to be free and wanted to be the master's servant for life because he loved his master and his wife and children and thus pierced his ear, I wanted to pierce my ear and to serve the Lord forever because I love the Lord, my wife and my children. I confessed to the Lord that I would like to serve Him forever and ever. As I was making this confession in that Morning Prayer, the holy God revealed my sin that in my heart I had master consciousness rather than slave consciousness and enabled me to confess my sin to Him. And the Holy Spirit reminded me the Scripture Philippians 2:4 and helped me to ask God for Jesus' humble heart. Let us get rid of our master consciousness but pursue slave consciousness. And let us serve the Lord humbly. May we be able to serve our neighbors with Jesus' humility.

Third and last, the mind of Christ Jesus which we all need to have is to humble ourselves and become obedient to the Lord to death.

Look at Philippians 2:8 – "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!" Those who worship God in vain honor God with their lips but their hearts are far from Him (Mt. 15:8-9). They don't practice what they preach (23:3). And they like to be praised and exalted (vv. 5-7). So when they give to the needy they announce it because they want to be honored by men (6:2). This is our sinful nature. Now in the church, there are people who seem to be serving the Lord outwardly like the Pharisees in order to be exalted among the men, but inwardly there are serving money (Lk 16:13). The reason they do so because they believe that money is power. And they are trying to be exalted among people by money. Just as Simon, the magician in the Bible, who thought that he could buy the gift of God with money (Acts 8:20), even in the church nowadays there is people who are trying to buy a church duty with money. But this is what the Scripture Luke 16:15 says, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

We should not be such proud people. The heart of a proud person that wants to be exalted can never be satisfied. The vanity of getting glory from people can never be satisfied. We must never seek vain glory. Pastor Park Yun-sun said: 'Therefore, the principle of not seeking the vain glory but getting rid of it prevents pride from afar' (Park Yun-sun). We must be humble. We must lower ourselves. To do so, we must have the humble heart of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God (v. 6). He made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross (vv. 7-8). What did God do to

Jesus? Look at Philippians 2: 9-11: “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The result of Jesus' humility was that God exalted Jesus Christ very high. Jesus was resurrected, ascended and God made every knee to bow down to Him.

One of the lessons God has taught me in my difficult time of my life was ‘It is much better to be exalted by God than by people’. And in order to be exalted by God, we must humble ourselves before God and before people. In other words, when we humble ourselves before God and before people, God will exalt us in His perfect time (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). That’s why the crisis is an opportunity. Crisis is an opportunity for God to humble us. And the crisis is also a good opportunity for God to exalt us. We have to empty ourselves like Jesus and humble ourselves before people. We must be obedient until we die humbly, just like Jesus. When we do that, God will exalt in His time.

The heart that we all must bear is the mind of Jesus Christ. The mind of Christ Jesus does not regard oneself equality with others. And the mind of Jesus is to empty oneself and to serve others as servants. The mind of Christ Jesus, which we all must bear, is to submit to the Lord until we die.

‘Work out your salvation’

[Philippians 2:12-18]

Have you been saved? The Scripture Acts 4:12 says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” In other words, the Bible says that only "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" we can be saved (v. 10). The Bible only says that "through the grace of our Lord Jesus" (Acts 15:11) we have been saved “through faith” (Eph. 2:8). The Bible says in I Peter 1: 9 that the goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls. Do you believe in Jesus?

In Philippians 2:12, Paul said to the saints of the Philippian church: “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Based on this word, I want to think about Philippians 2:12-18 under the heading “Work out your salvation.”

First, I want to think about what the word "work out your salvation" means.

The reason I want to think about this word is because I need to make it clear.

- (1) The first thing that we need to make it clear is when Paul said to the Philippian church saints “work out your salvation”, he didn’t say that they should be saved by good works at all.

We can know this by looking at the other letters written by Paul. For example, in Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul said, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.” It is entirely by the grace of God that we are saved and salvation is the gift of God. In Romans 3:22-24, Paul says that we are justified freely by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, in Philippians 2:12, when Paul told the Philippian church saints to work out their salvation, he didn’t mean that they should be saved by their own good work at all.

- (2) The second thing that we need to make it clear is that salvation in the Bible is past, present, and future.

However, among the three phases of salvation it seems that we only know the past and the future mainly. What is the past salvation? The past of salvation means that when we believe in Jesus Christ by the grace of God, we are already saved. The typical Bible passage is 1 John 5:12-13, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” The Bible clearly says that those who believe in Jesus, the Son of God, have already obtained eternal life (salvation). But the Bible also says that we will be saved in the future. This is the future salvation. The typical Bible verses are Acts 16:31 and Romans 10: 9: “They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household’” (Acts 16:31), “That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). These two passage tell us that if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be saved in the future not that we are already saved. And the future salvation that we understand is that when Jesus Christ comes back, He will lead us to eternal heaven and live there eternally. Like this what we know about salvation is that when we believe in Jesus Christ we are already saved (past salvation) and we will be saved when Jesus comes back (future salvation). But the problem is what Paul said in Philippians 2:12 – “work out your salvation.” This indicates the present salvation. This doesn’t mean that we are already saved or we will be saved but it means that we should

work out our salvation. But the salvation we understand is not what people can do, but what God does. Isn't that right? For example, Prophet Jonah said in Jonah 2:9, "... Salvation is from the Lord." Also, in Revelation 7:10, the Bible says, "And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." When we look at these words, we can clearly know that it is God who saves us and it is not from our own effort and work. But in Philippians 2:12, Paul told the Philippian church saints that "work out your salvation." How should we understand this Scripture? The Bible clearly says that salvation is God's work and not our work. Then why did Paul said to the Philippian church saints "work out your salvation"? Did he mean that they should save by their own strength or power? But that doesn't make sense because the Scripture clearly says that it isn't man who accomplish salvation but God does. Indeed, Paul said in Philippians 1:6 that God who began a good work in them will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. What does it mean? It means that God who already started the work of salvation in the Philippian church saints will accomplish it until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

What did Paul mean by "work out your salvation"? I think in order to answer this question we first need to know clearly what salvation is. What is "salvation"? In the Old Testament, "salvation", in Hebrew word "Jeshua", means to deliver from sin and a dangerous environment. In the New Testament, "salvation", in Greek word "soteria", means to deliver from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin, and from the sinful life and to live as the eternal heavenly people (Internet). When I think of the question, "What is salvation," I thought of it based on Romans 5: 6, 8, 10:

- (1) First, look at Romans 5:6 – “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

In light of this verse, salvation is God helping the helpless and ungodly like us by rescuing us from our weakness by the death of Christ and making us godly.

- (2) Second, look at Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

In light of this verse, salvation is God justifying us (v. 9) by causing His begotten beloved Son Jesus to die on the cross because God loves us. This means that salvation does not only mean to deliver us from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin and from our sinful life, but also to justify us.

- (3) Third, look at Romans 5:10 – “For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

In light of this verse, salvation is God reconciling us who were Gods' enemies through the death of His only begotten Son, and making us to be the children of God.

Then what is "salvation" in Philippians 2:12? I think this present form of "salvation" is "eternal life." In other words, I think Paul said to the Philippian church saints 'work out your eternal life'. The reason I think this way is that the future salvation means that when Jesus comes back to earth in the future He will lead us to eternal kingdom and enables us to live in heaven forever. At the same time, since we have already been saved by faith in Jesus, based on the words of 1 John 5: 12-13, we already have eternal life in Jesus. Therefore, when we understand "salvation" as "eternal life" in the past and the future salvation, I think we can consistently comprehend the words "work out your salvation" in Philippians 2:12. In other words, the word "work out your salvation" can be interpreted as 'work out your eternal life.' If we apply this word to us, what the Bible is telling us is 'Live your life like those who have eternal life.' In summary, the Bible is telling us to live like the heavenly people.

Second, I want to think about what it means to live like those who have eternal life, like the heavenly people.

The heavenly people, those who have eternal life obey the twofold command of Jesus. Look at Matthew 22:37-39: “Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” What it means to live like those who have eternal life and like the heavenly people is to love our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, will all our minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Who makes this possible for us? Look at Philippians 2:13 – “for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” The Bible says that it is God works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose. This means, God gives us desire to do good and power to do good (Park Yun-sun). How does God give us the desire and power to do good? It is by the indwelling Holy Spirit who bears the fruit of love (Gal. 5:22-23) so that we can love our God and our neighbors with His love.

But what is the problem? The problem is that we don’t live by the Spirit (Gal 5:16) but rather against the Holy Spirit and follow the fleshly desire (v. 17) and do the acts of the sinful nature (v. 19). Among the acts of the sinful nature are “idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions” (v. 20). This problem was also in the Philippian church. How can we know that? It is because Paul mentioned the two names Euodia and Syntyche and told them to agree with each other in the Lord (Phil. 4:2). Also Paul told the Philippian church saints to be like-minded, to have the same love, to be one in spirit and purpose and to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit (2:2-3). Also, in Philippians 1:15, Paul said that some preach Christ out of envy, rivalry and not sincerely, supposing that they could stir up trouble for Paul while he was in chains (1:15, 17). That was why Paul told the Philippian church saints to continue to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12). In other words, Paul told them to always be obedient to the Lord in fearing God (Ps. 2:11) and with a humble frame of mind (Pfeiffer) as those who had eternal life whether they were with Paul or not because they had received the love of Christ’s redemption (Park Yun-sun). I hope and pray that we may all live according to the indwelling Spirit’s guidance by loving God and loving our neighbors as those who have eternal life.

Then how did Apostle Paul exhort the Philippian church saints to love their neighbors specifically? I thought of three things:

First, Paul exhorted them to do everything without grumbling or disputing.

Look at Philippians 2:14 – “Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” This is what Henry Nouwen said in his book "A Spirituality of Living": ‘Grumbling makes us to be obsessed with failures and disappointment, to complain about the loss.’ I sympathize with it because I actually focused on my failures and disappointment when I was grumbling. I also complain about the loss. I looked at my meditation on Deuteronomy 1:27 (“and you grumbled in your tents and said, ‘Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us’”) under the title ‘A sin of grumbling’. The reason why we grumble is because of our unbelief. Look at Deuteronomy 1:32 – “But for all this, you did not trust the LORD your God.” This unbelief is the bitter root of grumbling. That’s why we ask “Why?” question and show our victim mentality when we face difficulties. But Paul told the Philippian church saints “Do all things without grumbling or disputing” (Phil. 2:14). This shows that in the Philippian church there were grumbling and disputing. Actually when we look at what Paul said in Philippians 2:3, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit”, we can tell that there was grumbling and disputes in the Philippian church. And the cause of grumbling and disputing was empty conceit (v. 3). If there is anyone in the church who is thinking himself or herself higher than he or she actually is and is pursuing vain glory, then there will be grumbling and disputing in a church. It seems that the Philippian church was like that. That was why Paul told the Philippian church saints to do everything without grumbling or disputing (v. 14).

Why did Paul say that to the Philippian church saints? Why did he say to them to do everything without grumbling or disputing? This was the reason in verse 15: “so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.” This world we live in is a crooked world. People are not walking on the right path that God has commanded them to. Instead, they are walking on the crooked path. However, they think that they are walking on the right path. This world is denying the God’s absolute truth and considering the lie as the truth. And their minds are twisted. That’s why their words and actions are twisted. How should we Christians live in this crooked world? We are to live in this crooked world, manifesting the light of Jesus as the blameless and pure children of God (Phil. 2:15). In order to do that, we must do all things without grumbling and disputing.

Second, Paul exhorted them to hold fast the word of life.

Look at Philippians 2:16 – “holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.” Here, “the word of life” refers to “the gospel.” And “holding fast” means “offering something for others to take” (MacArthur). At the same time, this word also means “hold firmly” (Walvoord). What was Paul trying to say to the Philippian church saints? He tried to say that they should hold fast to the gospel and to preach the gospel to others. This is what Park Yun-sun said: ‘... Christians should demonstrate through their being and action that the gospel gives the life and power’ (Park Yun-sun).

How can we actually demonstrate through our being and action that the gospel gives life and power? It is precisely by “being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (vv. 2-4). So Paul said in verse 14 to the Philippian church saints, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” When they do all things without grumbling and disputing, they could be able to live the blameless and pure life as the God’s children and shine the light of Jesus Christ in this crooked world. And the Bible tells them to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, the word of life, to others. What is strange is that in Philippians 1:5, Paul already told the Philippian church saints “in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now” but why did he tell them to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in 2:16? I think the reason was because the Philippian church saints were participating in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but they were unable to stand firmly in the gospel and live a worthy life of the gospel. In other words, they should have preached the gospel of Jesus Christ humbly without the grumbling and disputing but with the same mind and the same love. And such shortcomings didn’t help the Philippian church saints in preaching the gospel, Paul told them to do all things without grumbling and disputing and then to preach the gospel, the word of life. Why then did Apostle Paul exhort the saints of the Philippian church to preach the gospel, the word of life, to others? Look at Philippians 2:16 – “... so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.” The reason is that when the Philippians church saints preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, Paul wanted to have reason to glory that he didn’t run and toil in vain when Jesus will come back again (His second coming).

In Paul's letter to the Thessalonian church, this is what he said to the church saints: “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?” (1 Thess. 2:19). Paul told them that they were his hope, joy, and the crown of glory. In Philippians 4:1, this is what Paul said to the Philippian church saints: “Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.” The saints of the Philippian church were Paul’s joy and crown. In particular, they reason why Paul desperately wanted the Philippian church saints to shine the light of the gospel in this crooked and rebellious world as God's blameless children was so that they could be his crowns of glory at the return of Christ Jesus. This reminded me the hymn “Heralds of the Light, Be Swift”: (1) Her-alds of the light, be swift, haste your go-ing; Shat-ter the fet-ters of night. Peo-ples still with-out the truth wait un-know-ing. Beam forth the Gos-pel of Light. Her-alds of Light, speed a-way! (2) Do the work of God, with pow'r of His giv-ing; He your Com-pan-ion will prove. Tell the love of God for all peo-ple liv-ing. Beam forth the Gos-pel of Love. Her-alds of Light, speed a-way! (3) Bear the truth of God, the fire of His al-tar; Faint not in age or in youth. Cross-ing

seas and moun-tains, rest not, nor fal-ter. Beam forth the Gos-pel of Truth. Her-alds of Light, speed a-way! (4) North and South and East and West, go, o-bey-ing, God your sup-port in the strife. For the dead and blind in sin, go forth pray-ing. Beam forth the Gos-pel of Life. Her-alds of Light, speed a-way! (Chorus) Let shine the bright Gos-pel ray. End the night of sin, Let the bright-ness in! Her-alds of light, speed the day (Internet). I hope and pray that all of us may love all those souls who don't know Jesus Christ with the affection of Jesus Christ and shine the light of the gospel, the word of life.

Third and last, Paul exhorted them to share their joy with him.

Look at Philippians 2:17-18: “But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.” Paul had joy. Although he was in prison at the moment when he was writing to the Philippian church saints because he was preaching the gospel, he had joy. Although there were those who opposed him (1:28) and Paul was suffering because of his enemies (v. 29) he rejoiced. In fact, this is what Paul said in Colossians 1:24 – “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.” This is what he said to the Corinthian church saints in 2 Corinthian 7:4 – “Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.” In Philippians 2:17, Paul wrote the letter to the Philippian church saints, saying that he would rejoice even though he was being poured out as the drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. Here, "a drink offering" was a drink that was poured out on the sacrifice. What Paul said was that he would rejoice even if his own blood was being poured out on the sacrifice for the saints of the Philippian church (Park Yun-sun). In one word, Paul said he would rejoice even if he was martyred. And he wanted to rejoice with the Philippian church saints (v.17). So he said to them, “You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me” (v. 18).

We should be rejoicing for loving one another and live Christian faith together within the same church. Also, we should all rejoice together even though we may suffer in preaching the gospel not only with our mouths but also with our lives. We must rejoice in the Lord not only as we participate in the gospel but also even we get martyred. This is the life we should live specifically in love with each other. This is the life that we work out our salvation. I hope and pray that we may be faithful in working out our salvation until we meet our Lord face to face.

Those who seek the work of Christ Jesus

[Philippians 2:19-24]

We are saying that Christians do 'the work of the Lord', but what is the work of the Lord? I have thought about the Lord's work, centered on two of the personal meditations of Scripture passages:

- (1) The first passage of Scripture is Acts 14: 21-23: “After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.’ When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Based on these verses, I thought about the work of the Lord as four things: (a) First, the work of the Lord is to preach the gospel (v. 21). Paul risked his life in preaching the gospel because there were those who opposed the gospel and Paul who was preaching the gospel. Paul nearly died when he was preaching the gospel in Lystra. So he had to risk his life and preached the gospel. (b) Second, the Lord's work is to make disciples (v. 21). Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe and preached the gospel. And they made many disciples there. They obeyed Matthew 28:19-20, that they went and made Jesus' disciples of all nations. (c) Third, the Lord's work is to strengthen the souls of the disciples (Acts 14: 22c-23). After finishing their ministry successfully at Derbe, Paul and Barnabas revisited the mission field and strengthened the souls of the disciples. (d) Fourth, the Lord's work is to build leaders in the church (v. 23). Paul and Barnabas revisited the mission field and chose elders for each church. And they prayed with fasting and they commended them to the Lord.

- (2) The second passage is John 6:29: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’”

We need to prioritize clearly. The first thing we need to do is not to serve God. The first thing we need to do is "the work of God." And the work of God is to believe in Jesus Christ whom God sent. Then what do we have to do to believe in Jesus, our priority task? We must hear the words of Christ. Look at Romans 10:17 – “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ. Therefore, we must diligently hear the word of the Lord. And there must be our progress of faith (Phil. 1:25).

In Philippians 2:19, as Paul wrote the letter to the saints of the Philippian church, he said that he wanted to send Timothy to them quickly. What was the reason? The reason was because Paul wanted to be encouraged by learning their condition (v. 19). In other words, Paul wanted to send Timothy to the Philippian church saints quickly, so that through him he would hear the news about their condition and be encouraged. So before sending Timothy to them, Paul introduced Timothy to the Philippian church saints: “Other people are interested only in their own lives, not in the work of Jesus Christ” (Expanded Bible). What did Paul mean? He meant that everyone was seeking their own interest and not the work (or interest) of Jesus Christ. In Paul's view, this was contrary to his teaching. What was Paul's teaching? Look at Philippians 2:4 – “do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” Paul told the Philippian church saints to look not only for their own personal interests but also for the interests of others. If so, then shouldn't they look for and concern about the interest (work) of the Lord Jesus Christ? But as Paul continued to write his letter to the Philippian church saints, he said that they were seeking

their own interests and only Timothy was seeking the work (or interest) of Christ Jesus (v. 21). That was why he said to them that he hoped to send Timothy who was genuinely concerning for their welfare to the Philippian church saints (vv. 20-21). So I would like to receive a lesson from God as we meditate on Timothy, who sought the work of Christ Jesus under the title of "Those who seek the work of Christ Jesus." I hope and pray that we may be like Timothy who sought the work of Christ Jesus.

Who seeks the work of Christ Jesus?

First, those who seek the work of Christ Jesus genuinely concern for their brothers and sisters' welfare.

Look at Philippians 2:20 – “For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.” Apostle Paul introduced Timothy whom he wanted to send to the Philippian church saints as a man with “likeminded” (v. 20, KJV; cf. v. 2). Isn’t this introduction a little interesting? This introduction of Paul about Timothy was interesting to me because the Philippian church saints weren’t likeminded (v. 2). In particular, two women who had shared Paul’s struggle in the cause of the gospel, Euodia and Syntyche didn’t have the same mind in the Lord (4:2-3). Paul, who knew this, said he wanted to send Timothy, who had the same heart with him, to them quickly in order to be encouraged by knowing their condition. I think there is a hidden message from Paul toward the Philippian church saints. In particular, Paul seems to be telling that message to Euodia and Syntyche who had shared Paul’s struggle in the cause of the gospel. And that message was for Euodia and Syntyche to have “the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (2:2) by imitating Paul and Timothy who were likeminded and who genuinely concern for their welfare (v. 20). How could Paul and Timothy have the same mind? What kind of mind did they have? They both had the mind of Jesus Christ (v. 5). What is the mind of Christ Jesus? What is the mind of Christ Jesus that Paul and Timothy had? It is the mind that “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (v. 8). Paul and Timothy who were sent by the Lord had a humble heart to submit to the will of the Lord who sent them. That was why they were able to have the same mind and united in spirit.

The reason Paul introduced Timothy to the saints in Philippian church was because he believed that Timothy was the one who genuinely concern their condition. Here the word “genuinely” means “the father's sincerity to his son” (Park Yun-sun). That is, just as the father is sincerely thinking of his son's situation, Paul told the Philippian church saints that Timothy genuinely concerned their situation. How could Paul have introduced Timothy to them like this? I looked up the answer in the relationship between Paul and Timothy. In Paul's letters, we can see that Paul said of Timothy: “my true child in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2), “my beloved son” (2 Tim. 1:2), “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:17). When we look at these expressions, we can see that Timothy was Paul's beloved and faithful true son in the Lord. In other words, the relationship between the Paul and Timothy was a relationship between the spiritual father and the spiritual son, and a love relationship with each other. That was why Paul had no doubt that Timothy genuinely concern about the Philippian church saints' welfare (Phil. 2:20). And he wanted to send Timothy quickly to them. As soon as Paul saw how things went with him, he hoped to send Timothy immediately (v. 23). The reason was because Paul wanted to know their condition through Timothy (v. 19).

Isn't it natural that we want to know the condition of the person we love? In particular, isn't it the parents' interest to know the situation of their beloved children who are far away? Just as the parents thought of their children, Paul was thinking genuinely about the Philippian church saints who he loved, and thus he wanted to send Timothy, who also genuinely thought about them, immediately to them to know their condition. It was because Paul wanted to be encouraged by knowing their condition through Timothy (v. 19). A similar case is found in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3. Paul sent his spiritual son Timothy to the Thessalonica church (1 Thess. 3:6). The reason why Paul sent Timothy to them was “so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions” (v. 3) and to find out their faith (v. 5). It was because Paul could endure it no longer (vv. 1, 5) “for fear that the tempter might have tempted you (them), and our (their) labor would be in vain” (v. 5). And Paul's faithful beloved spiritual son Timothy, who had been sent forth, fulfilled his faithful mission and returned to Paul and brought him good news of

the Thessalonian church saints' faith and love (v. 6). Timothy told Paul that they always thought kindly of him, longing to see him just as Paul also longed to see them (v. 6). For this reason, in all his distress and affliction Paul was comforted about them through their faith (v. 7). Look at the Paul's response to the good news of the Thessalonian church through Timothy: "for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account" (vv. 8-9). Timothy, who had been sent by Paul to the Thessalonian church, comforted Paul's heart.

What is it that comforts and pleases our hearts? Do we really rejoice and be comforted when we know the condition of those we truly love? We, who are interested in the work of Christ Jesus, should share our hearts with one another and be sincere in each other's welfare. And we should get to know each other's condition. Although Paul wanted to know the Philippian church saints' condition in Philippians, in Ephesians and Colossians, Paul wanted the Ephesian church saints and the Colossian church saints to know his condition (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7) as well as his co-workers' circumstances (Eph. 6:22; Col. 4:8). Like this, Paul's relationship with the churches saints was to genuinely concern for each other's condition and circumstances and inform and share with each other. Therefore, they became comfort and joy to each other. I hope and pray that we too like Paul and Timothy who genuinely concern about our church's circumstances and each other's circumstances so that we may comfort each other.

Second and last, those who seek the work of Christ Jesus serve in the work of the gospel.

Look at Philippians 2:22 – "But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel." Apostle Paul told the Philippian church saints that he hoped to send Timothy immediately (v. 19) and he first introduced Timothy to them: 'I have no man likeminded, who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare' (v. 20). Paul's second introduction about Timothy was Timothy was seeking the work of Christ Jesus (v. 21). When we look at the Paul's letter to the Corinthian church saints, this is what he said about Timothy: "Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am" (1 Cor. 16:10). Then, in Philippians 2:22, Paul introduced Timothy the third time to the Philippian church saints: 'Timothy has proven character.' When Paul said "his proven worth" about Timothy (v. 22), the word "proven" here means in Greek "approval gained through testing" (Pfeiffer). This means that Timothy's character was proven by tests or trials. It seems to me that Timothy was recognized as a person of proven character to the Philippian church saints because he persevered by faith (Rom. 5:4) when he was going through "the most severe trial" (2 Cor. 8:2). And the Timothy's good character which the Philippian church saints knew and acknowledged was his genuineness (v. 20).

The personality of those who believe in Jesus is important. In particular, sincerity is very important. I thought of this: 'How happy are we if we can have a friend who has sincere personality?' Especially when I think about Paul and Timothy, if our church leaders have proven character like Paul and Timothy, especially sincerity, then how happy our church will be and how the happy service and ministry will be. In order to do that, I should first be a sincere person in front of God and my church saints. In particular, as the covenant Heavenly Father is faithful to a child of God like me, I also should be faithful to my family and my church members. However, when I look at myself before God, when I see my own unfaithful to my family and church members in the piercing of my conscience, I get discouraged by myself. And when I get discouraged, the indwelling Holy Spirit reminds me the Word of God 2 Timothy 2:13 – "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

If we look at Acts chapter 16 that tells us the background of the establishment of the Philippian church, this is what the Bible says about Timothy: "and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium." Timothy, who was Paul's faithful spiritual son, was a person of good character who was praised by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium. And he served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father (Phil. 2:22). To understand this more fully, we need to know more about Timothy. Timothy grew up in a godly atmosphere as a child of a Greek father and a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). Since his father was a Greek, Timothy

might have been influenced by the Greek in terms of many gods, but he believed and served one God as his name meant ("honoring God"). He was able to do so because he learned the Scripture from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). That was why Timothy, like his grandmother and his mother, had the sincere faith within him (v. 5). Timothy, who lived faith in God, had become a model young man. It was no wonder that Timothy, a young man who loved one God and served his neighbors, was given the praise of everyone at his home town Lystra. The life of Timothy, who was undergoing such a Christian education in peaceful situation, met Apostle Paul and it became an opportunity of change. When Paul visited Lystra in his first mission journey, Timothy met Paul. And he accepted Jesus Christ through that meeting and he regarded Paul as his spiritual father and received great love and discipleship training (Internet). And he served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel like the child serving his father (Phil. 2:22). Here, the word "serving" means Timothy served and obeyed his spiritual father Paul like a slave. To this Timothy, Paul said "our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ" (1 Thess. 3:2). And in 2 Corinthians 1:19, Paul said "For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us--by me and Silvanus and Timothy" What did he mean? Paul meant Timothy preached the Son of God, Christ Jesus, among the Corinthian church saints with Paul and Silvanus. So Paul told the Roman church saints that Timothy was "my fellow worker" (Rom. 16:21). In other words, Timothy was Paul's co-worker who preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ with Paul.

Think once in the eyes of the Philippian church saints who received this Paul's letter. While reading this letter of Philippians, I wonder what they thought about Timothy, whom Paul was introducing? Of course, when Paul was introducing Timothy as the one who was likeminded, who genuinely was concerned for their welfare (Phil. 2:20) and who sought the work of Christ Jesus (v. 21), I am sure the Philippian church saints would have believed Paul's words. The reason was because at least for them Apostle Paul was a trustworthy servant of the Lord. But when Paul said that Timothy had proven character and he served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel like the child serving his father (v. 22), perhaps the Philippian church saints might have felt the sense of kinship to Timothy. The reason I think that way is because of the words of Philippians 1:5 – "in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now." How could the Philippian church saints, who had been participating "in the gospel from the first day until now," not feel the sense of kinship when they heard about Timothy who also as Paul's co-worker had been participating in the gospel? All of them, Paul, Timothy and the Philippian church saints, sought the work of Christ Jesus (v. 21) and served in the furtherance of the gospel (v. 22).

All of us must seek the work of Christ Jesus. All of us must serve in the furtherance of the gospel, whether directly or indirectly. As we hold fast to the word of life (v. 16), we must preach the gospel to others. What's the reason? The reason is because the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the gospel of life. We must preach the gospel that gives eternal life. That is the service of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that is what those who seek the work of Christ Jesus should do.

At the beginning of this month (February 3), a pastor of the Mongolian True Love Church sent me an email with photos attached. I remember the first time I met with him my mentor in 2007 for the first time in Mongolia and I was leading a seminar during Presbyterian Seminary retreat. At that time, I remembered that some 60 local Mongolian seminary students attended the retreat. When I met him, he was unique because even though he was Mongolian he was good at Korean. When I went to Mongolia for the second time in 4 years late, I was surprised to hear that after he graduated from the seminary he committed himself 3 years to Eternal Love church that was located about 930 miles from Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. And I still remember after the seminary graduation, I saw him taking pictures with his family and other graduated students. After I had the second meeting with him, even though I came back to America, I kept on thinking about him. I guess it was because he committed 3 years to the church that is far away and no one wanted to go there to serve. So I started to support him little bit, hoping that it could be helpful to him little bit in his ministry. After 3 years, he came to Ulaanbaatar and started a new church True Love church. Since then, our church had been supporting True Love church. And I put his and his congregation pictures on our church bulletin board and asked my church members to pray for him and True Love church. Also I put two young Philippine pastors' pictures on the same bulletin board as well so that we can pray for them as well.

Our church vision is to raise leaders. Our concern is that the Lord will raise up His servants to build His church and build His kingdom. As we join together in this Lord's work, what I am paying attention and praying is that the Lord's workers should be truly trustworthy people. That's why I joined the Mexico mission team last month and went with my church elder to Tijuana, Mexico because I wanted to meet with a Mexican pastor, Victor, whom our church Hispanic Ministry Pastor Gomez told me about. I heard about him many times through Pastor Gomez, so I wanted to see him and find out who he is. I met Pastor Victor and his wife too. And they joined our church mission team to go to the house of Gabriel (handicap ministry) and visited homeless ministry. We are grateful that the Lord enabled us to meet the Lord's workers whom we can work together to do the Lord's work. I hope that all of us can do the Lords' work wherever we are. Let us seek the Lord's work. Let us genuinely concern about other's welfare. I hope and pray that all of us serve in the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Almost dying for the work of Christ

[Philippians 2:25-30]

Tony Campolo, speaker, author, sociologist, pastor, social activist and passionate follower of Jesus, has published a study of the problem of the elderly (Internet). He surveyed 50 elderly people over the age of 95, and asked, "How would you like to live if you were given life again?" He asked them to answer in three ways. The three common answers were: (1) First, they would reflect more. They said they lived without thinking about why they were living. So they wanted to live by reflecting more. (2) Second, they would risk more. They said they lived in compromise with injustice and kept on noticing others. They wanted to live more boldly from now on. (3) Third, they would do more things that would live on after they were dead. They wanted to live as they think about death: 'What would happen to me after I die?' They regretted what they would leave after they were dead. The common confession was that they regretted that they lived without thinking (Internet).

We have already meditated on Philippians 2:19-24, about Timothy, his faithful spiritual son, whom Paul wanted to send to the Philippian church quickly. Prior to sending Timothy to the Philippian church, Paul introduced him to the Philippian church saints. I summarized it again in five ways: (1) First, Timothy was likeminded with Paul (v. 20). In other words, the spiritual son Timothy had the same mind as his spiritual father Apostle Paul. (2) Second, Timothy was genuinely concerned for the Philippian church saints' welfare (v. 20). In other words, Timothy had a genuine concern for them. (3) Third, Timothy sought the work of Christ Jesus (v. 21). In other words, Timothy was interested in the work of Christ Jesus. Like Paul, he was trying to do the Lord's work (1 Cor. 16:10). (4) Fourth, Timothy was a man of good character (Phil. 2:22). His character was proven through tests or trials. And his good character that was being acknowledged by the Philippian church saints was his genuineness (v. 20). (5) Fifth, Timothy worked with Paul for the gospel (v. 22). He served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel like the child serving his father (v. 22). So Paul wanted to send Timothy quickly to the church in Philippi because he wanted to be encouraged by knowing their condition (v. 19). Therefore, Paul hoped to send him immediately, as soon as he saw how things go with him (v. 23). And he trusted in the Lord that he himself also would be coming shortly (v. 24). After saying these, Paul told the Philippian church saints about another person in Philippians 2:25-30. And that person is "Epaphroditus." Who is this Epaphroditus? Thinking about this person in three ways, we would like to receive the lessons that God gives us:

First, Epaphroditus was Paul's brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier and the Philippian church's messenger and minister to his need.

Look at Philippians 2:25 – "But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need." Epaphroditus was Paul's "brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier" who was also the Philippian church's messenger and minister to Paul's need. Here the word "messenger" is "ἀπόστολος" in Greek and it means "apostle". Therefore, the meaning of the word "messenger" or "apostle" means "the one who has been sent". The apostles of Jesus were those who had been sent to this world by the Lord Jesus in order to fulfill the Lord's will. So, the twelve apostles of Jesus were the ones who went and made the disciples of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). Then, in Philippians 2:25, when Paul said that Epaphroditus was "your messenger" it means that Epaphroditus was the one the Philippian church sent to Paul and not Paul sent him to the Philippian church saints. In fact, Epaphroditus was sent by the Philippian church. That was why Paul said "your messenger" and not "my messenger".

Why then did the Philippian church saints send Epaphroditus to Paul? What was the purpose? The purpose was to minister Paul's need (v. 25). Here the word "minister" is "λειτουργὸν" in Greek and it means "one who engaged in personal service," "aide," and "assistant" (Arndt). In other words, the messenger of the Philippian church, Epaphroditus, was Paul's assistant and aide who served Paul. When I think of the fact that Epaphroditus was a servant to Paul, I think the Philippian church served Paul better than any other churches. The reason I think so is in Philippians 2:17 – "But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you." In this passage Paul mentioned about the Philippian church's sacrifice and serving Paul by faith. That was why Paul said he would rejoice and rejoice with the saints of the Philippian church, even if he would get martyred. What a precious fellowship in the Lord. The relationship between Paul and the Philippian church was a wonderful fellowship that was serving and to be served.

How then did the Philippian church serve Paul's need? Look at Philippians 4:15-16: "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need." At the first preaching of the gospel, after Paul left Macedonia, only the Philippian church participated in the gospel (1:5) and helped the Paul's need. In addition, the Philippian church sent a gift more than once for Paul's needs (4:16). The Philippian church did so through Epaphroditus. So, in Philippians 4:18, Paul said to the saints of the Philippian church: "But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God." The church of Philippi supplied Paul's need through their messenger Epaphroditus. That was why Paul said he received everything in full and have abundance. Also he said that what they sent was the fragrant aroma, the acceptable sacrifice. Thus, the messenger of the Philippian church, Epaphroditus went to Paul when Paul was leaving Macedonia and when he was in Thessalonica with the necessary things for Paul, prepared by the Philippian church. In addition to that, Epaphroditus was with Paul and co-worked with him after delivering the gift (2:25). In other words, Epaphroditus didn't just return Paul after delivering the gift but he also worked together with Paul for the gospel (v. 25). In fact, Epaphroditus cooperated with Paul in evangelism (Park Yun-sun). He also fight the good spiritual fight like a soldier (v. 25) when he was cooperating with Paul in evangelism due to those who oppose them and the gospel. That was why when Paul wrote this letter of Philippians to the saints of the Philippian church, he said that Epaphroditus was his brother, his fellow worker and fellow soldier, who was also their messenger and minister to his need (v. 25).

When I think about Epaphroditus, our church needs more people like Epaphroditus who can be our church messengers to those missionaries whom our church is supporting. In other words, we need more people to act as messengers in our churches in supporting those missionaries in the mission fields. For example, now the Lord has been using our church to do the mission in Tijuana, Mexico. Our church Mexico mission team is going down there every month with gifts. In a sense, our church is sending the Mexico mission team to Tijuana, Mexico. Of course, the most important gift to the souls in Tijuana, Mexico is Jesus Christ and His gospel. And it is important that we provide food for them, give gifts and do medical missions. However, I think it is also important to work together as a brother and sister with the Mexican pastor and workers who are serving there, and to help them with their needs. These ministries are important not only Tijuana, Mexico, but also Ensenada Mexico, C-country, Philippines, India and Mongolia. I believe that if our church can help the needs of the missionaries there or the local servants of the ministry who work there, and work together for the gospel and to expand the kingdom of God, I think that it is a precious ministry and the beautiful relationship of the co-workers in God's sight. I hope and pray that the Lord continue to use our church to faithfully bear this precious and beautiful cooperative ministry for His glory.

Second, Epaphroditus was longing for the Philippian church saints and was distressed.

Look at Philippians 2:26 – "because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick." In the midst of sickness, Epaphroditus longed for the saints of the Philippian church. We don't know how long did he let the Philippian church and serve Paul and work together with him. But one thing for sure

was that Epaphroditus got sick and came close to death for the work of Christ (v. 30). In such a situation, Epaphroditus longed for the saints of the Philippian church.

I think that Paul, who was writing the letter, would have sympathized and understood the heart of Epaphroditus. In other words, Paul understood that Epaphroditus had longed for the Philippian church saints. We can know this because when we look at the Paul's letters, he wrote to the saints of the churches that he too longed to see them when he was far away from the beloved saints. For example, look at Romans 1:10-13: "always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles." When Paul wrote to the Roman church saints "I long to see you" (v. 11) and "often I have planned to come to you" (v. 13), we can see how much he wanted to see them. Another example can be seen in the letter to the Thessalonica church. Look at 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18: "But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while--in person, not in spirit--were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. For we wanted to come to you--I, Paul, more than once--and yet Satan hindered us." Apostle Paul worked very hard with enthusiasm to see the faces of the Thessalonian church saints. Because he was in a situation where he couldn't see the beloved church saints whom he wanted to see so deeply, he could have understood and sympathized with Epaphroditus who longed to see the Philippian church saints. That was why Paul wrote to the Philippian church saints, "I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus" (Phil. 2:25) and "Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly" (v. 28).

But Paul said to the saints of Philippian church that Epaphroditus was distressed because they have heard that he was sick (v. 26). Think about it. How would you react when you hear that a person whom you want to see eagerly is sick and nearly dead? Won't you be worried? Don't you think you will feel sad? But Epaphroditus was distressed because his beloved Philippian church saints heard that he was sick. Isn't it strange that Epaphroditus worried more about the saints of the Philippian church than worrying about himself since he was almost dying? Can you imagine that when we are sick and almost dying, we worry about our family and church members who heard about my sickness instead of worrying about ourselves? Does it make sense? Here one thing we should think about is the fact that Epaphroditus "was distressed" (v. 26) because the word "distressed" in Greek "ἀδημονῶν" appears in Matthew 26:37 (Mk. 14:33) when Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane: "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed." Just as Jesus was distress when he went to pray in the garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified, Epaphroditus was distressed because he knew that his beloved Philippian church saints knew that he was sick. This shows that Epaphroditus loved and longed for the Philippian church saints with Jesus' sacrificial love. Pastor Park Yun-sun said: 'Epaphroditus was distressed in his side because for his own personal circumstance the Philippian church saints might be distressed. This was how much he cared for them in such a sacrificial spirit.'

This is the principle of Philippians 2:3-4. And Epaphroditus had already lived on this biblical principle: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." Epaphroditus looked out for the Philippian church saints' interests than his own personal interests. He was more worried that they would be worried about him because of his sickness because he almost died for the work of Christ. Isn't this a sacrificial love? This was how much Epaphroditus loved the Philippian church saints, more than they loved him. Imagine a father, who is far away, is almost dying from his sickness, and he didn't tell his children about his sickness. But when the children found out about it, how would the father feel? Don't you think he would be in distress like Epaphroditus? In this way, Epaphroditus longed for the Philippian church saints even though he came close to death.

Who are we longing for? Are we longing for our beloved church members who are far away? I still remember clearly that when I left my home church and went to Korea and attended the pastoral retreat and how the

Holy Spirit worked in my heart. When He did so with the promise word of Jesus ‘I will build My church’ (Mt. 16:18), my heart longed for my home church. And when I was singing the Korean hymn “I Love They Kingdom, Lord” I couldn’t help but crying in tears thinking about my church in Los Angeles then the church in Korea where I was serving. That’s why I don’t agree with the Korean saying, "Out of sight out of mind". Of course, it is our nature, but in the Lord we long to see our beloved church members who are far away. Especially if we have been praying for those church member who are far away with the affection of Jesus Christ like Apostle Paul (Phil. 1:8), we will be more concerned about them than ourselves (2:26). I hope and pray that we, like Ephphroditus, may long for and concern about our church members who are far away.

Third, Ephphroditus risked his life for the work of Christ.

Look at Philippians 2:30 – “because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.” When Ephphroditus was sick and almost died, he was distressed because he knew that the Philippian church saints, who he longed for, heard that he was ill (v. 26). At that time, there was a man who was sorrow upon sorrow, watching Ephphroditus who was ill. He was Paul. Look at verse 27: “Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.” Why did Paul have sorrow upon sorrow? It was because not only that Ephphroditus was sick and almost died that Paul was in sorrow but also because of the Philippian church saints, whom he longed for with affection of Jesus Christ, who heard that Ephphroditus was ill and they would be in distress as well. For example, when a young married couple gave birth to a baby, can you imagine what they may go through in their minds when the baby is dying? I am sure they will be very sad. But their parents (the baby’s grandparents) will be twice as sad because their grandkid died and their son or daughter will be very sad. And I think this was Apostle Paul’s heart. But God who knew the Paul’s sorrow, the Philippian church saints’ sorrow and Ephphroditus’ sorrow had mercy and saved Ephphroditus’ life. That was why Paul said in verse 27 that God spared him sorrow upon sorrow. Also, in verse 28, Paul was all the more eager to send Ephphroditus to the Philippian church. This shows that Ephphroditus was healthy enough to go back the Philippian church. Why did Paul want to send Ephphroditus to the Philippian church? Look at verse 28: “Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.” The reason why Paul wanted to hurry and send Ephphroditus back to the Philippian church was because the church saints could see him again and be glad and Paul could have less anxiety.

Therefore, as Paul was sending Ephphroditus back to the Philippian church, this is what he wrote to that church saints: “Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him.” Paul wanted them to welcome Ephphroditus in the Lord with great joy and to honor men like him. What was the reason? Look at verse 30: “because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.” The reason was because Ephphroditus risked his life for the work of Christ. What is interesting here is that the Greek word for “risking his life” is "παρὰβουλευσαμενος" and this Greek word is derived from “parabolani”. “Parabolani were the members of a Christian brotherhood who is the Early Church voluntarily undertook the care of the sick and the burial of the dead, knowing full well they could die” (Wikipedia). It seems that in the early churches there were many Lord’s servants like Ephphroditus who did the Lord’s work voluntarily and served not only those who were sick but also the Lord’s servants like Paul even though they knew that they might lose their lives. So Paul said to the Philippian church saints to honor such people like Ephphroditus (v. 29).

Like Ephphroditus, we must do the work of the Lord voluntarily. Not only that, but also we need to do the Lord’s work even risking our lives. This means that in some ways we need to take risk in the Lord’s work even it requires from us more than what we can afford. In short, we must offer our lives to the Lord and do His work voluntarily because God didn’t spare His begotten Son Jesus for our salvation (eternal life). That was what Apostle Paul did. Look at Acts 20:24 and 21:13: “But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24), “Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (21:13). We must honor such people like Paul and Ephphroditus (Phil 2:29).

As I was meditating about a person named “Ephphroditus”, I thought about two things conclusively:

- (1) My first thought is that I want to pray with you in prayer, thinking of the meaning of his name Ephphroditus.

The name “Ephphroditus” means "lovely, charming". So I want to pray to the Lord, ‘Lord, may You raise Your servant like Ephphroditus who is lovely and charming in Your sight.’ Let us pray together for the Lord to raise such servants among us who work together with the Lord’s servants for His gospel and help the Lord’s servants regarding their needs. Let us pray that His servants love and long for His flocks with the affection of Jesus Christ. May we all be His servants who are willing to risk our lives for the work of Christ.

- (2) The second and last thought is that even though God had mercy on Ephphroditus who was almost dying and saved his life, He didn’t spare His begotten Son Jesus’ life, but gave Him on the cross for us.

Look at Romans 8:32 – “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” God who didn’t spare His only Son Jesus, loves us. And to fulfill the will of Heavenly Father, Jesus was crucified and died on the cross to save us. We who receive His great love and His grace of salvation, what must we do? May this hymn “Take My Life, and Let It Be” be our devotion to the Lord:

1. Take my life, and let it be Con-se-crat-ed, Lord, to Thee.
Take my mo-ments and my days; Let them flow in cease-less praise.
2. Take my hands, and let them move At the im-pulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be Swift and beau-ti-ful for Thee.
3. Take my voice, and let me sing, Al-ways, on-ly, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be Filled with mes-sa-ges from Thee.
4. Take my sil-ver and my gold Not a mite would I with-hold.
Take my in-tel-lect, and use Ev-ery pow’r as Thou shalt choose.
5. Take my mo-ments and my days. Let them flow in end-less praise.
Take my-self, and I will be Ev-er, on-ly, all for Thee.
A-men.

Safety caution

[Philippians 3:1-3]

In your opinion, what do you think is the level of safety consciousness of the Korean people? According to a report by the Hyundai Economic Research Institute on October 20, 2014, "Survey on Safety Awareness and Policy Tasks," a telephone survey of 1004 adults and over 20 years old said, "What do you think about our society's safety consciousness?" 95% of respondents answered that they lack safety consciousness. More than half (50.9%) answered 'very scarce' and 44.1% said 'somewhat scarce'. The answer to the question "very scarce" is 0, and the answer to "somewhat scarce" is 0.3, so the safety consciousness is 17 out of 100. This is a failed level. Specifically, 67.5% of respondents said that they did not use their seat belts when asked "How do I get in the back seat of a passenger car?" 81.9% of respondents said that they just use it even though they know there is no emergency exit. The biggest stumbling block in creating a 'safe country' is the public consciousness. 32.0% of the respondents said 'immaturity of the safety consciousness and of culture' is the biggest obstacle. According to Kim Dong-ryul, the head of Hyundai policy research department, said, "There is still a lot of problems in the safety consciousness of the people," especially, the 20s, students, full-time housewives need special attention to safety consciousness, education and training' (Internet).

Not long ago, I heard the news on the radio that a 40 years old employee worker at Incheon Steelworks was killed in a blast furnace. Perhaps this employee was working on injecting 1,500 to 2,000 tangles into the distribution system at the steelworks workshop and then falling into a blast furnace 2 to 2.5 meters down and eventually died. At that time, I also heard that the news pointed out that there is a lack of safety consciousness while talking about 'safety devices' at the place of work. I think that's how much the Korean people's safety awareness is lacking. Here in California, we are preparing for an extraordinary earthquake in the future. According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), a major earthquake of 7.8 magnitude or more, which is 50 times more powerful than the 1994 Northridge earthquake, will come soon that will result in more than 2,000 deaths and tens of thousands of casualties, and that it will cause \$ 200 billion damage. So few years ago, the Californian conducted a large-scale simulation exercise to prepare for a major earthquake all over California (Internet).

So I asked myself this question: 'What level of spiritual safety consciousness do we Christians have?' How much spiritual safety awareness do we have? Obviously, the Bible says that "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). I think we are not getting more and more self-control and alert. It seems that we are self-control more and more. Like those Israelites in the Exodus time who were out of control, made a golden calf and so became a laughingstock to their enemies (Exod. 32:25), we too have lost our self-control, and have become idolaters of the heart. This phenomenon has already been prophesied by Apostle Paul. He said that "in the last days difficult times will come" and people will be "without self-control" (2 Tim. 3:1, 3). Like the prophecy, it seems the time has come that in these last days of difficult times, even we Christians have lost our self-control and we think and do things beyond ourselves and thus are bringing shame to God's holy Name. Also we Christians are not alert. Although we must be alerted and cry out to God, we are spiritually sleeping because the body is weak even though our spirit is willing (Mt. 26:41). This is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:5, "Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." Now we aren't being alert and praying to God, so we lose our self-control and continue to fall into Satan's temptation to commit sin. What should we do?

In Philippians 3:1, this is what Paul said to the Philippian church saints: "Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you." Here Paul

again referred to the two things he already mentioned in Philippian chapter 1 to the saints of the Philippian church. What are the two contents?

(1) The first content was about joy.

Paul already spoke of 'joy' in Philippians chapter 1. As an example, Paul said Philippians 1:4 that he always prayed with joy in all his prayers for the Philippian church saints. Also in 1:18, Paul said that he rejoiced and continued to rejoice because Christ was preached. Although he was in prison, the reason why he rejoiced was the Philippian church saints' partnership in the gospel (v. 5) and there was advance of the gospel even he was in prison (v. 12). In a word, Paul rejoiced in the Lord because the gospel of Jesus Christ was being preached.

(2) The second content was about those who oppose the gospel of Christ.

In Philippians 3:2, Paul speaks of those who are against the gospel of Christ, whom he has already mentioned in Philippians 1:28. He mentioned about those who opposed the Philippian church saints (v. 28) in the context of conducting themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (v. 27). And Paul went to verse 29 and said that suffering for Christ is God's grace. Looking at this, we can tell that the Philippian church saints were suffering because of those who opposed the gospel. In such situation, Paul continued to write in this letter to the Philippian church saints in 3:1, "Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you." Why did Paul write to the same things to them again? It was because it was the safeguard for them. Here the word "safeguard" in Greek means "safe, secure from peril" (Greek dictionary). Then what was their peril? Look at verse 2: "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision." Here, Paul repeatedly warned the Philippian church saints to beware. Of what or whom should they beware? I would like to think of three things.

First, Paul said to beware of "dogs".

Look at Philippians 3:2: "Beware of the dogs" I am sure you heard the news about dogs biting people. Do you know how many people are being attacked by dogs every year in the US now? According to Kenneth Phillip, a dog lawyer, in 2010 alone, there were 34 fatal dog attacks in the United States, and 350,000 people per year who were bitten by dogs went to a hospital emergency room. Can you imagine that many people are getting bitten by dogs every year? So I often think of the warning sign "Beware of Dog" attached to the fence of the building parking lot here and there.

In Philippians 3:2, Paul warned the Philippian church saints to beware of "dogs". Here, who are the "dogs" that Paul was talking about? In 1st century AD, the dogs were wild, walking around the streets and ran through a pile of garbage in searching for foods. So, at that time, people thought dogs were very dirty animals. At that time the Jews considered the Gentiles like dogs. In other words, the Jews regarded the Gentiles as dirty animals that they shouldn't associate with. That was why in the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4, Apostle John wrote: "The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans)." In the first century AD, the Jews had a sense of superiority that they were the chosen people of God and didn't treat the Gentiles as people, but rather they regarded them as dogs. The Talmud says that in the old days, the Jewish men rose in the morning and prayed and thanked God for three things and the first thing was "God, thank you that I am not a Gentile but a Jew.' Don't you think this prayer is similar to the Pharisee's prayer recorded in Luke 18:11? "The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector.'" Paul, however, didn't tell the Philippian church saints to be careful with the Gentiles who were considered as dogs (Phil. 3:2). When Paul told them to beware of dogs, he meant the Jews especially the Judaizers. Who were the 'Judaizers' here? The Judaizers were the one of the groups that initially attacked the gospel. They insisted that the Gentiles should observe certain ordinances of the Old Testament, especially circumcision, in order to be righteous. Paul spoke of

these Judaizers and their false gospel with heresy and he even cursed them (Galatians). But the problem was that Judaizers were recognized as true believers by most people in the church. For example, it was like that in the Galatians church (Gal. 2:12). However, the Judaizers actually undermined the clarity of the gospel in that church, seriously defiled the gospel and confounded the Gentile believers. To briefly summarize the cause of the confusion, their argument was that somebody (1) believes in Christ, (2) do his best to keep the Law and (3) then justified. But Paul's argument was that somebody (1) believes in Christ first, (2) then is justified before God, and (3) immediately prepares to keep God's law (Machen). Do you understand this difference? Although this looks like a small difference, it is actually a very big difference. And the big difference is that while Paul says that by the grace of God we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone, the Judaizers said that we are saved by working that is keeping the law. The true gospel preached by Paul focuses on what Jesus Christ did on the cross (grace), but the false gospel the Judaizers claim is focused on what sinners do (merit). In a word, to Paul salvation is by God's grace, but to the Judaizers it is by human action. Thus, Paul referred these Judaizers as "dogs" because they coveted the wealth and went around as self-proclaimed teachers (3:19). Therefore, Paul told the Philippian church saints to beware of the Judaizers because they were the false teachers who preach this false gospel and thus they were dangerous.

And then Paul told the Philippian church saints to worship in the Spirit of God (v. 3). Why did Paul tell them to worship in the Spirit of God after he told them to beware of the Jews, especially the Judaizers? The reason is that worshipping God is due to those who are saved by believing in Jesus through the grace of God. This is the purpose God has saved us by giving His begotten Son Jesus Christ on the cross. That is, the purpose of God's salvation is worship. How can we know this? We can know this by looking at Exodus 3:12, where God called Moses: "And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain." In addition, when we look at the book of Exodus, God told Moses to go to king of Egypt Pharaoh and said this to him several times, "Let My son go that he may serve Me" (4:23, 7:16, 8:1, 9:1, 10:7). So immediately after the plague of the locust and of the darkness, this was what King Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron, "Go, serve the LORD your God!" (10:8), "Go now, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire" (v. 11), "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be detained Even your little ones may go with you" (v. 24). Then after the last tenth plague, this was what King Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the LORD, as you have said" (12:31).

Our Victory Presbyterian Church has three purposes: To build (1) a true worshiper, (2) a faithful disciple, and (3) a witness and modest volunteer who loves the soul. Based on these three purposes, our church has three statements for the three purposes. The statement for the first purpose is this: "Worship - Witnesses." The Bible verse for this first purpose statement is 1 Corinthians 14:25: "the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." I learned this Bible verse from the book "Spiritual and True Worship" written by Professor John Frame, whom I learned from at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. I learned little bit that what God wanted from our church the most was worshipping God and that we must bear the responsibility of witnessing and evangelism as God's true worshipers. The purpose of the grace of salvation for us is to worship God. In other words, because God has made us believe in Jesus Christ, we must worship God. The God of salvation speaks to us in John 4:23, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." Since God is seeking the true worshipers who worship Him in spirit and truth, our church is seeking to be His true worshipers and pursuing true spiritual worship as we prioritize worship, and focus on it. As we do so, our earnestly prayer is even through our worship, those who don't believe in Jesus in our midst will experience God's presence and bow down and worshiped God, declaring that God is certainly among us.

Second, Paul said to beware of "those men who do evil".

Are you scared of a dog more or people more? If I ask more specifically, do you think you should be more careful of a vicious dog or a vicious wicked worker? I think we should be more careful of the vicious wicked worker than the vicious dog. The reason is that the vicious wicked worker is worse than the vicious dog. For

example, even the dog is very aggressive and violent, it does not bite its own master. But the aggressive and violent evildoer attacks even those who love him, feeds him, protect him, and so on. According to the U.S. news, Thomas Gilbert, a 70-year-old man who founded and operated a hedge fund with assets of so much money at Wall Street was shot dead by his own son who majored in economics at Princeton University. The reason why his son killed his father was that his father who had been supporting him for the monthly income and allowance, told him that he would cut the monthly rent and reduce his allowance money so he pulled the trigger toward him (Internet). Don't we call this kind of son as "an immoral /a depraved person"? Or do we call that kind of son as "bastard"? This kind of son is worse than *Pungitius sinensis* (or Amur stickleback). *Pungitius sinensis* is the only fish to go and make the nest. After building the nest, the male *Pungitius sinensis* do its best to protect the eggs. It also fights against the big fish. It diligently puts eggs in and out to supply oxygen to the eggs. And it usually protects their eggs for 15 days without eating anything. And by the time the egg hatches, it fiercely dies next to the nest. And the baby *Pungitius sinensis* eat their own father's body unconsciously and thus grow. *Pungitius sinensis* devotes its' life for its babies and finally gives its body as well. Because of its affectionate nature, the hatching rate of *Pungitius sinensis* is up 90% (Internet).

In Philippians 3:2, Paul told the Philippian church saints to beware of those men who do evil (the evil workers). Here, who were the evil workers? There is a moral sense of meaning when we look for the meaning of Greek in the original language: "wicked, vicious, bad in heart, conduct, and character" (*Zodhiates*). And this Greek word appears in three places in the New Testament besides today's text. If we look at two of these, we will find some help in identifying the evil workers whom Apostle Paul told the Philippian church saints to beware. The first Bible passage is Matthew 21:41: "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." Here the "those wretches" refers to as the farmers. The reason why Jesus said that the farmers were those wretches was because when a landowner of a vineyard sent his servants to the tenants who borrowed his vineyard to collect his fruit, the tenants seized his servants and beat one and killed another and stoned the third (vv. 33-35). So the landowner sent more servants but the tenants treated them the same way (v. 36). So at last, he sent his own son, thinking that the tenants would respect his son (v. 37). "'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him" (vv. 38-39). That was why Jesus called those tenants "those wretches" (v. 41). When we look at this vineyard farmer's parable who actually those wretches refer to? They referred to the Jews who shouted insistently "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Lk. 23:21). Also, they referred to "the chief priests and the teachers of the law" (Mt. 21:15) who were listening to the Jesus when He was talking about the parable of the vineyard farmer. The second Bible passage is Matthew 24:48-49: "But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards." This is the word that Jesus said to His disciples when He was sitting on the Mount of Olives (v. 3) and His disciples asked Him privately 'Tell us, when will this (the destruction of the temple buildings) happen (v. 2 – "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another, everyone will be thrown down") and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (v. 3). Jesus told them to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man (v. 44) and said, 'Be faithful and wise servant' (v. 45). Then Jesus told them about the wicked servant in three ways: (1) First, the wicked servants were in the wrong mind. Look at Matthew 24:48 – "But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time'." (2) Second, the wicked servants were doing wrong. Look at verse 49: "and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards." (3) Third, the wicked servants were the hypocrites. Look at verse 51: "He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." To whom Jesus usually referred as the hypocrites? They were Pharisees and teachers of the law (Mt. 7:5, 15:7, 22:18, etc.). In light of this fact, in Philippians 3:2, when Apostle Paul warned the Philippian church saints to beware of those men who do evil, he had Pharisees and the teachers of the law in his mind.

Who were the Pharisees and the teachers of the law? The biblical commentator Arthur Pink said: (1) There were two groups of the teachers of the law. One group was the teachers of the law of the country and another group was the teachers of the law of the church who engaged in interpreting the Scripture. (2) The Pharisees represented a sect who were more rigorous than the Mosaic Law requires, and who made the moral laws and ordinances based on

the traditions of their ancestors. So the Pharisees were regarded the highest among the Jews. (3) Their faults, however, were merely formal and adhered to the law externally, but in their conscience were dirty thinking, greed and hate, and had a cold heart toward God. They also emphasize the consciousness of the law more than the moral claims of the law, and their own interests dominate them rather than the glory of God. The teachers of the law and Pharisees were not interested in the purity of their souls. They thought that their own outer action could be blessed and had enough of an eternal world (Pink). How dangerous is this thought? Don't you think the Pharisees and the teachers of the law's thoughts are dangerous? How can we be blessed and have enough of the eternal world with our own outer action? In other words, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law thought that they could obtain sufficient salvation (eternal life) and enter the eternal kingdom if they put their human endeavor to observe strictly the moral laws and ordinances that were based on their ancestors' traditions. Why is this thought dangerous? I thought about two reasons: (1) First, it is because if we live our Christian faith like the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, then we will certainly become the hypocrites. If we focus on our outward action more and more, then there will be wider gap between our hearts and our outward actions. This will lead us more to hypocrite life. And I don't think this is Christian life. Rather, it is just a mere religious life. And this is what Prophet Isaiah said: "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them" (Isa. 1:11-14). (2) Second, it is a very dangerous thought because we will have the merit consciousness like the Pharisees and the teachers of the law and we will manifest our own glory instead of glorifying God. Although our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, we will pursue our own glory with our own merit consciousness instead of glorifying God with the grace consciousness. That was why Apostle Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints "glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:3).

What can we boast about ourselves? If I ask more biblically, what can we boast in the way the world does? (2 Cor. 11:18) For the Jews, Judaizers, Pharisees, and teachers of the law had something to boast about in the worldly way. There were three things: the chosen people of God, the Law, and circumcision. For the Jews, the pride they had was the fact that they were chosen by God, and the Law and circumcision. These three things made them arrogant and to have spiritual superiority so that they made themselves different from the Gentiles. In particular, the Jews were very proud of receiving the Moses' law so in their pride they relied on the law and boasted themselves (Rom. 2:17). But the problem was that they themselves were guilty of breaking the law (vv. 12ff.). Although they knew God's will (v. 18) and believed themselves that they were the teachers of infants (v. 20). And they loved to teach others but they didn't teach themselves (v. 21). They bragged about the law, but dishonored God by breaking the law (v. 23). Because of them, God's name was blasphemed among the Gentiles (v. 24). What does the Bible say about boasting in the worldly way? Look at 1 Corinthians 3:21 – "So then, no more boasting about men!" Look at James 4:16 – "As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil." When the Jews, especially Judaizers, Pharisees, and the teachers of the law, boasted that they were the God's chosen people, that they had the law and the circumcision, in God's perspective their boasting is in their arrogance and is evil (v. 16). In particular, they believed that they could be saved by obeying the law as the chosen people of God, and they boasted against God (Jdgs. 7:2). This boasting was boasting that 'My own strength has saved me' (v. 2) and 'I have saved myself by my power, by my efforts, because I have kept the law thoroughly.' And this is boasting against God. But what does the Bible say? Look at Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." Look at 1 Corinthians 1:29 – "so that no one may boast before him." The Bible clearly says that we are saved not by works so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9). The reason is because we are saved by God's grace by believing in Jesus Christ and not by our works or good deeds. The reason is that salvation is a gift of God and not by our own effort. Think about it. Since we are the unqualified sinners who received a gift of salvation by God's grace, shouldn't we boast of the one who saved us and not us? How can we boast ourselves and what we did instead of God who did send His own Son Jesus died on the cross and gave us a gift of salvation? We should never. We can never boast about what we did. If there is anything that we can boast ourselves, what can we boast about ourselves? Look at 2 Corinthians 11:30 – "If I must boast, I

will boast of the things that show my weakness.” Look at 2 Corinthians 10:17 – “But, ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord’” (cf. 1 Cor. 1:31). Here, what does it mean to “boast in the Lord”? That is to boast the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Galatians 6:14 – “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” Paul had nothing to boast about except the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. So as he was testifying the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was more worthy than his own life, he said: “Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16).

I hope and pray that we can only boast the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14). I hope and pray that we can only glory in Christ (Phil. 3:3). I hope and pray that in God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise His name forever (Ps. 44:8).

Third and last, Paul said to beware of “those mutilators of the flesh”.

As we have already learned, the Jews, Judaizers, Pharisee, and the teachers of the law boasted in the flesh that there were the God’s chosen people, have the law and were circumcised. These three things were their pride.

What is circumcision? "Circumcision" means "cut around". In Hebrew, it is “Brit milah”. Here, “brit” means “covenant” and “milah” means “circumcision”. So when we say "circumcision", the meaning of the word is "circumcision of covenant". So when circumcision was performed, the ceremony removed the epidermis covered on the penis of the male penis. And circumcision was prescribed on the eighth day of birth (Gen. 17:12, 24-25; Le 12:3). But the important thing was the symbolic meaning of the circumcision. What is that symbol? It is the symbol that God made a covenant with Abraham. Look at Genesis 17:11 – “You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.” So God made a covenant with Abraham, and he commanded all the men of his family, including Abraham and his slave, to do circumcision. Why? The reason was that circumcision was a sign on the body of the Israelites as a sign of the covenant of being the people of God. At that time, circumcision was a symbol and a mark that ‘I am your God, and you are my people!’ In other words, circumcision was a testimony of God's people in the Old Testament times. Circumcision was a sure sign that the old man died and became the covenant people of God. So since Abraham, the men of Israel had the secret mark of the people of God through this covenant ritual. This ceremony was an external ritual ordered that must be strictly observed (Gen. 17:12; Exod. 4:24; Josh. 5: 2).

In Philippians 3:2, Paul warned the Philippian church saints to beware of those mutilators of the flesh. Here, what does it mean by “mutilators of the flesh”? In NASB, it says “beware of the false circumcision” (v. 2). Here, the word “circumcision” in Greek is different from the Greek word for “circumcision” of the Old Testament “peritome”. In the Old Testament, when God made a covenant with Abraham, the word that was used for “circumcision” was “peritome” in Greek, meaning "to cut around". But in Philippians 3:2, the meaning of the Greek word for “mutilators” or “circumcision” is "to cut down (off)". According to Rev. John MacArthur, when Paul said “mutilators of the flesh” (cutting down) is like the Baal prophets in 1 Kings 18:28 who “slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed”. This kind of ritual was forbidden in the Old Testament. So when Paul warned the Philippian church saints about “mutilators of the flesh”, he meant not those people who circumcised according to the Old Testament but those who did circumcision that was forbidden in the Old Testament (Phil. 3:2). Then the question is when Paul warned the Philippian church saints to beware of “mutilators of the flesh”, whom did he refer to? He referred to the Judaizers. The Judaizers said that they were serving God even by hurting their bodies, but that didn’t have any spiritual meaning and was just hurting their own bodies (Park, Yun-sun). Then why did the Judaizers hurt their bodies that had no spiritual meaning? The reason was that they didn’t circumcise their hearts (Jer 9:26). That was why they were stiff-necked (Deut. 10:16) and were resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). They always disobeyed God's Word. Nonetheless, they had kept the ordinances according to the law and the traditions of their ancestors, both formally and externally, and eventually they had become the hypocrites as Jesus said. So, in writing to the Roman church saints, Paul, with the Jewish believers in mind, admonished: “No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God” (Rom. 2:29).

Apostle Paul told the Philippian church saints, who he longed for with affection of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:8) and who already had true circumcision, to beware of the mutilators of the flesh and not to put confidence in the flesh (2:2-3). In other words, Paul told them to beware of those mutilators of the flesh, the Jews, Judaizers, Pharisees and the teachers of the law, who were physically circumcised according to the ordinances of the Mosaic Law and who put confidence in their flesh because their hearts were circumcised by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ by God's grace. Paul wanted to see the Philippian church saints trusting in the circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit instead of relying on merely physical and external circumcision. The reason was because Paul didn't want them to pursue vain glory with a sense of merit and pride and spiritual superiority like the Judaizers who put confidence in the flesh. Not only that, Paul didn't want them to become hypocrites by focusing on the formal and external things like the Judaizers.

This is the reason why people are calling us, the Christians, the hypocrites. The reason they say we are hypocrites are because even though we go to church and are baptized, we don't love God with all our heart and with all our soul (Deut. 30:6) but we merely talk like we love Him and keep our formal and external religious rituals and duties. In particular, people call us the hypocrites because we are glorifying ourselves with a sense of merit as we do serve the Lord's church. We should no longer be Christians whom the people say we are hypocrites. We must be true Christians. True Christians faithfully see what Jesus did for them on the cross. Also, they focus on what Jesus did on the cross and live in grace with obedience to God's will and glorifying God. I hope and pray that we be true Christians.

Don't put confidence in the flesh

[Philippians 3:4-6]

It is very important what kind of consciousness we have in our faith life. Here, the consciousness that I consider important is "consciousness of grace" and "consciousness of merit". First of all, we must be filled with the consciousness of grace. We must keep a record of what our Lord has done for us on the cross on the tablet of our heart. Therefore, we must work harder than others with God's grace, like Apostle Paul, confessing that "by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). As we do so, we must be careful about the consciousness of our own merit. We must be careful not to record in our mind what we had done for the Lord, for His church and for our neighbors. In addition to this merit consciousness we must guard our hearts against another consciousness. And that consciousness is "privileged consciousness". According to Samuelson, we are living in the Age of Entitlement. In other words compare to the past, people think that they have to get exactly what they want, and they are increasingly inclined to feel right that they should receive what they want immediately. Sometimes this is manifested as a tendency to have excessive expectations for society, organization, and other people that I have to be given special treatment unconditionally, without taking into account the welfare and well-being of others, being caught up in the privilege of the individual (Internet). Sometimes we have words like this on our lips or in our minds. That is, "Do you know who I am?" The reason is because there is a sense of privilege within us. Not only do we think that we are special unlike others, but we may also have tendency to be prideful and show off our status within our privilege consciousness.

In Philippians 3:1-3, Apostle Paul said three times "Beware" for the sake of their safety. Who did Paul tell them to beware? They are "those dogs," "those men who do evil" and "those mutilators of the flesh" (v. 2). In fact, Paul told the Philippian church saints to beware of the Judaizers. Why did Paul warn them to beware of the Judaizers three times? It was because they believed and taught that they could be saved through human endeavor or work, not by faith in Jesus Christ. And the human endeavor or work that they pursued was to observe the law. They believed that by observing the law they could obtain eternal life. And one of the laws that they followed strictly was circumcision. But Paul told the Philippian church saints that the Judaizers weren't the true circumcision but the Philippian church saints are the true circumcision. Look at verse 3: "For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh--." Here, Paul summarized the true circumcision in three ways: (1) First, those who worship by the Spirit of God, (2) Second, those who glory in Christ Jesus and (3) Third, those who put no confidence in the flesh. Here, the word "flesh" refers to 'human privilege or honor' (Park Yun-sun). When Paul said that those who didn't trust the flesh were true circumcision, he would have spoken in mind the Jews, the Judaizers, the Pharisees, and the teachers of the law who put confidence in the flesh. And Paul, in keeping with the three things they were proud of in the flesh, namely, the chosen people of God, the law, and the circumcision, he told the Philippian church saints that the Judaizers were not the true circumcision but the false circumcision. In particular, Paul warned the Philippian church saints to beware of the false circumcision who didn't do the circumcision of the heart, but did mutilating their flesh outwardly and physically and put their confidence in the flesh and were boastful. And he told the saints not to put confidence in the flesh.

Then Paul said in Philippians 3:4 to the Philippian church saints, "though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more." He said in six things why he had more reasons to put confidence in the flesh than the Judaizers. I have divided these 6 things into two groups. Note that the three of the first group (the circumcised Israelites, the Benjamites, and a Hebrew of Hebrews) are by no means privileged by Paul himself. This privilege was given to him. On the other hand, three of the second group (the Pharisee in regard to the law, persecuted the church with zeal, and faultless for legalistic righteousness) were earned by his efforts rather than given to him.

The first group is “circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews” (v. 5).

Here Paul told the Philippian church saints why he had more reasons to put confidence in the flesh than the Judaizers in three ways:

(1) Paul (Saul) was an Israelite who was circumcised on the eighth day.

Paul (Saul) was also circumcised on the eighth day like the Judaizers. As we have already meditated, circumcision was one of the privileges enjoyed by the Jews, and the Jews were very proud and boastful that they were circumcised. The reason was that circumcision was a sign of the covenant of being the people of God. In other words, circumcision was like a certificate of being the God's people. But here we have one thing to consider about circumcision. There were three kinds of circumcision: (1) The Gentile converts were circumcised when they became adults, (2) The sons of Ishmael were circumcised at the age of thirteen, and (3) The Abraham's orthodox family sons were circumcised on the eighth day (Park Yun-sun). Among these three kinds of circumcision, Paul (Saul) was an Israelite who was circumcised on the eighth day (v. 5). This means that Paul was in the Abraham's orthodox family and he could have put his confidence in his privilege of being circumcised on the eighth day. In fact, Paul said in Romans 11:1 – “... I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.” Paul told the saints in the Corinthian church that he too would boast like many who were boasting in the way the world did (2 Cor. 11:1) because he was a Hebrew, an Israelite and an Abraham's descendant (v. 22). Paul, unlike some Judaizers, both his parents were Jews. When we trace the genealogy of his family, he was a descendant of Abraham. He was a true covenant people (Walvoord). He wasn't converted to the Israelites, but he was an Israelite from birth. Therefore he had all the rights and privileges as a God's chosen people (Martin).

(2) Second, Paul (Saul) was a Benjaminite.

Benjamin is the second son of Jacob's wife, Rachel (Gen. 35:18). And the tribe of Benjamin was one of the twelve tribes of Israel, one of the elite tribes, with the tribe of Judah, was the loyal tribe of the kingdom of David, a tribe of the south Judah kingdom (1Ki 12:21) (MacArthur). Also, the Benjaminite was regarded as a noble leader (Jdg. 5:14), and Saul, the first king of Israel, came out of that tribe (MacDonald). In particular, according to Deuteronomy 33:12, the tribe of Benjamin was “the beloved of the Lord”.

(3) Third, Paul (Saul) referred himself as "a Hebrew of Hebrews."

The reason why Paul said he was the Hebrew of Hebrews was because there was not even one Gentile among his ancestors and all of them were pure Hebrews (Park, Yun-sun). Paul was born of Hebrew parents and maintained the Hebrew tradition and language. He lived in the Gentile city, but kept the Hebrew tradition and language (see Acts 21:40; 26: 4, 5) (MacArthur).

The second group is “in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless” (Phil. 3:5, 6).

Here again, Paul told the Philippian church saints why he had more reasons to put confidence in the flesh than the Judaizers. And he used the Greek word "kata" (according to) to distinguish the three reasons:

(1) First, "to the Law, a Pharisee" (κατὰ νόμον) (v. 5).

Paul (Saul) was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3), the son of a Pharisee (23: 6), was thoroughly trained in the law of his fathers under Gamaliel (22:3) who was “a teacher of the law,

who was honored by all the people” (5:34). And he was a Pharisee who kept the Law of Moses strictly (Park Yun-sun). So Paul said in Acts 26:5, “They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.” Also in Acts 23: 6, Paul cried out in front of the Sadducees and Pharisees who gathered in the Sanhedrin: “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.” Thus "Pharisee" was a title of honor for Paul. The title asserted the highest honesty and faithfulness in fulfilling God's responsibilities to the divine Torah (Martin). At that time the 'Pharisee' referred to the elite of the Jewish people. The Pharisees were fervent in the study of the law (reading and meditating the Bible hard), without defect in their works (living according to the Scripture) and were honored by the people (consistency of speech and action). They respected the purity of Judaism, condemned the fall of the Jewish people to the other cultures, and were patriots against Roman domination. The number of Pharisees at that time was about 6,000, and their influence was remarkable. People said that 'If two people enter into the kingdom of God, one of them will be a Pharisee.' But because the Pharisee had a great defect as a religious man, the Lord Jesus called and rebuke them “whitewashed tombs” (Mt. 23:27), “You snakes! You brood of vipers!” (v. 33) The term “pharisaic” originally came from the Hebrew “parash”, meaning 'to separate'. In other words, as the purists they separated themselves from the Hellenistic culture and those influenced by it. The motive wasn't wrong, but there was a spirit of self-righteousness and exclusion. The Lord Jesus most condemned was Pharisee who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else (Lk. 18:9) (Kim Hee-bo).

(2) Second, "as to zeal, persecuting the church" (κατὰ ζῆλον) (Phil. 3:6).

Saul (Paul) wasn't satisfied with just keeping the law. As a Pharisee he zealously persecuted the church. Here Saul's "zeal" toward God was enthusiastic toward the purity of God's covenant community, and only those who had such zeal were truly considered servants of God (cf. v. Num. 25:1-18; Ps. 106:30, 31). And the word "persecuted" here is a word used by the army to fight the enemy by chasing the enemy, or to describe a hunter pursuing his prey. Indeed, Saul (Paul), who was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1) pursued them and chased them who were following Jesus Christ. And he ravaged the church by entering house after house and dragged off men and women believers and put them in prison (8:3, 9:1, 22:4-5, 26:9-11) (Martin).

There are two kinds of zeal in the Bible. They are the zeal that Paul had before he believed in Jesus, and the zeal of Phinehas, who was jealous of God's zeal in the Old Testament. First, in the Old Testament, Numbers 25:11, there is a man who has turned the anger of God with rightful zeal. His name is Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest. When the whole assembly of Israel were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (v. 6), an Israelite man (v. 6) Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a Simeonite family (v. 14) brought to his family a Midianite woman (v. 6) Cozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family (v. 15). When Phinehas saw this, he took a spear in his hand (v. 7) and followed Zimri into the tent and drove spear through both of them (v. 8) with God's zeal (v. 11). By doing so, Phinehas turned God's anger away from the Israelites (v. 11) and then the plague against them was stopped (v. 8). This zeal of Phinehas was righteous zeal in God's view. The Phinehas' zeal was based on the Word of God. In other words, the Phinehas' right zeal was the zeal of God'. This is eager zeal and correct zeal. Then what is wrong zeal? It was the zeal that Paul had toward God before he believed in Jesus. His zeal was not according to true knowledge (Rom. 10:2). In other words, Saul's (Paul's) zeal was not zeal based on correct knowledge. Look at Acts 22:3 – “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.” Look at Galatians 1:14 – “I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.” Saul's wrongful zeal was based on false biblical knowledge. Saul, who served the Old Testament God with zeal, didn't know the New Testament Jesus as the Messiah, Christ, who was prophesied in the Old Testament. In other words, Saul persecuted the church with false zeal because of his ignorance and false assurance.

Saul had no knowledge of Jesus Christ. As a result, he didn't believe that Jesus was the Christ. In short, the reason that Saul persecuted the Lord's Church was because of his disbelief. He persecuted Christians who preached "Jesus is the Christ" because he didn't believe that Jesus was the Christ. The reason was that he hated anything that threatened Judaism because he loved Judaism (cf. Acts 8:3, 9:1) (MacArthur). This is the work of God with the man's zeal. Doing the work of God with this kind of zeal is not based on the true knowledge. In other words, doing the work of God with the man's zeal is not the zeal based on the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Also, it is not zeal based on true belief. Because we don't have the right knowledge of Jesus Christ, we are working hard on God's work without the right faith. Saul, who had done the God's work very hard with false knowledge and false beliefs, was thought that persecuting the Christians was "offering a service to God" (Jn. 16:2).

(3) Third, "as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless" (κατὰ δικαιοσύνην) (Phil. 3:6).

This was Saul's (Paul's) third achievement that he could put confidence in himself and boast about it. It was as to the righteousness which was in the Law, Saul was found blameless. Here, "the righteousness which was in the Law" refers to the righteousness that a man could achieve by obeying the Law and thus be justified before God by human merit. Like the rich man in Luke 18:21, Saul obeyed all the commandments. In order to be justified based on the Law, he lived according to all the standards that the Law required (Martin). So when he saw himself in his own eyes, he was blameless as to the righteousness of the Law. However, Scripture Romans 3:20 clearly states: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin." Before Paul (Saul) believed in Jesus, he pursued a blameless life as to the righteousness of the Law. However, after he believed in Jesus, he realized that no one would be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law. The reason was because we become conscious of sin through the law. That's why the more we live our Christian life, the more we become aware of our sins in depth. And this is extremely normal (1Tim. 1:15). What Paul realized after he believed in Jesus Christ was that there was "a righteousness from God, apart from the law" (Rom. 3:21) and this "comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (v. 22) "and are justified freely by his grace" (v. 24). Therefore it is inevitable that more we live our Christian life of faith more we have the consciousness of grace and not the consciousness of merit. This is very natural (1 Cor. 15:10, Lk. 17:10). Therefore, the more we live our faith, the more we will be humble. Apostle Paul said: (1) "I am the least of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9), (2) "I am less than the least of all God's people" (Eph. 3:8) and (3) "sinners--of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim. 1:15).

There is evidence that we are doing wrong in our faith life by looking at these three things: (1) I am becoming increasingly insensitive to sin (or seems to be) (Eph. 4:19). I don't regard sin as sin (Rom. 5:13). (2) I am more and more attached to consciousness of merit (Lk. 18:11-12). I am thinking more about what I do for the Lord and for the church rather than what the Lord does for me (Mt. 25:44). (3) I am becoming more and more proud (Prov. 21:4, Ezek. 28:5). I like to reveal my glory over the glory of God (Jn. 12:43). We must live our Christian life properly in God's sight. The more we live our Christian life, the more we should be sensitive to our sins. We must be able to recognize our sins that we have committed to God more and more as we live our Christian life. Also, the more we live our Christian life, the more we must be filled with gracious consciousness. We don't have any merit to boast about. We only have the merit of Jesus. Our sins are forgiven because Jesus died on the cross and we became righteous because He was resurrected (Rom. 4:25). Therefore, the more we practice our faith, the more humility we must have before God and people. And whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we must do it all for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). We must pray to God: "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Your name give glory" (Ps. 115:1). In order for us to glorify God, we must first worship God with the Spirit of God. Remembering the grace of salvation that God has given us through faith in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, we must give thanks to God and praise and worship Him. We should also boast Jesus Christ alone. We should boast the cross of Jesus Christ. We must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must never put confidence in our flesh!

The surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord

[Philippians 3:7-9]

Do you know what is beneficial and what is harmful to your Christian life? What if we know (distinguish) between what is beneficial and what is harmful to each of our Christian life? I am sure we will get rid of what is harmful to us and take what is beneficial to our Christian life.

But what is the problem? In my opinion, the most fundamental problem is that we are not able to distinguish between what is beneficial to our faith and what is harmful to our faith. Let's take an example. Let's compare to the health of our bodies. What if we cannot distinguish between what is beneficial to our health and what is harmful to our health in managing our health? Then for sure we cannot take care of our health well. However, I think that some of the elderly people who were sick (or are still sick) here and there know what to do about their health since they went to their hospitals and met their doctors many times. So I am sure they do their best to take care of their health. But what if they know what to do for their health but don't do it and continue to do what is harmful to their health? I think this is a bigger problem. The bigger problem is that they know what is beneficial and harmful to their health but they keep on taking what is harmful to their health and not taking what is beneficial to their health. This is really the big problem. In this way, how can we be spiritually healthy if we don't do what is beneficial to us but continue to do what is harmful in our spiritual life? How can we be spiritually healthy? We will definitely get spiritually sick and ill. For example, if you look briefly, what would you think is beneficial to your Christian life? Don't you think it is beneficial to your spiritual health when you heard the Word of God and obey Him? Don't you think it would be beneficial to your spiritual health when you devote yourselves to prayers? However, what if you don't hear and obey the Word of God and if you don't devote yourselves to prayers but disobey His Word and don't pray to God? Don't you think it will be harmful to your spiritual health?

In Philippians 3:7-8, Paul told the saints of the Philippian church: "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ." I want to meditate on the word Philippians 3:7-9 under the title "The surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" and to receive the precious lessons that the Lord gives us.

First, take a look at Philippians 3:7 again: "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ." What does the phrase "But whatever was to my profit" refer to? It refers to the privilege that was given to him in the past before Paul believed in Jesus and what he gained from his efforts. It was the three privileges that were given to Saul (Paul) (v. 5a) and another three privileges that Saul obtained through his efforts (vv. 5b-6). The three privileges that were given to Saul were "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews" (v. 5a). And the three privileges that he obtained through his efforts were "in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless" (vv. 5b-6). To summarize, these six things that Saul (Paul) considered them as profitable to him before he believed in Jesus was putting confidence in the flesh (v. 4). He had more reason to put confidence in the flesh than the Judaizers. These six reasons were listed in verses 5-6. And these six reasons were greatly profitable to Saul before he met the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus. From Saul's point of view, he was a Pharisee who pursued in believing in Christ (here Christ was not Jesus in Saul's case) and being justified by doing his best to keep the law. To Saul, who pursued this legalistic righteousness (v. 6), the six lists of privileges were a tremendous benefit to him. For one example, look at the last sixth privilege in verse 6: "as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless." This was a great benefit to Saul. It was the tremendous benefit to Saul that he, who had thoroughly believed that he could be justified by God because he kept the law, was blameless as to the righteousness which is in the Law. But as we know, this is the story before Saul believed that Jesus is the Christ. In other words, Saul

considered all these six privileges to be beneficial to him before he believed in Jesus Christ. However, in Philippians 3:7, Paul continued to write to the Philippian church saints and said, “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.” In other words, he said that he counted loss the six privileges listed mentioned in vv. 5-6 for the sake of Christ. What Paul said that those six privileges were not profitable to him at all who believes that Jesus is the Christ so he considered loss. Here the meanings of the Greek words “profit” and “loss” are accounting terms (MacArthur). What Paul said to the Philippian church saints was that he considered loss the six privileges that he were profitable to him before he believed in Jesus Christ (v. 7b).

How could Paul consider loss all the profits of his past? Why did he consider loss the six privileges that he put confidence in before he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? What was the purpose? The purpose is recorded in verse 7: “... for the sake of Christ.” When Paul met resurrected Jesus on the way to Damascus, he came to believe that Jesus who was crucified and died, is Christ. As a result, Paul realized that no one could be saved by the legalistic righteousness (v. 6), that is righteousness that comes from the law (v. 9), but only by “the righteousness that comes from God” (v. 9) that people could be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Look at Philippians 3:9 – “and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” Before Paul met the resurrected Jesus on the way to Damascus, he thought that he could be justified by keeping the law (by his effort). But when he met the resurrected Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus, by God’s grace he believed that Jesus is the Christ and he was saved. Therefore, Paul came to realize the truth that he could only be saved by “the righteousness that comes from God” and “by faith” (v. 9) and not by “a righteousness of my own that comes from the law” (v. 9). Also, he came to realize that the flesh that he put confidence in (v. 4), that was the six privileges that he put confidence in (vv. 5-6) were not profitable at all (v. 7). So he considered them loss for the sake of Christ (v. 7). In addition to these six privileges, Paul considered “everything”, that is all the worldly things beside those six things loss for the sake of Christ (Park Yun-sun). Not only that, Paul had lost all things and considered them rubbish (v. 8). Here we need to go over two things

(1) The first word is “rubbish” (v. 8).

The word "rubbish" is being translated into "garbage" or "waste" in the Korean modern Bible. Actually, this word may mean "residues" that are discarded at the table. According to Dr. Park Yun-sun ‘The Pharisaic legalism, which Paul had considered very precious in the past, is like the residues left at the table. Although these residues looked good on dogs (the Judaizers such as Pharisaic Jews), but it was an obstacle to Paul’ (Park Yun-sun). Also, the word “rubbish” can be translated as “dung or manure” that come out from our human body (Park Yun-sun).

(2) The second word is “consider” (vv. 7-8).

This word “consider” appears three times in verses 7 and 8. When we look at the English Bible, we cannot tell the difference of these three words. But if we look at the Greek, there is difference between “consider” in verse 7 and in verse 8. The difference is that the verb “consider” in verse 7 is past tense while in verse 8 it is present tense. What does it mean? It means that when Paul met Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus and was saved he considered those six privileges that he put confidence in the flesh as rubbish. However, in verse 8, when Paul said “I consider everything loss” and “I consider them rubbish”, the verb “consider” here refers to the continuous action permanently (Park Yun-sun). In other words, not only did Paul already consider six privileges that he put confidence in the flesh loss (v.7) he also considered “everything a loss” and considered them rubbish (v. 8) continually and permanently.

Why did he do that? Why did Paul continue to regard them all as loss and continue to do so? Apostle Paul told the reason in Philippians 3:8-9: “What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him,” The reason was because Paul knew “the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (v. 8). Although Paul, who was a Pharisee in regard to the law in the past (v. 5), had many knowledge of the law, didn’t know that “the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24).

In particular, even though he had much knowledge about Christ, he didn't know that Jesus was the Christ. He didn't know that Jesus was the Son of God (cf. Acts 9:20). That was why Paul zealously persecuted the Christians who believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and followed His ways. But when Saul (Paul) heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4) on the way to Damascus, and when he believed that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God (v. 20), he realized that "the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). Here, the "knowing" is not only about his intellectual knowledge about Him. When Paul used the Greek word (γνώσεως), he referred to knowing Jesus "experientially" or "personally" (cf. Jn. 10:27, 17: 3, 2 Cor. 4:6, 1 Jn. 5:20). This knowledge is also equal to the life we share with Christ (Gal. 2:20). And it is consistent with God's knowledge of God's people (Am. 3:2) and their love and obedience in knowing God (Jer. 31:34, 6:3, 8:2) (MacArthur). I thought about why Paul regarded the fleshly things that he put confidence in and proud of in the past as loss. It was because of "the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ" his Lord (Phil. 3:8). When I did so, I wrote these words: 'In order to get the best value, we have to abandon everything else that has no value (Phil. 3:7-8).'

What do you think? If you have deeply realized (or progressively realizing) that the knowing Jesus Christ is the most valuable personally or empirically will you not abandon everything else that has no value? Paul did it. He permanently considered all six privileges that he put confidence in the flesh in the past and all other things of this world as loss and rubbish because of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. What were his two purposes?

(1) The first reason was that he might gain Christ.

Look at Philippians 3:8 – "... that I may gain Christ." In order to gain Christ whom Paul didn't know, Paul permanently considered all other thing a loss (Park Yun-sun). I would like to take Jonah 1:4-5 as an example: "Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep." Just as all the Gentile sailors threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship, we must throw all the worldly things in order to gain Christ. In other words, in order to get the best value, we must discard everything else that has no value. But if we cannot abandon the love of money even though we say we want to gain Christ, we will serve two masters according to Jesus' words (Mt. 6:24).

(2) The second was to be found in Christ.

Look at Philippians 3:9 – "and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." Here, the phrase "be found in him" is being translated as 'in order to be perfectly united with Christ' in another Korean Bible version. The meaning of this translation is 'a spiritual union with Christ, a state of righteousness' (Park Yun-sun). Paul was already justified by believing in Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus. In other words, he was already one with Jesus by being united with Jesus Christ in His death on the cross and resurrection. Thus Paul was "already" united with Jesus and received the righteousness of God, but not in perfect condition. But he was not yet united with Jesus completely and received God's righteousness perfectly. In other words, when Paul was already saved because he believed that Jesus was the Christ and received Him, he was justified because the righteousness of God was imputed to him. But qualitatively, he was not in perfect condition of righteousness to do the right things. That was why he said in Romans 7:23, "but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." But when Jesus comes again he would be suddenly transformed into a glorious spiritual body and he would be in complete righteous state. Then he would be able to live a life of complete obedience to Jesus' twofold command of loving God and loving his neighbors and to fulfill God's will perfectly. Until then, Paul devoted himself not only to lose the six privileges of his flesh of the past but also to consider all other worldly things rubbish and continually and permanently lose them.

What is the most precious thing to you? Is there anything more precious to you than the Lord Jesus? Is knowing Jesus Christ the most valuable thing to you? Are you living a life of sharing with Christ? Are you getting to know Christ as God knows you? Are you obeying the Lord because you love Him? If you do, then you must consider all the fleshly things that you put confidence in a loss and rubbish in order to gain Christ and to be found in Him. Also, the purpose is to perfectly unite with Christ, to reach a perfect spiritual union with Him and to be in the perfect state of righteousness. It is only until that moment that we wish all of us to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. May we be able to confess that the knowing our Lord Jesus Christ has the surpassing value.

One thing I want to do

[Philippians 3:10-14]

“What is one thing that you want to do in your life of faith?” As I was meditating on Philippians 3:1-14, I asked myself this question. When I did that, I thought about doing one thing definitely, that is a threefold perspective of one thing. The threefold perspective of one thing is faith, love and hope.

First, regarding "faith" it is John 6:29 – “Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent’.”

My first priority is to know Jesus Christ whom God has sent. I want to know Jesus more and more. So I also want to know, like Apostle Paul, “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8). I also want to be able to confess, like Apostle Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16). I want to be a faithful believer who professes the right faith. To do so, I want to keep on listening to the words of Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:17). I want diligently listen to the Word of God so that there may be a progress of my faith (Phil. 1:25). Therefore, I want to live by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

Second, regarding "love" it is Matthew 22:37-40: “Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments’.”

When we live a life of loving God and loving our neighbors as Jesus commanded us to do so, not only that my heart will become heaven, but also our home and our church will become heaven. In pursuing this life of heaven, it is my sincere desire to obey Jesus' twofold command (Mt. 22:37-40). However, I am realizing more and more that my flesh is weak and I cannot obey this twofold command of Jesus with my own strength. So I seek God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is love. It is my hope and prayer that God may increase the fruit of the Holy Spirit more abundantly in my life, so that I may be able to live a life that loves God and loves my neighbors more and more.

Third and last, regarding "hope", it is Psalms 27:4 – “One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.”

Among the American gospel songs I once loved to sing the song "One Thing I Ask". This is how the song goes: “One thing I ask/ One thing I seek/ That I may dwell in Your house, oh Lord/ All of my days/ All of my life/ That I may see You Lord.” Like the psalmist of Psalms 27, I also have a "one thing" that I ask of God. And that one thing is that I live in the house of Lord all the days of my life, looking at the beauty of God and seek Him in His temple.

In Philippians 3:13-14, this is what Apostle Paul said to the Philippian church saints: “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Based on this Word of God, I want to mediate on Philippians 3:10-14 under the title “One think I want to do.”

When we look at Philippians 3:13-14, Paul said to Philippian church saints that “one thig I do” (v. 13). Here, what was "one thing" that Paul was referring to? What was the one thing that Paul did? It was “forgetting

what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,” he pressed on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (vv.13b-14). One thing that Paul was clearly doing was running towards the goal. Paul was running toward the goal, as if a runner was running and doing his best to finish his race while looking at the goal line. Then what was the goal Paul was running toward? It was “that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (v. 12), “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (v. 14). These two phrases describe the same goal of Paul. And the goal was the Paul’s mission, the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (v. 14). Paul was caught up in this mission. So Paul wrote the letter to the Philippian church saints, saying that he was pressing on toward his mission, as he had been caught in the heavenly mission given by God in Christ Jesus (vv. 12, 14).

Then the question that we have to ask here is what Paul's mission was. I think Paul's mission was twofold. In other words, Paul's mission is one thing, but that one thing had two sides of his mission, just as a coin has both the front and back sides. One side of Paul's mission is written in Acts 20:24 – “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.” Paul's mission was to testify to the gospel of God's grace. In other words, his mission was to preach the gospel (the good news) of Jesus Christ. And he didn't regard his life as precious in order to complete this mission. To that extent Paul was on fire in a sense to complete his mission to the Lord. For Paul, who was on fire to complete his mission in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, had another aspect of his mission which was to live a life worthy of that gospel. In other words, Paul's mission, externally, was to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, but internally was to live his life worthy of the gospel by becoming more like Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:27).

That was why in Philippians 3:10, Paul said to the Philippian church saints, “I want to know Christ.” This is related to the word of Philippians 3:8, “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” Although Paul, who was a Pharisee as to the Law in the past (v. 5), had much knowledge of the Law, he didn't know that “the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). In particular, even though he might have much knowledge of Christ, he didn't know that Jesus was the Christ (cf. Acts 9:20). That was why he persecuted those Christians who believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and followed His way. But when Saul (Paul) heard the voice of the resurrected Jesus on the way to Damascus, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4), and when he believed that the Lord of those Christians whom he persecuted zealously was Christ and the Son of God (v. 20), he realized “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8). The "knowledge" Paul speaks here is not merely his intellectual knowledge about Him. When we look at the Greek word (γνώσεως) that Paul used, he meant that he knew Christ Jesus "experientially" or "personally" (cf. Jn. 10:27, 17: 3, 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Jn.5:20). Also this knowledge is equal to the life we share with Christ (Gal. 2:20). And this is consistent with God knowing His people (Amos 3:2) and His people loving and obeying God as they get to know Him (Jer. 31:34, Hos. 6:3, 8:2).

When Paul realized “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”, he had the goal that had two sides. And those two sides are ‘gaining Christ’ (v. 8) and “be found in Him” (v. 9). Paul wanted to gain Christ whom he didn't know before, and be united with Christ spiritually, a state of righteousness. Since he was already spiritually united with Jesus' death and resurrection, he was already in the state of righteousness. In other words, since Paul was already spiritually united with Jesus in His death and resurrection, he was united with Jesus. Although he was already united with Jesus and received the righteousness of God, he wasn't yet in perfect state of righteousness. For him, the time yet didn't come for him to be in perfect state of righteousness when he would be united with Jesus perfectly. Since Paul desperately wanted this, he considered everything in the flesh that he put confidence in before he believed in Jesus to be not only loss but also rubbish (v. 8).

We, who know the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord, must want to do one thing that is fulfilling the mission that the Lord has given us. And that mission is to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and live a life worthy of His gospel. I want to share the gospel song called “Mission”: “I will follow Jesus who has walked/ This road of suffering water and blood/ That was shed for us/ That's the path I've chosen to go/ Through the mountains or the raging seas/ To the end of the world I go in peace/ Giving all of me to the lost and hurt/ I will

gladly answer God's call/ Here I am, Lord send me to the world/ Father use me as You will/ Take my heart, my life, my everything/ Send me and I will go/ Though the world reject, despise, and hate/ I will choose the path of love/ knowing only that the cross will save/ I will follow Your way/ You gave all to love/ And make me Yours/ Even death upon the cross/ Now I will love You forevermore/ Jesus I am all Yours/ Follow the path of the Lord alone. I will go the way of shedding all the water and blood/ I am okay, even at the end of the sea. I wish you would forsake me for those dying/ Father send me I will run I will not spare my life/ I am okay, even at the end of the sea. I wish you would forsake me for those dying./ Father send me I will run I will not spare my life/ I will love even if the world hates me. I will follow the cross to save the world/ You are the one who loves me until you give up your life Accept this little me I love too" (Internet).

The righteous man who has realized that he is justified by God's grace in Jesus Christ and who knows the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ live a life of throwing away and abandoning (Phil. 3:7, 8). At the same time, the life of the righteous wants to know more about Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10). The reason is because he wants to imitate Jesus Christ and to live a life that is worthy of the gospel (1:27). Here, what was the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus? Based on Philippians 3:10, I want to think about in three ways:

First, Paul wanted to know the power of Jesus' resurrection.

Look at Philippians 3:10 – "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection" Here, what was the power of His resurrection that Paul wanted to know?

A couple of weeks ago, during the Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting, our church retired Pastor Kim preached the Word of God based on Romans 8:10-11: "But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." After listening to his sermon and after we finished the Prayer Meeting, I went into my office and summarized his sermon: 'Someday all of us will die (Eccl. 7:2). We are made up of the body and the spirit (Rom. 8:10). And we have our mortal body (v. 11). Not only our body but our soul had to die eternally because of one man Adam's sin (5:12). But if Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, then even though our body dies our spirit is alive (8:11). When we die, the body returns to the earth, but our spirit enters into the heaven. "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). Jesus was resurrected. Since Jesus was resurrected, those who belong to Him (v. 23), those who believe in Jesus will also be resurrected. Jesus' resurrection is our resurrection. God who raised Jesus from dead will also give life to our mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in us (Rom. 8:11). Since resurrection is the work of Triune God (v. 11), we will surely be resurrected. When the last trumpet sounds (1 Cor. 15:52) and when Jesus comes (v. 23), our lowly bodies will be transformed so that they will be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21; cf. 1 Jn. 3:2). Therefore, we must give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

In Philippians 3:10, Paul, who was saved and received the commission when he met Jesus on the way to Damascus, said to the Philippian church saints that he wanted to know power of His resurrection. The power of His resurrection which he wanted to know was like God who raised Jesus from the dead through the Holy Spirit, Paul wanted to know and experience the resurrection of his body through the Holy Spirit who was dwelling in him who believed Jesus (Rom. 8:11). The reason he wanted it was even though he "already" was in a state of righteousness by being united with Jesus, he wasn't "yet" fully enjoy that state of righteousness by being completely united with Jesus that was about to come in the future.

When the last trumpet sounds, we will be change (1 Cor. 15:51). We will no longer wear perishable, mortal and sinful bodies. Instead, we will put on the imperishable, immortality, powerful and glorious bodies (vv. 42-44, 52-54). And He will transform our lowly bodies so that we will be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). On the last day, those who sleep in the Lord will be resurrected and will put on His glorious and spiritual bodies, and we will ascend to eternal heaven and dwell with the Lord forever (1 Thess. 4:17). As we are Christians who have the

eternal hope of resurrection, I hope and pray that we may know the power of Jesus' resurrection while we are living on this earth.

Second, Paul wanted to know the fellowship of sharing in Jesus' sufferings.

Look at Philippians 3:10 – “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings,” Paul, who wanted to know Christ rightly, wanted to know and participate in His sufferings.

Why do we have to suffer? On Saturday, October 11, 2014, our church member sister Kelly's beloved second daughter, Eloise had almost died from drowning in a pool. What sister Kelly told me was when Eloise was drowning, suddenly a man appeared and he jumped into the pool and saved Eloise and did CPR on her. At that time, sister Kelly was praying earnestly to God. Thankfully, her beloved child Eloise was alive and sister Kelly told me by phone. At that time, when Eloise was in the intensive care unit, sister Kelly sent me the Eloise's picture sitting in the hospital bed and also sent her testimony. The conclusion of her testimony was ‘All answers are Jesus Christ’ One of the things I was a little bit surprised at was about two days ago I meditated on the story of Jesus immediately rescuing Peter who was drowning into the water (Mt. 14:24). The conclusion of that meditation was that God's purpose for suffering was for us to know who God is and to make a true faith profession. Do you understand why God allows us suffering? If you are in the midst of suffering now, I would like to offer you three exhortations:

(1) Suffering can be beneficial to us.

Look at Psalms 119:71 – “It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.” At least there are two benefits of suffering. (1) The first one is that suffering reminds us of the fact that we are going astray. Look at Psalms 119: 67 – “Before I was afflicted I went astray,” There are many times when we don't know that we are going astray until suffering. Then through the suffering that the Lord gives us, we become aware of it. Like a shepherd who strikes a sheep that was going astray and makes the sheep to go to the right direction, the Lord, our Shepherd, uses the stick of suffering to lead us to walk in the right way. (b) The second benefit of suffering is that suffering makes us to obey the word of the Lord. Look at Psalms 119:67 – “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.”

(2) Suffering can be a temptation to leave the Word of God, but at the same time, it can be a good opportunity for us to get closer to the Word of God as well.

When we are suffering, we must hold on to the Word of God's promise and cry out to God. Also, we must keep the Word of God so that the Word of God can become ours (Ps. 119:49-56).

(3) Suffering can be a tool for God to test our hearts.

As a blacksmith puts silver in the furnace to remove the dross from the silver (Prov. 25:4), God put us “in the furnace of affliction (Isa. 48:10) in order to test our hearts (17:3) and to make us to “come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). The purpose is for God to make us a worthy vessel (Prov. 25:4). The purpose is to cleanse us so that we can be “an instrument for noble purposes, make holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

Apostle Paul wanted to participate in Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10). Isn't it interesting that Saul (Paul) the persecutor who gave the Christians suffering wanted to participate in His suffering after he met Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus? What change did Paul have in his heart so that Paul wanted to participate in the sufferings of Jesus Christ? I looked up the answer in Philippians 1:29 – “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” That is, Paul wanted to participate in Christ's sufferings because he realized that as a believer of Jesus Christ it was God's grace to suffer for Him. So Paul said in Colossians 1:24 –

“Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.” When we are suffering for our church like Jesus, the comfort that the Lord gives us is that fact that Christ is suffering with us (Rom. 8:17) and that no one can break us from the love of Christ (vv. 35, 39).

As Paul was writing to the Philippian church saints, he said he thanked God because of their “participation in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3-5). Then he exhorted them to consider suffering for Christ's sake as God's grace (v. 29). Here the Bible teaches us that participating in the gospel of Christ is participating in His sufferings. After that, Paul said in Philippians 3:10 that he wanted to know Jesus Christ and that he wanted to participate in His suffering. Why didn't Paul mind to participate in the suffering of Jesus Christ? I think there were at least two reasons: (1) The first reason was that Paul wanted to learn obedience by participating in the suffering of Jesus Christ. Look at Hebrews 5:8 – “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.” (2) The second reason was because Paul considered his present sufferings were not worth comparing with the glory that would be revealed in him (Rom. 8:18).

We also must learn obedience through suffering. And through obedience we must learn the heart of Heavenly Father (Hos. Ch. 1). Also, we must think about the glory that will be revealed in us in the future that cannot be compared with our present suffering. Like Paul, we must participate in the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Third, Paul wanted to be conformed to Jesus' death.

There are three books that take the place of the first place of religious primer books after the Bible. The three books are Augustine's "Confessions", John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" and Thomas A Kempis' "Imitation of Christ". When we look at Chapter 23, 'About meditating on death,' the author Kempis said:

"Each morning remember that you may not live until evening; and in the evening, do not presume to promise yourself another day. Be ready at all times, (Luke 21:36) and so live that death may never find you unprepared. Many die suddenly and unexpectedly; for at an hour that we do not know the Son of Man will come. (Matt. 24:44) When your last hour strikes, you will begin to think very differently of your past life, and grieve deeply that you have been so careless and remiss. Happy and wise is he who endeavours to be during his life as he wishes to be found at his death. For these things will afford us sure hope of a happy death; perfect contempt of the world; fervent desire to grow in holiness; love of discipline; the practice of penance; ready obedience; selfdenial; the bearing of every trial for the love of Christ. While you enjoy health, you can do much good; but when sickness comes, little can be done. Few are made better by sickness, and those who make frequent pilgrimages seldom acquire holiness by so doing. ... Who will remember you when you are dead? Who will pray for you? Act now, dear soul; do all you can; for you know neither the hour of your death, nor your state after death. While you have time, gather the riches of everlasting life. (Luke 12:33; Gal. 6:8) Think only of your salvation, and care only for the things of God. Make friends now, by honouring the Saints of God and by following their example, that when this life is over, they may welcome you to your eternal home. (Luke 16:9)" (Internet).

Look at Philippians 3:10 – “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” What does it mean to imitate the death of Christ, as Paul said here? We can think in two ways (Walvoord): (1) First, it may mean that as Jesus died for sin and Paul was already died to sin (Rom. 6:2, 6-7, Col. 3:3), he wanted to cut the sinful life of the old man before he believed in Jesus Christ and be separated from his former life of sin daily (Rom. 6:1-4, 11-14). (2) Second, it may mean that just as Christ died as he was preaching the gospel, Paul also wanted to die as he preached the gospel of Christ. In other words, Paul said he wanted to have beneficial death. Look at Philippians 1:20-21: “according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” This beneficial death was to

say that Paul wanted to submit to the will of the Lord even to death, as Jesus was submissive to the will of the Father God to the point of death (2:8). In a word, when Paul said that he wanted to imitate the Jesus' death, he meant that he wanted to keep on preaching His gospel and to keep on living the worthy life of His gospel until he died. He even wanted to be martyred. That was why he already said in Philippians 2:17 – “But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.” Here, “a drink offering” is a drink that is poured out on sacrifice. What Paul said was he would rejoice even his blood was being poured out into the sacrifice to the point of death for service of the Philippian church saints' faith (Park Yun-sun). In one word, Paul said he would rejoice even if he was martyred.

I think Epaphroditus imitated this Paul (1:25). The reason I think this way is because Epaphroditus came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in the Philippian church saints' service to Paul (v. 30). When Paul said he wanted to be conformed to Christ Jesus' death (3:10), he meant that he wanted to imitate Jesus Christ. He was already saved and justified by faith in Jesus Christ when he met Him on the way to Damascus. But he wasn't yet in a perfect righteous state. Paul, who was living in this “Already and Not-yet” tension, wanted to imitate Jesus Christ and that was his goal (MacArthur). In other words, he longed for the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. That was why Paul talked about “that which is through faith in Christ” and “the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” in verse 9. In other words, he talked about “justification” which was already justified by faith in Jesus in verse 9 and then in verse 10, he talked about “sanctification”.

What is “sanctification”? This is what Westminster Short Catechism question 35 says about sanctification: “Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” Our sanctification is renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness in the image of God (Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24). Our sanctification will be completed when we are completely free from sin and when we reach God's image completely, at the stage of glorification. There are two elements of this sanctification: (1) Dead: We are gradually dead to our sins (Rom. 6:11), and (2) Alive: We are living to righteousness (v. 13) (Internet). Why then did Paul long for the sanctification of being like Jesus even though he was already justified? The reason was that he wanted to attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:11). In other words, Paul, who was already justified by faith in Jesus Christ, longed for sanctification because he eagerly wanted for the resurrection of the dead. Here what does it mean when Paul said “attain to the resurrection from the dead”? We can think in two ways: (1) Actually be raised from the death of the body and (2) Being raised from spiritual dead. Since Paul was already raised from spiritual dead when he met Jesus Christ and believed in Him on the way to Damascus road, he meant to be raised from physical death when he mentioned about attaining to the resurrection from the dead (v. 11). And being raised from physical death is referring to his dead body would be resurrected and wear the glorious body at the moment of Jesus' return (Second Coming) and would enter into the perfect righteous state. That was why Paul was so eagerly longing to imitate Jesus.

Don't you want to imitate Jesus? Let's, like Paul, focus on one thing that is imitating Jesus. Let's press toward the goal, fulfilling God's given mission to us as we hold onto that mission. The Lord's mission to all of us is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to live a life worthy of His gospel as we imitate Jesus Christ. This is our responsibility as God's people who are justified by faith in Jesus through the grace of God. If we truly understand surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord, we must throw away and abandon our confidence in the flesh. At the same time, we must want to know more about Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that all of us imitate Jesus Christ and live a life that is worthy of His gospel.

“I press on toward the goal”

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”(Philippians 3:13-14).

I had a precious time in meditating on the Word of God Philippians 3:13-14 before passing the year to the eternal past and welcoming the hopeful New Year.

Paul is telling us two things about how to press on toward the goal: (1) Forgetting what is behind, and (2) Reaching forward to what lies ahead.

What is "what lies behind" that Paul is speaking here? It can be thought of as two things. First, I think he was speaking about those six things that he could put confidence in the flesh (vv. 4-6). When Paul was Saul, he was a man who could put his confidence in the flesh more than anyone else. But whatever things were gain to Paul, those things he had counted as loss for the sake of Christ (v. 7). Second, I think Paul was speaking about those things that God had accomplished through him until he was writing the Philippians. Of course, Paul had done so many wonderful things for the Lord. But he always considered himself as 'unworthy servant' (cf. Lk 17:10) and he wanted to forget about what the Lord did through him because he believed that the Lord could accomplish a greater thing in the future.

I have applied this Word to myself. As I did so, I wanted to forget about what lied behind me such as the things that I put confidence in the flesh and/or those things that I had done for His church. The first reason is because I wanted to throw away all the worldly things that I put confidence in. I want to forget about all those worldly things that I can put confidence in the flesh because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. The second reason is because I want to forget about year 2004 by faith because God will do greater things in the New Year 2005 through us.

Paul forgot what lied behind him and reached forward to what lied ahead. Then what was "what lies ahead"? (v. 13) We can think of this in two ways. First, "what lies ahead" for Paul was his commission. And his commission was to carry His name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel (Acts 9:15). Paul was a servant of the Lord with a clear sense of mission and an apostle who didn't spare his life in carrying out his mission. Second, "what lies ahead" for Paul was death. Paul said in Philippians 3:10 that he wanted to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. How could he know the power of resurrection? Isn't it impossible to know the power of the resurrection until we die in the midst of suffering? How can we know Christ fully? Isn't it possible when we die and be resurrected see Jesus face to face in heaven? Apostle Paul wanted to know Jesus so he pressed toward the goal of death. And I believe he now sees Him face to face with the Lord in heaven and know Him fully as he is fully known by the Lord.

In this year, we came thus far as we held unto the Lord's promise, 'I will build my church' (Mt. 16:18). We have seen the gracious hand of God among us. We are now still seeing that our Lord is fulfilling His promise of building His church. But I am going to let this year go to eternal past and forget about it because I am confident that God will do greater things in the coming year. So I want to start the New Year with the Lord as I pray, expect, and wait upon the Lord. I want to run only toward the God's promise Word. The Lord will build us up. The Lord will build His Kingdom through us. Running toward this goal, we should not spare our lives like Apostle Paul.

Let us become mature Christians

[Philippians 3:15-16]

Have you ever heard of "Growing Pains"? "Growing pain" is a figurative word that describes the pain that children or adolescents have during the time of their sudden growth or a similar phenomenon. Usually the pain appears on knees and ankles, thighs, shin, and arms (Internet). It is said that 10 to 20% of children aged 4 to 12 are experiencing this growing pain. This growing pain is a necessary process that the children must experience as they grow (Internet). In other words, the children must go through growing pain in order them to grow.

The author, Daniel Gottlieb, who wrote the book "The Road Less Traveled," said: 'The measure of a man's greatness is his ability to take on the pain. The great man is pleased with the pain. That's why the paradox of joy comes into existence' (Internet). What do you think? Do you think that the measure of one's greatness is the ability to take on the pain"?

We have pain that each of us must experience in order for our faith to grow. Just as a child has to undergo growing pain to grow, there is a pain that we must go through for our faith to grow. Whatever that pain is, if we desperately want to grow in faith, we must endure the pain. Moreover, we must make the pain beneficial for our spiritual growth. We need to dedicate ourselves to walk in the path of suffering, if our faith can be built even stronger through pain and suffering. Therefore, our faith must grow. Furthermore, our faith must mature. This is what the Bible says to us in James 1:4 – "Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

I would like to meditate on Philippians 3:15-16 under the title "Let us become mature Christians" and receive lessons from the Word of God. I want to think about how mature Christians live. Hopefully we will humbly accept the lessons and obey them so that we all will grow as Christians who are mature in faith.

Look at Philippians 3:15 – "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude" How do we know that our faith is growing and maturing? I looked up the answer in the Jesus' parable of the seed. Look at Mark 4:20 – "'And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.'" The heart of Christians who are growing and maturing is like "the good soil". What does it mean that the Word of God is sown in the hearts of Christians who are growing and maturing? We can summarize in three ways: (1) First, the Christians whose faith is growing and maturing hear the word (vv. 16, 20) and immediately receive it with joy (v. 16). (2) Second, the Christians whose faith is growing and maturing endure and don't fall in the midst of affliction or persecution (v. 17). (3) Third and last, the Christians whose faith is growing and maturing don't allow the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires of other things to enter in and choke the word for unfruitfulness but overcome it and bear fruits (v. 19).

Do you know what Paul's interest in the Philippian church was? It was their progress and joy in the faith (1:25). Paul's interest in their progress and joy in the faith was to the extent that even though he desired to depart and be with Christ, which was far better, he knew that it was necessary for him to remain in the body (vv. 23-24). To that extent Paul was interested in the progress and joy of the faith of the Philippian church saints whom he longed for with the affection of Jesus Christ (1:8). With this great interest, Paul wrote to the Philippian church saints in Philippians 3:15 and said, "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you." What Paul was saying was all those who are mature in faith should live with such view of things. Here we have think about two things:

- (1) First, we must think about what “perfect” means in the phrase “as many as are perfect” (Phil. 3:15).

Here, the word “perfect” means one fully fit for running (Jamieson). Look at 2 Timothy 2:5 – “Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.” Based on this word, we can make this conclusion about those Christians who are mature: ‘Those who are mature in faith are the men and women of faith who are not only fully fitting for running but also who are competing the spiritual race according to the rules.’ Here we must keep in mind that all the mature believers have not completed the race yet. As Paul said in Philippians 3:12, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me”, those who are mature in faith are still running the spiritual race according to the God’s laws.

- (2) Second, we must think about what “have this attitude” means in the phrase “Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude” (Phil. 3:15).

In order for us to know what “have this attitude” means, we should think about the word “therefore” in Philippians 3:15. The reason is because the "conjunction" introduces the conclusive application of Paul's words to the Philippians from verses 1 through 14. In other words, Paul conclusively applied what he said in Philippians 3:1-14 that those who are mature in faith must “have this attitude” (v. 15).

Then what is “this attitude” that Paul was talking about? I summarized it in three ways:

First, the mature Christians worship in the Spirit of God, boast Christ Jesus and don’t put confidence in the flesh.

Look at Philippians 3:3 – “for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.” Here we have three lessons:

- (1) The mature Christians know that they are saved by God’s grace in believing in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, they know that they ought to worship God. This is the purpose why God saved us by sending His begotten Son Jesus Christ and to die on the cross. In other words, the purpose of salvation is to worship God.

- (2) The mature Christians boast only Jesus Christ.

The reason is because they know that they are saved by the Jesus’ merit on the cross. They cannot boast of themselves because they know that they have no merit in their salvation. But if they have something to boast about themselves, it is their "weakness" (2 Cor. 11:30). Those who are mature in faith confess, like Apostle Paul, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14).

- (3) The mature Christians don’t put confidence in the flesh. They only put confidence in the Lord.

Second, the mature Christians know the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus.

Look at Philippians 3:8 – “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,” The mature Christians know the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus. That’s why they pursue two things like Apostle Paul:

- (1) They consider all the worldly things that were profitable to them (the fleshly things they put confidence in) before believing in Jesus as lost and rubbish (v. 8).
- (2) They want to know Jesus Christ, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings and to be conformed to His death after believing in Jesus (v. 10).

Third, the mature Christians press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Look at Philippians 3:14 – “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Here we have three lessons:

- (1) The mature Christians have clear sense of calling.

They have the assurance of the upward call of God. And they are obedience to His calling and give their lives to fulfill His will.

- (2) The mature Christians have thorough sense of mission.

They complete the Lord’s errand with their lives. Therefore, they aren’t driven by their environment and run about in confusion but are driven by their sense of mission.

- (3) The mature Christians advance towards the goal.

They forget what lies behind and reach forward to what lies ahead (v. 13), toward the goal (v. 14). They live a life that is driven by the goal.

The reason why the mature Christians are pressing toward the goal with such a clear sense of calling and a sense of mission is because they never want praises or rewards from people. What they desperately want is “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (v. 14). What was that prize to Apostle Paul? Look at 2 Timothy 4:7-8: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” The prize that Paul earnestly desired was "the crown of righteousness." Here, "the crown of righteousness" symbolizes the reign of the believers with the Lord through the eternal completion of the righteousness that they will receive by faith’ (Park Yun-sun).

We must be mature Christians. We must press on toward our goal with a clear sense of calling and a sense of mission like Apostle Paul. As we seek the prize of the crown of righteousness, we must fight the good fight, keep the faith and finish the race and complete the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, when Jesus comes back, all of us will ascend to heaven and stand before the Lord with our glorious body, and we will reign with Him forever.

Perhaps there were people in the Philippian church who didn’t think the same way as Paul did but thought differently. We can guess this little bit when we look at Philippians 3:15 – “... and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you.” Look at this verse we can imagine that there were people in the Philippian church who had different attitude than Paul and the mature Philippian church saints. If so, then who were these people who had the different attitude? We can think in two ways:

First, they were the immature saints (Ash).

These immature saints didn't have the same attitude with Paul and the mature saints in three ways: (1) They didn't worship in the Spirit of God, glory in Christ but put confidence in the flesh. (2) They didn't know the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus and (3) They didn't press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Also, they didn't forget what lied behind and reached forward to what lied ahead (v. 13). They didn't run toward the goal, but kept in the past, remembering what lied behind (MacArthur).

Second, they thought that they had already obtained it or had already become perfect (v. 12) (Jamieson).

They overestimated themselves. John Chrysostom said: "He who thinks he has attained everything, hath nothing" (Chrysostom). Perhaps they thought that they could accomplish perfection by keeping the law as the old man's life, before they believed in Jesus Christ. That was why Paul warned the Philippian church saints to "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision" (3:2) (Jamieson). Thinking about them, Paul said, "God will reveal that also to you" (v. 15). What did Paul mean? He meant to say that God would reveal the truth to not only the Philippian church mature saints but also to those who were immature and who had the different attitude, those who thought that they could still achieve the perfection by keeping the law. This meant that without the revelation of God, they couldn't understand the truth, and without God's revelation, they couldn't make a righteous thought based on truth as those who are mature in faith. Apostle Paul, who knew this, wrote the letter to the Philippian church saints, believing that God would reveal to those immature saints who didn't have the same attitude as the mature saints. The reason he could believe this was because, as he was always praying for them (1:4) he was confident that God who began a good work in them would perfect is until the day of Christ Jesus (v. 6).

After Paul said to the immature saints among the Philippian church saints, this was what he said in Philippians 3:16 – "Only let us live up to what we have already attained." What did Paul mean? Paul encouraged the Philippian church mature saints who had the same attitude with him to live up to what they had already attained. In other words, Paul exhorted them to continue to live according to the Word of God and according to the principles of the truth in order to reach the perfection of Jesus Christ. The reason seems like it was because Paul wanted the mature saints to keep the unity of the church with the immature saints in the Philippian church (Ash).

We must become mature Christians. In order to do so, we must live with the right attitude. And with the right attitude, we should worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and don't put confidence in the flesh. Also, we should get to know more and more the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord. We should press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. I hope and pray that we will become mature Christians.

‘Follow my example’

[Philippians 3:17-21]

Today we have come up to the house of the Lord and are worshiping God on the first Sunday of December. What we have aimed at starting this year was "2 Corinthians 5: 7" for we live by faith and not by sight. We have come thus far with the motto "Scripture alone, Faith alone" because we have wanted to live by faith and not by sight. As we look back on this year, I want to have time to reflect and think about whether we lived with the Scripture alone and faith alone or not. By doing so, I hope and pray that we can end this year well before God. Of course, I don't think this is easy because we are having hard time even to end each day well. That's why ending the year well is much bigger challenge. Nevertheless, we are trying to do it by God's grace.

When I reflect this year, I personally think that I didn't live by Scripture alone and faith alone. Rather, I lived by what I saw with my own eyes and carried away by circumstances. I doubted God and even distrusted Him. One the one hand, I am ashamed to think of it, but on the other hand, I am grateful for God's grace that He helped me to understand my weakness and lack of faith. And I am sorry that such pastor like me has proclaimed the Word of God to you throughout this year. I confess that I didn't proclaim the Word of God as I show the example of life, living only by the Word and by faith. Especially in the past few weeks, it has been my little earnest desire to be a mature Christian so I proclaimed to you the word of God few times based on Philippians 3:15-16 under the heading "Let us become mature Christians." Since I had been wanting to be the mature Christian and also wishing you to be mature Christians as well, I titled the messages "Let us become mature Christians" and proclaimed the words few times. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). For the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame (v. 2). Let us imitate Jesus by enduring the present shame and suffering of our own cross for the joy that we will enjoy in the Lord. Let us endure and be patient by faith and fulfill the mission that the Lord gave to each one of us. In the midst of that, let us seek to imitate Jesus. May we be more like Jesus.

In Philippians 3:17, Paul said to the Philippian church saints, "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." Based on this word, I want to think about three things to imitate Paul:

First, Paul said to join with others in following his example.

Look at Philippians 3:17 – "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." Do you have anyone you want to follow example? If so, why do you want to imitate him or her? I am sure one of the reasons is because you respect him or her. And the reasons why we respect him or her are different. One of the Internet websites I saw talked about why people respect certain people (Internet):

- <Andrew Carnegie> Businessman who knows how to share
- <Rockefeller> Tolerance is the forgiveness of the past and the future investment
- <Winston Churchill> Making enemy to be his side with composure and wit
- <Benjamin Franklin> If you love your life, do not waste your time.

Among the many people in the Bible, I would personally like to imitate Paul. I began to like to imitate him when I entered the seminary and studied theology and became interested in his letters in the New Testament. I don't remember clearly but the reason I became interested in Paul was because of his passion for the mission that the Lord gave him when he met Jesus on the way to Damascus and believed in Him and be transformed to be more like Jesus. At that time, I wanted to be like Paul who was fire for the Lord.

When we look at Philippians 3:17, Paul said to the Philippian church saints to join with others in following his example. It is interesting to note that Paul who already exhorted them to imitate Christ in Philippians 2:5-11 exhorted them to imitate Paul himself in Philippians 3:17 (Melick). Why did Paul exhort the Philippian church saints to imitate Christ first and then imitate him? The reason was because Paul himself was imitating Christ. So in 1 Corinthians 11:1 he said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." In Philippians 3:17, Paul strongly exhorted the Philippian church saints to follow his example. What does it mean and why did he exhort them like that? I found the answer in Philippians 3:15-16. When Paul said to follow his example, he meant for them to be mature Christians like him (v. 15). The reason why Paul said to them was because there were not only the mature believers in the Philippian church but also the immature believers as well. In other words, because some of the immature members of the Philippian church didn't have the same attitude as Paul and the mature believers had, Paul exhorted them to join with mature believers in following his example. Then Paul said to them in Philippians 3:17, "... and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." Paul encouraged them to imitate him in the first half of the verse 17 and then in the second half of verse 17 he said, "those who live according to the pattern we gave you."

So who does "we" refer to here? "We" refers to Timothy (2:19-22) and Epaphroditus (vv. 25-30) whom Paul already mentioned in Philippians 2 and who exemplified piety with Paul. Why then did Paul exhort the Philippian church saints to follow Timothy and Epaphroditus' example? In Timothy's case, it was because Timothy was the one who sought after the interests of Christ Jesus (v. 21). This means two things:

(1) First, Timothy was genuinely concerned for the Philippian church saints' welfare.

Look at Philippians 2:20 – "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare." Timothy whom Paul encouraged the Philippian church saints to follow his example had "likeminded" (v. 20, KJV). And the mind that Timothy and Paul had together was the mind of Jesus Christ (v. 5). And the mind of Jesus Christ was to humble Himself and became obedient unto death of the cross (v. 8). Both Paul and Timothy had humble heart that was willing to be obedient to the Lord until they fulfill the Lord's will. That was why they were able to be likeminded and have the same mind. Because Paul believed that Timothy was the one who genuinely concerned about the Philippian church saints' welfare, he wanted to send him to them (v. 20). Here the word "genuinely" means "the father's sincerity to his son" (Park Yun-sun). That is, just as the father is sincerely thinking of his son's situation, Paul told the Philippian church saints that Timothy genuinely concerned their situation. That was why Paul encouraged the Philippian church saints to imitate Timothy.

(2) Second, Timothy served with Paul in the gospel.

Look at Philippians 2:22 – "But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel." Here the word "proved" means in Greek "approval gained through testing" (Pfeiffer). This means that Timothy's character was proven by tests or trials. It seems to me that Timothy was recognized as a person of proven character to the Philippian church saints because he persevered by faith (Rom. 5:4) when he was going through "the most severe trial" (2 Cor. 8:2). And the Timothy's good character which the Philippian church saints knew and acknowledged was his genuineness (Phil. 2:20). This Timothy, who had proven genuine character, served with Paul in the gospel (v. 22). That was Paul encouraged the Philippian church saints to imitate Timothy. Then how about Epaphroditus' case? Why did Paul exhort the Philippian church saints to imitate him? There are three reasons for this: (1) It was because Epaphroditus was Paul's brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who was also the Philippian church saints' messenger, who they send to take care of Paul's needs (v. 25). (2) It was because Epaphroditus longed for the Philippian church saints and was distressed because they heard he was ill (v. 26). (3) It was because Epaphroditus almost died for the work of Christ (v. 30). That was why Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to "take note" of him and his co-workers Timothy and Epaphroditus and follow their example (3:17). Here the word "take note" means "to fix the attention upon with a desire for or interest in" (Wuest). This word

is also found in Philippians 2:4 – “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Here the word “look to” is the same word as “take note” (3:17). In other words, to look to the interests of others means to fix your attention upon others with a desire for or interest in (SeVincent). Paul wanted the immature Philippian church saints to join with the fellow mature saints in fixing their attention upon with the desire to follow his and his co-workers Timothy and Epaphroditus’s example, the pattern of their lives (MacArthur). In short, to put it briefly, Paul exhorted all the Philippian church saints to focus on the pattern of Christ-centered life of himself and his co-workers Timothy and Epaphroditus and to considered them as the mirror to live like them (cf. 1 Thess. 1:7, 1 Cor. 10:6).

Who is the role model of faith we are mirroring? Who are we to follow? He is Jesus. All we Christians must follow Jesus Christ. The hymn “Lord, I Want to be a Christian” verse 4 should be our prayer request: “Lord, I want to be like Jesus/ In a my heart, in a my heart/ Lord, I want to be like Jesus/ In a my heart. Ina my heart, In a my heart/ Lord, I want to be like Jesus In a my heart.” But we cannot see Jesus with our own physical eyes like the Jesus’ disciples. The reason is that Jesus is raised from the dead and ascended to heaven and sit on the right hand of God. Therefore, what we can do is to imitate Christians like Paul who imitated Jesus as the role models of our faith. In other words, we must fix our attention on the pattern of life of those faithful Christ-centered Christians before us and make them our mirror and try to live like them. Therefore, I hope and pray that someday we can say to our younger generation brothers and sisters in Christ as Paul did “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

Second, we must imitate Paul’s tears.

Look at Philippians 3:18 – “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” I read an article titled ‘When women shed tears’ in the internet. According to the article, women usually have more tears than men because the women have the prolactin hormones, which are the nerve cells that convey the depression in a sad situation, 8 times more than the men. That’s why we see the tears of our mothers and the tears of our wives. The women cry for no reason, cry for a little thing, cry for instinct of protection, and cry for relieve irritation and stress. Now the question is whether the tears are profitable or useless. Actual tears are said to have a therapeutic effect. When we cry, our mood changes, and our stress goes away a lot. I personally think that when we separate tears from beneficial tears and unprofitable tears, we first think of the useless tears such as tears that we shed while yawning. Although we cannot stop shedding the useless tears, I want to shed the beneficial tears. At least, there are three kinds of beneficial tears. They are tears of repentance, tears of gratitude and tears of devotion. However, I realize that these three beneficial tears are not something I can shed because I want to. I realize that the Holy Spirit has to work in our hearts and touch us so that we may shed these beneficial tears.

But besides these three tears there are tears that we can see in the Bible. One example is 'Tears of Prayer'. When we look at Isaiah chapter 38, Hezekiah the king of Judah “turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord” (v. 2) when he heard God's message through Prophet Isaiah, “Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover” (v. 1). As a result, God's answer to Hezekiah’s prayer was, “I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life” (v. 5). Another example is the prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel in 1 Samuel chapter 1. Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord (v. 10). As a result, the Lord remembered her (v. 19) and answered her prayer (v. 17) and gave her a son Samuel (v. 20). Not only God gave Hannah son Samuel as a gift, He gave her other six children as well (2:5). In addition to these 'tears of prayers', there are 'tears of love' in the Bible. The best example is John 11:35 – “Jesus wept.” Why did Jesus cry? The reason was because Jesus saw Mary was weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping. That was why Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled (v. 33). When I was meditating on these words, I remembered the word of Romans 12:15 – “... mourn with those who mourn.” Jesus mourned with Mary and all the Jews who had come along with her who wept. How precious these tears are. Shouldn’t we shed this kind of tear as well?

In Philippians 3:18, Paul continued to write to the Philippian church saints and said, “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” Paul often told the Philippian church saints with tears that “many live as enemies of the cross of Christ” (v. 18). Here we can assume that when Paul said to them “enemies of the cross of Christ” often, this seemed to be a very important and serious matter to Paul. In particular, I think when Paul found out that “many live as enemies of the cross of Christ”, he exhorted the Philippian church saints earnestly with tears. We can see this Paul again in Acts 20:31 – “So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.” This is what Paul said to the Ephesian church elders in Miletus (v. 17). The reason why Paul encouraged those elders to remember what he did when he was with them and the rest of the Ephesian church saints, “for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears”, was because he knew that after he left the Ephesian church, “savage wolves” that is, the false teachers, would come in among them and distorted the truth in order to draw away the Ephesian church saints (“disciples”) after the false teachers (vv. 29-30). These false teachers who distorted the truth were the “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). The false teaching taught by the enemies of the cross of Christ was a lie that salvation could be earned by observing the Law of Moses, which was taught by the Judaizers. And this was opposed to the truth that Paul proclaimed with was salvation is by faith in Jesus. Paul knew that those who were deceived by this falsehood and who acted as Christ's enemies of the cross were "many" in the Philippian church (v. 18). That was why Paul cried in tears knowing that there were many who lived as enemies of the cross of Christ in Philippi (Park Yun-sun).

Imagine that God used you to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and some of the people were saved by faith in Jesus Christ. But what if now they believed the lie that not only by faith in Jesus Christ that they are saved but also by human endeavor and good work? Will you not cry in tears with great anxiety? Then what do you think Paul's heart was toward the Ephesian church saints when he knew that the false teachers would come in among them and would make the church saints to fall away from His and His gospel and to go astray and follow the false teachers and their lie? Perhaps a good example of feeling this situation in the skin is the family situation in which even though the parents did their best to teach their children the gospel of Jesus Christ and His words but when they grow up they leave not only their churches but also their God. Will we not cry out to God for them in tears with great anxiety? Will we not exhort and admonish them with tears? That was why Paul had often told the Philippian church saints even with tears because many lived as enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18). Then, in Philippians 3:19, Paul told the Philippian church saints who the "enemies of the cross of Christ" were in four ways:

(1) The destiny of the enemies of the cross of Christ is destruction.

Look at Philippians 3:19 – “their destiny is destruction, ...” What did Paul mean? He meant that the destiny of the enemies of the cross of Christ, who opposed the gospel of Jesus Christ and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone, and taught that salvation by observing the Law of Moses, is eternal damnation. Think about it. The Bible John 3:16 clearly says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” But what is the enemies of the cross of Christ keep on saying that we can save ourselves by keeping the Moses' Law. Will they have eternal life or eternal destruction? The Bible says that only by believing in Jesus Christ that we can be saved. Those who believe that they can save themselves by their own effort and by doing good works are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and the Bible says that their destiny is destruction (Phil. 3:19).

(2) The god of the enemies of the cross of Christ is their stomach.

Look at Philippians 3:19: "... their god is their stomach.” What did Paul mean here? He meant that the enemies of the cross of Christ thought only their physical desire and irresistible binge (Walvoord). Paul said in Romans 16:18 that “such people are not serving the Lord Christ, but their own appetites.” Such people follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature (2 Pet. 2:10). They are like brute beasts (v. 12) who do the harm and their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight (v. 13). “With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood!” (v. 14) “They

have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness” (v. 15). They mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error (v. 18). Although they promise people freedom, they themselves are slaves of depravity (v. 19).

(3) The glory of the enemies of the cross of Christ is in their shame.

Look at Philippians 3:19 – “... and their glory is in their shame.” What did Paul mean? He meant that it was their shame that the enemies of the cross of Christ, the false teachers and those who followed them, who believed that by observing the Moses’ Law instead of believing in Jesus Christ people could be saved. Also, it was their shame that the enemies of the cross of Christ considered their physical sinful desire as their god. But they took those as their glory even though it was their shame. Dr. Park Yuon-sun said: ‘Since they didn’t repent their sins, but rather considered their sins good and were arrogant, they glorified in their shameful sins’ (Park). How could they consider their sins good? How could they glory in their sins instead of being shameful? The enemies of the cross of Christ regarded the shame of sin as the glory of sin. This is what Daniel 12:2 says, “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” The Bible clearly says there will be many who sleep will awake and will receive eternal life, but others to shame and everlasting contempt. If we relate this word to Philippians 3:19, the enemies of the cross of Christ, who regarded their shame as their glory, would be put to shame and everlasting contempt.

(4) The mind of the enemies of the cross of Christ is on earthly things.

Look at Philippians 3:19 – “... Their mind is on earthly things.” Although Paul said to “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things” (Col. 3:2), the enemies of the cross of Christ set their mind on earthly things. Since they served their own physical sinful desire as their god, they aren’t only setting their mind on things above, but also they cannot. Instead, their mind is on earthly things and they are attached to the worldly things (Park Yun-sun). This is what Apostle John said in 1 John 2:16-17: “For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” The enemies of the cross of Christ pursue the things of this world instead of the will of God. They pursue the cravings of sinful man, the lust of their eyes and boast why they have and do. All this comes from the world, and the enemies of Christ who think and pursue the worldly things will eventually perish forever.

Lastly, we must imitate Paul’s eager waiting for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at Philippians 3:20 – “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” As Paul was writing this letter to the Philippian church saints, he exhorted them to imitate him, Timothy and Epaphroditus and to observe those who walked according to the pattern they had in Paul and his co-workers in verse 17. Then in verses 18, Paul talked about the enemies of the cross of Christ. And then in verse 20, Paul said that “our citizenship” that referred to Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus and the Philippian church saints’ citizenship “is in heaven”. Here, Paul was contrasting between the enemies of the cross of Christ who set their minds on earthly things (v. 19) and himself, Timothy, Epaphroditus and the Philippian church saints who by God’s grace were saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I think the reason why Paul made this comparison was because he wanted the immature Philippian church saints to not to fall in to the temptations of the enemies of the cross of Christ and to imitate them but to set their minds on the things above as the heavenly citizens who already had eternal life and to wait eagerly for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. Then in verse 21, Paul explained why they were waiting eagerly for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven: “who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” Paul and his coworkers eagerly waited for Him to return from heaven because He “will

transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory” (v. 21). Isn’t this what Paul said 1 Corinthians 15:52-53: “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Is this not the "redemption of our bodies" that we are waiting for as Paul says in Romans 8:23? So Apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 3:11-13: “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

We must imitate Jesus. We must also imitate the tears of Jesus. Therefore, we must shed tears like Jesus. We must keep in mind that our citizenship is in heaven. Therefore, what we pray and expect and wait is the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come back to earth from heaven. When our Savior Lord Jesus Christ comes back to this earth, the Lord will transform our lowly bodies so that we will be like His glorious body.

“Stand firm in the Lord”

[Philippians 4:1-5]

Do you stand firm in your faith? The Bible Isaiah 7:9 says, “... If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.” We must firmly believe in Jesus. Therefore, we must stand firm in our faith (1 Cor. 16:13). To do so, we must stand firm in the word of the Lord. May the Lord make our steps firm in His Word (Ps. 119:133). The Bible says James 5:8 says, “You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.”

In Philippians 4:1, this is what Apostle Paul said to the Philippian church saints: “Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!” d

Here Paul continued to write letters to the Philippian church saints and said to them, “my brothers , you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown.” What does this mean? A similar word is also found in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20: “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.” For Paul, both the Philippian church saints and the Thessalonica church saints were his joy and glory when the Lord Jesus comes back to this world. What was Paul's joy? Paul's joy was to preach Christ (Phil. 1:18). Also, his joy was to see the Philippian church saints' progress and joy in the faith (v. 25). Paul's joy was to hear them encouraging one another from being united with Christ, comforting one another from His love, having fellowship with the Spirit and being tender and compassion toward one another (2:1). It was Paul's joy to hear that they were like-minded, had the same love and were one in spirit and purpose (v. 2). Moreover, Paul rejoiced with the Philippian church saints even if he was being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from their faith (v. 17). In other words, Paul's joy was his spiritual children of the Philippians, to whom he preached and the Lord saved (4:1). They were his crown (v. 1). What does it mean? The "crown" was, at the time of Apostle Paul, only the runner who made to the goal line first in race won it as the prize. Look at 1 Corinthians 9:24-25: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.” Also, according to Pastor John MacArthur, the “crown” referred to a person who received glory from his fellows as the symbolic sense of his success or fruitful life during the banquet (MacArthur). Since the Philippian church saints were Paul's spiritual fruits of his efforts, they were his crown (Phil. 4:1). Then, who is our crown? Aren't our brothers and sisters in Christ whom we proclaim the gospel and nurture them as we have been obeying the Lord's command of seeking His kingdom and His righteousness first the crown of our lives? When the Lord comes back, our crown in the presence of the Lord, are our brothers and sisters in Christ, our spiritual children who are saved.

Paul strongly urged the Philippian church saints, whom he loved and longed for, to stand firm in the Lord (v. 1). Why did he urge them to do so? I think there were two reasons. The first reason was the internal reason for the church in Philippi, and the second reason seems to be the external reason. The external reason that the Philippian church saints didn't stand firm in the Lord was because of “those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh” (3:2) and those who put confidence in the flesh (v.3). They were the Judaizers. Also, those enemies of the cross of Christ who thought about only the earthly things, whose god was their physical sinful desires and whose glory was in their shame (vv. 18-19) were the external reason why the Philippian church saints didn't stand firm in the Lord. Then what was the internal reason that they didn't stand firm in the Lord? The internal reason was that within the Philippian church saints, there were some who preach the gospel out of the “envy and rivalry” (1:15), “out of selfish ambition, not sincerely” (v. 17) and did things out of “vain conceit” (2:3). In particular, when we see Paul mentioning the name of two women, Euodia and Syntyche, and telling them “to agree with each other in the Lord” (4:2), I think they didn't stand firm in the Lord. I think

that was why Paul urged the Philippian church saints to “stand firm in the Lord” (v. 1). Because he loved them and longed for them with Christ’s affection and they were his joy and crown, Paul urged them to stand firm in the Lord.

I would like to think about how we can stand firm in the Lord as I meditate on four things based on Philippians 4:1-5 under the title “Stand firm in the Lord”.

First, we must live in harmony in the Lord in order to stand firm in the Lord.

Look at Philippians 4:2 – “I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.” What should the church do to stand firm in the Lord? Like a tree which rooted deep under the ground in order to stand firm, the church must be rooted on the rock Jesus Christ in order to stand firm. Look at Colossians 2:6-7: “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” In order for our church to stand firm in the Lord, we must root deeply in Him and build our life on His foundation. And we must stand firm in our faith and live a life full of thanksgiving, as we receive His teachings. When we look at Matthew 7:24 we see “a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Because it had its foundation on the rock, even when the rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house, it didn’t fall (v. 25). How can we build our house on the rock like this wise man? It is possible by hearing the words of the Lord and putting them into practice (v. 24). If we hear His words and don’t put them into practice, then we are like “a foolish man who built his house on sand” (v. 26). If we don’t practice what we have heard, the Word of God, we are foolish people who are building our church on the sand. As a result, when the rain comes down, the stream rises, and the winds blow and beat against the house, then the house will fall with a great crash (v. 27). Therefore, in order for the church to stand firm in the Lord, we must stand in the Lord, who is in the rock, and hear the word of the Lord and act in faith.

Also, in order for the church to stand firm in the Lord, we must live in harmony in the Lord. Look at Philippians 4:2 – “I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.” When we look at this verse, we can see that in the Philippian church two women Euodia and Syntyche didn’t live in harmony in the Lord. And they didn’t live in harmony in the Lord because they didn’t agree with each other (v.2). So Apostle Paul urged them to live in harmony in the Lord. Can you imagine two women who serve hard in the church don’t get along, don’t agree with each other and don’t live in harmony in the Lord? If we apply this to the family, what if the two daughters in the house don’t live in harmony and keep on disagreeing? I remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:26 – “If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?” Mark 3:25 also says: “If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” The church is the same. If the brothers and sisters in the church don’t live in harmony in the Lord but keep on disputing, then the church cannot stand firm. Pastor John MacArthur said: “Spiritual stability depends on the mutual love, harmony, and peace between believers” (MacArthur).

Then the question we can ask is, what kind of heart did Euodia and Syntyche have in the Philippian church so that Paul specially mentioned their names and urged them to live in harmony with each other in the Lord? I think the answer is shown in Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” In light of these verses, I think that the reason why Euodia and Syntyche didn’t live in harmony in the Lord was because they didn’t have “humble heart” but rather they had “vain conceit”. I think they considered themselves better than each other and others and didn’t look to the interests of others out of selfish ambition and vain conceit. In other words, each of them thought only of their own interests. I think that was why they didn’t agree with each other in the Lord. And the disagreement between the two women seemed to make Apostle Paul to mention their names and urged them to live in harmony in the Lord.

We must have the same mind and same love in the Lord. Apostle Paul already said in Philippians 2:2 – “make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” What is the same mind that Paul is saying here? Look at Philippians 2:5 – “Have this attitude in

yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” The same mind and the same attitude that all our church members should have is the mind and the attitude of Christ Jesus. What is the mind or attitude of Christ Jesus that Paul was talking about? What is the mind or attitude of Jesus Christ that we should have? Philippians 2:6-8 teaches us three ways: (1) First, the mind or attitude of Christ Jesus that we should have is not regarding equality with others (v. 6). (2) Second, the mind of attitude of Christ Jesus, which we all should have, is to empty ourselves and to serve others as servants (v. 7). (3) Third, the mind or attitude of Christ Jesus, which we all should have, is becoming obedient to the point of death (v. 8). We should not be proud. The desire to be exalted by a proud person can never be satisfied. The vanity of getting glory from people can never be satisfied. We shall never seek our own vain glory. Rather, we must seek God’s glory. We must be humble. We must keep on humbling ourselves. To do so, we must have the humble heart of Christ Jesus. Jesus didn’t consider equality with God but made Himself nothing, “taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (v. 7). “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!” (v. 8) Then God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name (v. 9). Let’s keep in mind that it is much better for us to be exalted by God rather than people. In order to be exalted by God, we must humble ourselves before God and people. When we humble ourselves before God and people, God will exalt us in His time.

Second, we must help each other in order to stand firm in the Lord.

One day, one of our church English Ministry brothers in Christ prepared some papers and led the Friday night bible study group to find out what their own spiritual gifts were. I heard this from my two daughters who were in that bible study. So I ask them what their spiritual gifts were. Only my first daughter replied and she said her gifts were three. How about you? What do you think your gifts are? The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus gave all the believers a gift. And the Bible says that there are various gifts in the church (1 Cor. 12:4). The Bible also says that there are different kinds of ministries (v. 5) and different kinds of working (v. 6). Therefore, I think that it is good and appropriate for each individual to serve the body of the Lord according to the gifts which they have received from the Lord. I also think that we must maximize our gifts for the Lord and His church. I got this idea from working out at a gym. I realized that I was satisfied with how much weight I had to do the weight lifting exercise. So I tried to get a heavier weight even though it was little bit hard for me. So I thought I should maximize the weight. In this way, I was challenged to maximize the gift that the Lord gave to me and my talents to the fullest. But the problem is that conflicts can arise in the church because of the gifts that each of us has received. The conflicts can arise in the church due to those who don’t recognize the diversity of the gifts given to each one of us. It seems the Roman church was like that. Look at Romans 12:6, 16: “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ... Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” There are four reasons why there can be disputes in the church because of the gifts: (1) First, when we forget that the gift we receive is given to us "by grace." (2) Second, when we don’t recognize the different gifts we received. (3) Third, when we don’t use our gifts in fitting way. (4) Fourth, when we use our gifts of grace with proud heart and boast ourselves.

But do you know that among the gifts in the Bible there is also gift of helping others? Look at 1 Corinthians 12:28 – “And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.” I think it is very beneficial to the church when there are people with gift of helping others who help other church members faithfully and humbly for His church. A good example is a woman named Phoebe in Romans 16: 2. Apostle Paul introduced her to the Roman church saints as “a helper of many, and of myself as well” (v. 2). Here the word “a helper” describes a woman helper who devoted herself to help Paul and others with her resources (Friberg). According to Pastor John MacArthur, the women workers at the time of the Early Church had worked to care for sick believers, poor people, strangers, and prisoners (MacArthur). The greater the number of people who have gift of helping others in the church, the more they will help other people like Phoebe, and the church as a community of love will be able to shine the light of love and of unity in this dark world. When I think about Phoebe whom Paul commended to the Roman church saints, Matthew 5:16 came into my mind: “In the

same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” This verse came into my mind because the meaning of the name "Phoebe" is "bright and radiant". Indeed, we are like Phoebe, God’s children of light, who must shine the light of Jesus Christ in this dark world. Therefore, we are to be like Phoebe, serving the body of the Lord by helping each other with the love of Christ.

Look at Philippians 4:3 – “Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.” As Paul continued to write to the Philippian church saints, he told his loyal yokefellow to help “these women”. Here, we don’t know sure who were the Paul’s “loyal yokefellow.” According to one commentary, Paul’s loyal yokefellow might be Timothy or Silas (Acts 15:40, 16:19) or the chief bishop of Philippi. Or another commentator said that the Greek word for “yoke” is "synygyus" and the name of the loyal yokefellow might be “Synzygus" (Jamieson). But this is not clear. We don’t know who Paul was referring to when he said “yokefellow” in Philippians 4:3. But the important thing is that Paul didn’t exhort the whole saints of the Philippian church, but one of them to "help these women". Who were "these women" whom Paul mentioned to the Philippian church saints? They were Euodia and Syntyche (v. 2). As Paul said that Euodia and Syntyche had contended at his side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of his fellow workers, he asked his “loyal yokefellow” to help these two women (v. 3). In other words, Paul told his unknown loyal yokefellow to help Euodia and Syntyche to agree with each other and live in harmony in the Lord. What is interesting is that the Greek word for “loyal yokefellow” is a compound word “synzygus”. This word is composed of ‘together’ and ‘working’ and it means “fellow laborer or worker” or “helper” (Zodhiates). The word "helper" was already used in Philippians 2:25 when Paul spoke of Epaphroditus to the Philippian church saints. Maybe that was why Paul wanted to send Epaphroditus more eagerly to the Philippian church (v. 28) so that Epaphroditus could help Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord (4:2-3). This is just my personal thought.

Now the question we can throw here is how the “loyal yokefellow” should help the two women Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony. One clear fact is that the Bible says that two women, Euodia and Syntyche, didn’t live in harmony in the Lord. Let’s say there are two women in our church who are serving hard in the church and who labor in the work of preaching the gospel but they don’t live in harmony in the Lord. Then how should we help them? I think we should help those two women to reconcile each other and be in peace together. In order to do so, we must first pray for them. And we must become peacemakers. And we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ who can reconcile them and be peace with each other. By doing so, we must break down the wall in their minds toward each other. Look at Ephesians 2:14-17: “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.” Moreover, we must remind those two women that their names are already written in the book of life (Phil. 4:3). We who have eternal life and are citizens of heaven shouldn’t have the different minds in the Lord. We should remind those two women of this fact and encourage them to reconcile each other and to live in harmony in the Lord. Then the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts to repent and forsake all of their sins such as vain conceit and selfish ambition and forsake them which make them not to live in harmony in the Lord and will fill their hearts with the fruit of the Holy Spirit and will humble them so that they may reconcile with each other and live in harmony in the Lord. And when those two women live in harmony in the Lord, it will not only be beneficial to other Christians in the church but will also be beneficial in reaching out to its community because the church will be praised by the people in the community. What Paul’s loyal yokefellow could do to help Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony was to work together in the ministry of the gospel. Look at Philippians 4:3 again: “Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.” I think Paul knew that when Euodia and Syntyche, who had contended at his side in the cause of the gospel, didn’t live in harmony in the Lord, it didn’t help in the ministry of the gospel. That was why Paul urged them to live in harmony in the Lord in verse 2 and then in verse 3 he asked “loyal yokefellow” to help those two women. The lesson we can learn from this is that when we work together in the ministry of the gospel of

Jesus Christ, what is so important is that we must all have one mind and harmony in the Lord. But if we disagree with each other and don't live in harmony in the Lord, then it will be a stumbling block in the ministry of the gospel.

We must help each other in order to stand firm in the Lord. And when we help each other, we must have same mind. If we don't have the same mind in the Lord, then we cannot be virtuous in the church, nor will it help the local evangelization. This is not glorifying God. Rather, we are committing sin that covers God's glory. We must reconcile each other. We must have the same mind in the Lord and serve the Lord's church. In particular, we must help those who work in the ministry of the gospel with the heart of Jesus Christ. In doing so, our church can stand firm in the Lord.

Third, we must rejoice always in the Lord in order to stand firm in the Lord.

Are you rejoicing always? The Bible 1 Thessalonians 5:16 says "Rejoice always". How can we rejoice always? Of course, this is impossible with our own strength. But this is possible with the power of God. As we believing that fact, we must first ask God for one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, that is "joy" (Gal. 5:22). And we must imitate Jesus. Look at John 8:29 – "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." Like Jesus, we must do the things that are pleasing to God. When we do that, we can rejoice always.

I personally have a biblical passage to think about when I hear the word "rejoice" in the Bible. That verse is Nehemiah 8:10 – "Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Although I personally like this Bible verse when I think about joy, but in reality I am not familiar with this verse in my life. I am still learning this word. When I consider this word, I ask myself whether I am living a life of joy because of the Lord. I also ask myself whether the joy of the Lord is my strength or not. How then can we rejoice in Him? Based on the context of Nehemiah 8:10, I meditated on three things:

(1) We must not mourn or weep in order to rejoice in the Lord.

Look at Nehemiah 8:9 – "Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law." When the Israelites heard the Moses' Law through Ezra and understood the Law through the Levites, they could not help but shed tears of repentance because their sins were exposed. In other words, they wept because there was conviction of sins through the Law. Ezra also recorded these tears in Ezra 10:1 – "While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites--men, women and children--gathered around him. They too wept bitterly." When the Israelites were weeping because of their sins, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites who taught the people, encouraged the Israelites not to mourn or weep because it was the day holy to the Lord. In the modern word, when the saints heard the word of God through the pastor and taught by their Bible study teachers, the saints realized their sins and shed tears of repentance. So the pastor, the elder, and the teachers encouraged them not to mourn or weep because today is the Lord's Day.

(2) We must not be grieved in order to rejoice in the Lord.

Look at Nehemiah 8:10-11: "Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength. So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, 'Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.'" Why did the Israelites who were gathered in front of the Water Gate grieve? It was because they didn't serve the Lord for a long time without knowing what pleased the Lord or what displeased Him (Packer). There is a man named Jo Manjae who wrote about the wisdom to overcome sorrow. This is what he said, 'Shakespeare insisted that sorrow is the enemy of life. As long as sorrow persists, people cannot

be happy and have joy. Sorrow hinders health and shortens life, making people unable to concentrate on new creative work. ... Also, widely known Aesop said, ‘A piece of bread that is eaten with relief is better than eating at a feast with sorrow’ (Internet). Sorrow makes us more vulnerable than strength. So Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites who taught the Israelites said to the weeping Israelites not to weep twice (vv. 9, 10). This reminds me the gospel song “This Is the Day”: “This is the day, this is the day That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made. We will rejoice, we will rejoice, and be glad in it, And be glad in it.” When we worship God, we can weep because God exposes our sins. But this weeping of repentance can be our strength. As we rely on the precious blood of Jesus on the cross, we must repent our sins and be forgiven. In doing so, we will be able to rejoice because we are forgiven and enjoy our freedom from our sins.

(3) We must understand the Word of God in order to rejoice in the Lord

Look at Nehemiah 8:12 – “All the people went away to eat, to drink, to send portions and to celebrate a great festival, because they understood the words which had been made known to them.” When the Israelites heard the words from Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites, they stopped weeping and rejoiced greatly. The reason was because they understood the words which had been made known to them (v. 12). In other words, because the words had been made known to the Israelites, their grief, tears and sorrow went away. Although the Moses’ Law makes us aware of our sins, it cannot save us. But the Law leads us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). In other words, the Law makes us realize our sins but by faith in Jesus Christ, whom the Law leads, we are justified. When the Israelites understood the words which had been made known to them, they stopped grief, tears, and anxiety and greatly rejoiced. The reality of many Christians seems to be that there aren’t many of us who are weeping and shedding the tears of repentance because the God’s Word has pierced our hearts. We need to go one step further from this stage. The stage of repenting our sins after listening to His Word isn’t the beginning stage and not the final stage. The final stage that the Word of God points to is Jesus Christ that is forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ. Those saints who understand the Word of God that had been made known to them faithfully look to Jesus Christ whom the Law leads us to. By doing so, they enjoy the blessing of peace because the Lord takes away all their sadness and anxiety because they shed their tears of repentance as they relied on the power of the blood of Jesus on the cross.

Look at Philippians 4:4 – “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Apostle Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to rejoice in the Lord always. He already said “I am glad and rejoice with all of you” in 2:17 and “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!” in 3:1. But now in 4:4, he said again to them to rejoice in the Lord always. When Paul exhorted them to do so, he meant to rejoice in the Lord even when the Philippian church saints were going through the same struggle they saw Paul had (1:30) because of their partnership in the gospel (v. 5) and because of those who opposed them (v. 28). How is this possible? I believe that the answer is in Philippians 1:29 – “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.” In other words, the reason why we can rejoice in the Lord even when we are suffering because of the enemies who oppose us is because we believe that the suffering for the gospel of Jesus Christ is the grace of God. Actually, Acts 5:41 tells us that the apostles rejoiced that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus.

I would like to receive some lessons in meditating on what Paul’s joy was. I hope and pray that Paul’s joy will be our joy.

(1) Paul’s joy was that the Philippian church saints’ partnership in the Paul’s evangelistic ministry.

Although Paul himself was suffering the imprisonment of jail because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he always prayed with joy of the Philippian church saints (v. 4). What was the reason? It was because of the Philippian church saints’ “partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (v. 5) with Paul, “defending and confirming the gospel” (v. 7). It was because they considered their struggle and suffering because of those who opposed them as God’s grace (vv. 28-30).

(2) Paul's joy was that Christ was preached.

When Paul learns that Christ is being preached, even though he is suffering the imprisonment of being imprisoned, he said "... I will continue to rejoice" (v. 18). He rejoiced that "most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly" because of his chains (v. 14). He rejoiced because they preached Christ out of goodwill (v. 15) and in love, knowing that Paul was put in prison for the defense of the gospel (v. 16). Although he knew that some preached Christ out of envy and rivalry (v. 15) and out of selfish ambition, supposing that they could stir up trouble for Paul while he was in chains (v. 17), he still rejoiced in the Lord because Christ was preached (v. 18). Paul rejoiced because it was Christ who was preached anyway, either in the wrong motive or in the true motive. He rejoiced because of Christ and because Christ was preached.

(3) Paul's joy was the Philippian church saints' progress and joy in the faith.

Although Paul desired to depart and be with Christ, which was better by far (v. 23), he knew that it was more necessary for him that he remained in the body (v. 24) because of the Philippian church saints' progress and joy in the faith (v. 25). So he said in Philippians 2:17-18: "But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me."

(4) Paul's joy was that the Philippian church was being built as a community of love.

Paul rejoiced when the Philippian church saints encouraged one another from being united with Christ, comforted one another with His love, had fellowship with the Spirit and had tenderness and compassion toward each other (2:1). He also rejoiced when they were like-minded, had the same love and were in one in spirit and purpose (v. 2). Look at Philippians 2:1-2: "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." Isn't this our joy? When we apply this to the home, how happy are our parents when their children are like-minded, have the same love and being one in spirit and purpose. When we apply this to the church, how happy is our Lord when the members of the body of Christ are like-minded, have the same love and being one in spirit and purpose. Will not all of us stand firm in the Lord when we have this joy?

(5) Paul's joy was sacrificing for the saints of the Philippian church.

Paul rejoiced that he was "being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service" for the Philippian church saints (2:17). This should be our joy. We should rejoice that we sacrifice ourselves (2:17) for the progress and joy of the faith of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (v. 25) whom we love with the affection of Jesus Christ (1: 8).

We must always rejoice in the Lord in order to stand firm in Him. And in order to rejoice always in our Lord, the Lord's joy must be our joy. The Lord's joy is that all members of His church are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord's joy is for all of us to participate in the ministry of the gospel. In order to do that, our faith must grow. There should be progress of our faith. The Lord is pleased when our faith grows. Such joy of the Lord must be our joy. Also, the Lord is pleased when all the family members of the church love one another in the Lord, humble themselves, and reconcile in Him. I hope and pray that this joy will be with us.

Fourth and last, in order to stand firm in the Lord our forbearance should be evident to all.

Look at Philippians 4:5 – “Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand” (ASV). What do you think "forbearance" means? According to the internet dictionary, one of its synonyms is “tolerance” (Internet). Then what is “tolerance”? It means “the ability or willingness to tolerate something, in particular the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with” (Internet). I think there are at least two dangerous tolerances when I think of the word "tolerance":

(1) The first dangerous tolerance is 'sexual tolerance'.

And the sexual tolerance that I am thinking is the tolerance for homosexuality. At least the first generation Korean adults know that homosexuality is a sin and they say homosexuality is a sin. But it seems that the second generation Korean-American young people say homosexuals should be respectful and tolerant because they are their own lifestyle. What do you think? Those who don't recognize homosexuality as a form of complete living in this world are treated as a person who is petty and crafty with full of prejudice or "Homophobia". Also, if someone claims that marriage between men and women is normal and lawful, they are attacked fiercely as people who are out of date and out of modern culture and oppressive (Internet). Not long ago, a famous Filipino boxer made a statement about homosexuality and was criticized by many people. After he took down his posted apology from social media, he posted biblical passages that supported his statement about homosexuality. As a result, he got a lot more criticism and hit hard from the press (Internet).

(2) The second dangerous tolerance is 'religious tolerance'.

One says, “The great danger and crisis of Christianity in this age is, above all, religious tolerance” (Internet). I think this religious tolerance is very dangerous when Christian leaders under the name of reconciliation, unity, peace, sharing, etc., meet with other religious leaders and do the unity movements. How can Christianity and other religions be united if the Bible teaches that we are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ, and other religions teach that we can be saved by human endeavors.

When I think about these two dangerous tolerances, I think tolerance should be done in the truth. Tolerance must be done within the boundary of the truth.

When we look at Philippians 4:5, Apostle Paul said to the Philippian church saints “Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand” (ASV). Here the word “forbearance” in Greek means ‘not claiming all rights of law or custom’ (BDAG) or “gentle, considerate” (Swanson). This word appears also in other passages in the New Testament besides Philippians 4:5. For example, in 1 Timothy 3:3, Paul spoke of the qualifications of a bishop, and said, “not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.” When I think about this verse, I think the church leader who is gentle doesn't quarrel. In other words, I think there is connection between gentleness (forbearance or tolerance) and “not quarrelsome” (peaceable). A similar word is found in Titus 3:2 – “to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.” In this verse, Paul also said “to be peaceable” (not quarrelsome) and “considerate” (gentleness) together. Furthermore, Paul said “to show true humility toward all men.” That is to say, those who are considerate (gentle) not only do not quarrel, but also show true humility toward everybody. Apostle Peter also used the word "considerate" (gentleness, forbearance) in 1 Peter 2:18 – “Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.” If we apply this verse to the modern world, an employee should not only submit to a good and considerate employer but also to those who are harsh. Here, we see Peter is making contrast between “good and considerate” employer and “harsh” employer. What this teaches us is that a considerate or forbearing person is not harsh. I think that's why ASV translated Philippians 4:5 as “Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

In order for us to stand firm in the Lord, we must be gentle and considerate to each other. In order words, we must treat each other generously. In particular, as the Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 3:2, the church

leaders should not be quarrelsome but should be peaceable, tolerant and treat each other gently in humility. But I think in the church of Philippi, two women, Euodia and Syntyche didn't do that (Phil. 4:2). So Paul wrote the letter to the Philippian church saints, especially referring to the two women Euodia and Syntyche and strongly urged them to live in harmony in the Lord (v. 2). What is needed is "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1). And this gentleness of Christ is only wisdom from above. Look at James 3:17 – "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere." In Philippians 4:5, Paul said to the Philippian church saints, "Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Why? This is because the day of the Lord is near (v. 5). We must let our forbearance to be evident to all in order to stand firm in the Lord. We must be considerate and gentle to each other. We should treat each other generously. As we expect that the day of the Lord is near, we must be gentle and considerate to each other and others as well.

Let us all stand firm in the Lord. This is the time when the Lord will come soon, so we must stand firm in the Lord. All members of our church must stand firmly on the Rock Jesus Christ and His Word. And we must have the same mind and attitude in the Lord. We should help each other. We should always rejoice in the Lord. Let us be gentle and considerate to all people for the day of the Lord is near.

Amazing peace of God that can never be imagined

[Philippians 4:6-7]

Do you have peace in your heart now? Or are you anxious about something now? What we want is peace of mind, but what we experience in our daily life is more worry than peace. I remember a gospel song 'Although the world wants peace': 'Although the world desires peace, the rumors of war grow more and more. There is only human sufferings, fears and they are endless wearisome. But the Lord is here.' Isn't it true that this is the world where the rumors of war grow more and more? Don't we listen to the news about the terrorists bombing here and there and many people die and get hurts? Isn't it true that human sufferings and fears are endless wearisome? That's why I often praise God this hymn called "My Soul in Sad Exile": "My soul in sad exile wax out on life's sea, So burdened with sin and distressed, Till I heard a sweet voice saying "Make me your choice; And I entered the "Haven of Rest. I've anchored my soul in the "Haven of Rest, I'll sail the wide seas no more; The tempest may sweep o'er the wild stormy deep; In Jesus I'm safe evermore" (v. 1). There are many worries, hardships and sinful things and deaths in this world. So there are many times when we do not know what true peace is.

Although the Bible says to cast all our anxiety on Him because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7), we still worry, saying "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" (Mt. 6:31). In other words, we have "the anxieties of life" (Lk. 21:34). We the married couples are concerned about how to please our spouse (1 Cor. 7:33, 34). And we the parents with children are concerned about our children. They worry because their children may turn away from the Lord and go and worship the gods of the nations (Dt. 29:18). We who love His church face daily pressure of our concern for all the churches (2 Cor. 11:28). And many times we worry about tomorrow. Although the Bible says "do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt. 6:34), we still worry about tomorrow. We worry about our future. And we worry about dying (Gen. 38:11). We have many worries of this life (Mt. 13:22). We are worries and upset about many things (Lk. 10:41). We are concerned and worried, even though we know that we cannot add a single hour to our lives (Mt. 6:27).

Do you know what happens when we worry? At least, there are two results: (1) Our hearts will be weighted down. Look at Luke 21:34 – "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap." (2) The word that we have heard will be choked and thus make it unfruitful. We cannot live according to the word of God. Look at Matthew 13:22 – "The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful." If there is worry in our hearts, that means we have no peace in our hearts. What should we do?

This is what Apostle Paul said to the Philippian church saints in Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Based on these words, I want to think about how we can have amazing peace of God that can never be imagined in two ways:

First, we must not be anxious about anything in order to have amazing peace of God that can never be imagined.

Look at Philippians 4:6a – "Do not be anxious about anything," What do you think about Paul encouraging the Philippian church saints not to be anxious about anything? When he was writing this letter to them, wasn't he in prison? Shouldn't he be anxious? But Paul said to them not to be anxious of anything. In my opinion,

I think it was necessary for the Philippian church saints to tell Paul not to be anxious of anything instead of other way around. Nevertheless, Paul told them not to be anxious about anything. Why did Paul tell the Philippian church saints not to be anxious about anything? The reason was because there was something that they were anxious about. So I thought about what they could be anxious about. I think at least they had two big worries. And those two worries were first, the internal worry and second, the external worry.

(1) I think there were about five internal worries that the Philippian church saints had:

(a) The Philippian church saints would have been anxious about Apostle Paul, the servant of the Lord.

Look at Philippians 1:12 – “Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.” What happened to Paul? Wasn’t he in prison for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ? Then wouldn’t the Philippian church saints have been worried about Paul who was in prison since they loved him? If we hear that our missionary have been put into prison for missionary work in the mission field, will not our church members worry?

(b) The Philippian church saints would have been anxious about some were preaching Christ not sincerely but out of envy and rivalry.

Look at Philippians 1:15, 17: “It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ... The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.” Most of the brothers in the Lord who knew that Paul was in chains for Christ, had been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly (vv. 13-14). The problem, however, is that some of the believers who boldly proclaim the word of God preached Christ out of envy and rivalry (v. 15) and out of selfish ambition and not sincerely (v. 17). Don’t you think Paul who knew this could have been anxious? Think about it in this way. If there is a missionary in our church who is in prison because he was preaching the gospel and he heard some of us are preaching Christ out of selfish ambition and not sincerely, supposing that we can stir up trouble for him while he is in prison. Don’t you think he will be anxious about us? Even we preach the gospel with pure motive and in love, it’s very hard to save a soul. But can you imagine our missionary who is in prison heard that we preach the gospel with impure motive, out of selfish ambition and out of envy and rivalry? Don’t you think he will be anxious about us?

(c) The Philippian church saints would have been anxious because the Philippian church saints were not living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Look at Philippians 1:27 – “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.” Why do you think Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to conduct themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? It was because they weren’t living in the manner worthy of the gospel. They weren’t standing firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel (v. 27b). That was why Paul said in 2:3-4, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” And in Philippians 4:2, Paul addressed the specific names of two women, Euodia and Syntyche who didn’t have the same mind “to agree with each other in the Lord”. It is very important that the church be a loving community and a united community in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The reason is that even if we do evangelism and missions, if the church cannot unite in the Lord, and if there is a struggle and division between the saints, then the church will be obstacle and stumbling block to evangelism and mission. Who would be evangelized and come to church if the church members are not agreeing each other in the Lord but are

disputing? The church members who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ must first live in the manner worthy life of the gospel.

(d) The Philippian church saints would have been anxious greatly when they heard that Epaphroditus, one of their church members, was ill.

Look at Philippians 2:26-28: “For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.” Epaphroditus was the Philippian church saint who was sent to Paul to take care of his needs (v. 25). When Paul set out from Macedonia and when he was in Thessalonica, Epaphroditus went to Paul and gave him the gifts that he needed (4:15-16). Not only that, he served with Paul even after he had given the gifts to Paul (2:25). He was with Paul and worked together for the gospel. He cooperated with Paul in evangelism. He also boldly proclaimed the gospel with Paul, fighting like a soldier of Jesus Christ in spiritual warfare against those who opposed the gospel and them. Then Epaphroditus was sick and came close to death for the work of Christ (v. 30). How would the Philippian church saints reacted when they heard this about Epaphroditus, one of their church members? They would have been worried enough. What if our church had heard of the fact that one of our church members who went to a mission field to help our missionary and he got sick to the point of death? Will we not very anxious and concerned? How dangerous are the missionaries who are now doing mission in the communist countries or Muslim countries. What if one of your church members who went to help them got sick and came close to death? Will you not very worry and concern? Will you not earnestly pray for him? I am sure you will ask for God's mercy.

(e) The Philippian church saints would have been anxious about the Judaizers who were the enemies of the cross.

Look at Philippians 3:2 – “Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision.” Here, Paul warned the Philippian church saints to beware of the enemies of the cross of Christ (v. 18). And they were the Judaizers who put their confidence in the flesh (v. 3). The Judaizers were those who fiercely attacked the gospel and insisted that the Gentiles should abide by some of the Old Testament ordinances (especially circumcision) in order to be righteous. Paul said that these Judaizers and their false gospel was heresy and he even cursed them (Gal. 1:8). The problem, however, is that Judaizers had been recognized as a true believer by most people in the church (ex, Gal. 2:12). For example, in the Galatian church was like that. In fact, they undermined the clarity of the gospel in the church, severely profaned the gospel, and confused the Gentile believers.

Apart from these five internal worries and concerns of the Philippian church, there were also some external anxiety factors for the Philippian church saints. If we can summarize those external factors in one word, it was persecution and suffering due to their participation in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Look at Philippians 1:28-30: “without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved--and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.” Why did Paul say like this to the Philippian church saints? It was because there were those who oppose them and they could have been afraid of their opponents (v. 28). And since they were going through the same struggle they saw Paul had (v. 30) and were suffering because of their opponents (v. 29), they could have been afraid of the opponents. That was why Paul said to them “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him” (v. 29).

Because of these internal and external factors, the Philippian church saints could have been worried so Paul encouraged them not to be anxious of anything (4:6). But I wonder how the Philippian church saints react to the Paul's saying. If we were the Philippian church saints, how would we react to the Paul's saying? If I were them, I think I would say in mind, 'How can this be possible?', 'How can we not be anxious of anything when we are in the very anxious circumstance?' So I thought about Paul who told the Philippian church saints not to be anxious of anything. He was in prison. He should have worried about himself. But he didn't. Rather, he rejoiced in the Lord. How could he do that? How could he rejoice in prison without any anxieties? How was this possible? I looked up the answer in Philippians 1:6 – "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." It was possible because Paul had the conviction. In other words, Paul didn't worry anything even when he was in the midst of worrisome circumstance because he believed God entirely.

Paul was convinced that the faithful God, who began His good work of salvation, will complete his salvation no matter what. That was why he wasn't anxious of anything even though he was in the anxious circumstance. We must have this conviction and a firm belief too. Even though we are struck by a situation of great concern and worry, we must stand firm in the faith in the God of salvation. With such a solid faith, we must care all our anxieties to the Lord. The reason is because God cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Therefore, we should not be worrying about many things (Lk.10:41). We should not worry about what to eat, what to drink and what to wear (Mt. 6:31). If we worry about our lives, then our hearts will become dull (Lk. 21:34), and the Word will be choked and we will be unfruitful (Mt. 13:22). Let us not worry about tomorrow (6:34).

Second and last, in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, we must present our request to God in order to have amazing peace of God that can never be imagined.

Look at Philippians 4:6 – "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Won't you pray for those whom you love who are suffering and are in very worrisome circumstance? What if you are in that kind of worrisome circumstance and the people who love you are praying for you earnestly? Won't you be thankful for their prayers and their concern? It is comforting to know that fellow brothers and sisters in Christ are praying for us when we are going through very anxious moments of our lives. Actually, I have experienced the grace of God when the beloved brothers and sisters in Christ were praying for me when I was going through some difficulties in my life. God answered their prayers and restored my downcast soul and strengthened me many times.

I sometimes think that God is leading us into a situation where there is nothing much we can do except praying to Him. I wonder why the difficult things are keep on happening in our lives in a row. Perhaps God wants us to kneel down before him and cry out to Him. Since the difficult things are too hard for us to bear, we cry out to God in tears with desperateness in our hearts. Not only that, we share our hearts and prayer requests with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ so that we may seek God together. The reason is that we believe in the power of united prayer. It is especially important that we hold on to the promises of God and pray together in faith. When we look at Acts 1, about 120 disciples of Jesus were gathered together in the Mark's upper room and prayed together. They all joined together constantly in prayer (Acts 1:14). The words of the Lord's promise that they held unto was Acts 1:8 – "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The result was that on the day of Pentecost Jesus' disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ even in the midst of persecution (Acts 2). Likewise, as we strive to gather together, we must hold on to the Lord's promise to our church, 'I will build up my church' (Mt. 16:18) and we should all join together constantly in prayer (Acts 1:14). The grace of God is the more abundant when we come together in unity and cry out to God together. But if there are complaints in our hearts, and if there is dissension among us, then we cannot have true prayer atmosphere (Park Yun-sun). Look at James 4:2-3: "You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because

you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” We must pray together. We should pray for unity. We must hold on to the words of Matthew 18:19 and pray in faith: “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” It is the utmost co-operation between us and God that we pray together that the God’s will be done. Also, we must continually devote ourselves to prayer with one mind (Acts 1:14). This means endurance and effort (Park Yun-sun). There are many obstacles that prevent us from devoting ourselves to prayer. One of them is bustling (Nouwen). In the midst of this bustle, we are at a high risk of not being able to prioritize prayer. Therefore, we must make prayer time intentionally and gather together and give wholehearted prayer to God.

In Philippians 4:6, Paul told the Philippian church saints, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Here, we should apply this word to ourselves as we think about it a little bit.

(1) We must pray to God in “everything”.

Mostly we seem to pray to God when a big things breaks out. Especially when that big thing is too difficult for us to bear, we cry out to God. But we don’t feel the necessity of prayer for small things, so we just face those small things and go through them without praying. But from now on, we should have a habit of praying to God in everything, whether big or small. In particular, we must have a habit of not only praying to God for the big worries but also the small worries as well. We must case all our anxieties to God through prayers (1 Pet. 5: 7).

(2) We must pray to God for our "requests".

What do you need to ask God? In other words, what are your needs? I think there are at least five things:

(a) The most basic thing that we need is "a daily bread".

Therefore, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray “Give us this day our daily bread” (Mt. 6:11). What we need is food, clothing, and shelter, that is the necessities of life. Instead of worrying about them, we should pray to God.

(b) What we need is "health".

This is what Jesus said: “... It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick” (9:12). Of course, the meaning of this word is different, but I think that what we basically need is health. If we are sick, then we need a doctor. But we shouldn’t need a doctor as much as we can. To do that, we have to be healthy. We must pray to God for good health. And we must take care of our health.

(c) What we need is “possessions”.

The Bible says in Acts 2:45 that the early church people who were filled with the Holy Spirit "began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need”. Until we live in this earth, we need property or possessions. Therefore, I think that we should pray to God for the possessions we need.

(d) We need a ‘faithful friend’.

We need a faithful comrade of faith (Job 6:14). We need the faithful friend who can rebuke us in love when we disobeyed God’s command and committed sin against God (Prov. 27:5). We need the faithful

friend who prays and comfort us when we are in trouble. We need to pray to God for the faithful friend whom we can share our hearts with in the Lord.

(e) We need "wisdom".

The more we live in this world, the more we need God's wisdom to keep our faith and to live faithfully (Rev. 17:9). Therefore, if we lack wisdom, we should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to us (Jam. 1:5).

Beside these things that we need, I am sure there are many other things that we need. If so, then we should pray to God for our needs. But we have to be careful about this idea once and for all. The idea is to think of what God thinks that we need rather than what we think we need. I have asked this question because our thoughts and God's thoughts can be different. In other words, what we think we need can be different from what God thinks we need. For example, when our child comes to us and says, 'I need this', sometimes we may think that our child doesn't need that but he or she needs this. So I think it is better for us to have a habit of praying and asking God that God will give us what we need rather than what we think we need as our faith grows. I think it is important for us to pray according to God's will rather than our will, believing that God knows exactly what we need.

When we look at Philippians 4:6, Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to let their requests be made known to God. He encouraged them to ask God what their needs were. I wonder what Paul thought their needs were. Or I wonder what they thought their needs were as a church. I think the Paul's thought and the Philippian church saints' thought might be same. Both of them might think the same things in terms of needs of the Philippian church saints. As I meditated on the whole book of Philippians, I think their needs were at least seven:

- (a) I think Paul and the Philippian church saints needed wealth. In working with Paul's gospel ministry, I think that the Philippian church saints needed wealth to support Paul and Paul himself needed their mission support in order to do his gospel ministry (Phil 1:5, 7; 4:15-17).
- (b) I think both Paul and the Philippian church saints needed God's help in the gospel ministry so they needed to pray to God (1:4, 9).
- (c) I think both Paul and the Philippian church saints needed God's protection because they were suffering due to the enemies of the cross of Christ who oppose them (1:28-29; 3:18).
- (d) I think both Paul and the Philippian church saints needed the mind or attitude of Jesus Christ (2:5; 4:2). With His mind or attitude, the Philippian church saints needed to build their community of love as they love each other with His love.
- (e) I think both Paul and the Philippian church saints needed to see healing upon Epaphroditus who was sick (2:25ff).
- (f) I think both Paul and the Philippian church saints needed the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus their Lord (3:8).
- (g) I think both Paul and the Philippian church saints needed was they need to learn to be content whatever the circumstances (4:11-12).

We should ask God for all these things. We should pray to God for our daily bread, health, wealth, the faithful friend, God's wisdom, God's protection, Jesus' mind or attitude, God's healing, knowledge of Jesus and the secret of contentment.

(3) We must pray to God "with thanksgiving".

How can we pray to God with "thanksgiving" without worrying about anything in a situation where we have to worry about it? How can we pray to God with thanksgiving when the situation that we are in is really bad in our perspective? I want to share with you my short writing from my meditation on the book of Jonah: 'How can we pray to God with thanksgiving when our situation isn't thankful? If we remember the grace of God's salvation in the past, we can give thanks to God by faith. The situation in which Jonah was never a situation that he could give thanks to God in human perspective. He was inside the fish three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17). He was in distress (2:2). He was casted into the deep heart of the sea (v. 3). He had been expelled from God's sight (v. 4). He was fainting away (v. 7). He was descended to the roots of the mountain where the earth with its bars were around him forever (v. 6). Even in this situation Jonah offered the thanksgiving prayer to God (vv. 1, 9). How was this possible? It was possible because he remembered the grace of God's salvation in the past. Then what was the God's grace in the past that Jonah remembered? It was when Jonah was thrown into the sea (1:14) that God had prepared the great fish and swallowed Jonah, so he was in the fish for three days and three nights (v. 17). This was God's salvation that Jonah experienced in the past. I am sure this wasn't the God's deliverance that Jonah prayed and expected. Perhaps the deliverance that he expected was that God commanded the fish to vomit Jonah up onto the dry land (2:10). But the sovereign will of God's salvation was to make the great fish to swallow Jonah (1:17). Nevertheless, Jonah gave thanks to God (2:1, 9). We cannot give thanks to God when the answer to our prayers is not realized as we expected. The realization of prayer response does not have to be what we expected, as we have prayed. The answers to our prayer belonged to God's sovereignty. Therefore, we must pray and give thanks to God by believing that we in God's sovereign will if not the sovereign will of God has been fulfilled yet. We must give thanks to God as we remember God's salvation in the past. We must give thanks to God, firmly believing that salvation is from the Lord (v. 9). We must give thanks to God by believing that God, who saved us in the past, will save us now too. We must give thanks to God by believing that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). We should pray to God with thanksgiving and with assurance of salvation and hope of salvation. When Jonah offered the thanksgiving prayer to God, God commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land (Jonah 2:10). Jonah's prayer was answered by God. Jonah was saved by God. Jonah's situation had finally changed: not in the belly of the fish but to the land. When we offer a thanksgiving prayer to God in faith, we will receive an answer of our prayer from God. We will experience God's salvation. God will change our mind as well as our situation. Salvation belongs to God (v. 9).

In Philippians 4:6, Paul continued to write the letter to the Philippian church saints and said, "... with thanksgiving, present your requests to God". How could Paul, who was writing this letter in prison, be able to pray with thanksgiving in the situation where in human perspective he couldn't give thanks? Look at Philippians 1:3-5: "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." The reason why Paul thanked God every time he remembered the Philippian church saints was because of their "partnership in the gospel from the first day until now". How did they participate in Paul's evangelism ministry? Look at Philippians 4:15-16: "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need." The Philippian church saints participated in Paul's evangelism ministry by supporting him materially. Paul, who received their support, gave thanks to God when he prayed for them. Another reason why Paul gave thanks to God for the Philippian church saints was because he had confidence. Look at Philippians 1:6 – "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." The reason why Paul gave thanks to God was because he was

confidence that God would complete the good work of salvation that He had begun among the Philippian church saints. And this confidence of Paul was never a conviction based on the Philippian church saints. Rather, this confidence was based on God. In other words, Paul had this assurance that God would save the Philippian church saints whom He loved because He is faithful. So Paul thanked God every time he remembered them in his prayers.

We should also thank God for everything when we pray to Him. Although it may seem like a situation that we can never thank God for, we should thank God in our prayers as we look at our God of salvation with faith. In particular, we should thank God in our prayers because we have conviction that our faithful God who has begun the good work of salvation within us will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Also, we should thank God as we pray for the missionaries whom our church is supporting because of their partnership in the gospel with us. We should thank God because Christ is being preached through them and because of the work of God's salvation. I hope and pray that this kind of reasons for thanksgiving prayers will become more abundant in your life and our church as well.

What does the Bible says about the result of prayer that is offered with thanksgiving? Look at Philippians 4:7 – “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” The Bible tells us that when we pray to God with thanksgiving instead of being anxious, the peace of God will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. Can you imagine that we can enjoy the God's amazing peace even in the midst of very worrisome situation that we are in? This amazing peace can never be given by this world. The reason is because this world doesn't know or understand this amazing peace of our God. Besides, no one in this world can experience this peace. Only the people of God can experience it. Only the God's people whose mind is steadfast, because they trust in God can enjoy this perfect peace (Isa. 26:3). Only those who pray with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6) will be able to enjoy this perfect peace. And this perfect peace will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The amazing peace of God will protect our hearts and our minds from all the anxieties, fears, doubts, etc., as if the soldiers guard their citizens all night long (MacArthur). Let us not be anxious about anything, but by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let us present our requests to God.

Think and put into practice

[Philippians 4:8-9]

Do you thank God? Looking back at the last year, what do you thank God for? I wrote these words yesterday morning: ‘Although we cannot give thanks when we look at the difficult situation with the human eye, but when we look at it with the eyes of faith in the Lord, we can find the conditions of gratitude even in the situation that we cannot appreciate.’ Perhaps you may be in the situation that you cannot appreciate when you look at it with the human eyes? Even in such the difficult situation, would you look at the Lord in faith and try to look for conditions to give thanks to God at this time?

Last Friday, I received the kakaotalk message from sister in Christ Jin Kyung An and quickly went to a hospital Intensive Care Unit, where Jin Kyung’s father was in. And I praised God with Jin Kyung and her mother as we looked at her father. And when two brother and sister in Christ came, they joined together with us and we worshiped God together. After worship, since Jin Kyung’s father had to do the kidney dialysis, we went to the waiting room and had some conversation. We thanked God together in the conversation that even though Jin Kyung’s father’s body was very weak, he was conscious and was able to open his eyes and looked at us and nodded us when we spoke. Although we couldn’t understand what he was saying to us due to the oxygen mask, nevertheless, we gave thanks to God because he was able to open his eyes and understood what we said to him. Above all, we couldn’t help ourselves but gave thanks to God and praised Him because of Jesus Christ. When we think of the God’s grace of salvation that He has given us in Jesus Christ, we have eternal reason to give thanks to God in all circumstances and in our whole lives.

Today as we came up to the house of God and worship Him, let us think about the reasons why we should give thanks to God. And let us praise and worship God with thanksgiving in our hearts and glorify Him.

In Philippians 4:8-9, we can see that Paul is exhorting two things as he writes this letter to the Philippian church saints whom he loves with the affection of Jesus Christ. I have summarized these two exhortations into the partial words in each verse. First, in verse 8, Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to “think about such things” (v.8). Then, in verse 9, he exhorted them to “put into practice” (v. 9). Based on these two exhortations, I would like to receive the lessons that God gives us as we think about what Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to think and to put into practice.

First, what did Paul exhort the Philippian church saints to think about?

Look at Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.” What are you thinking so much these days? Do you have a lot of thoughts about your family? Or do you have a lot of thoughts about your job or your company? You can have a lot of thoughts about your health and about the future.

We have to think about our thoughts. The reason is that if we think about what we are thinking now, we can know little bit what our own spiritual state is now. If we are now thinking about anxious thoughts or worry about this and that, or are having anxious thoughts about the future, then our spiritual state is now in frailty (cf. Ps 77:7-10) . Or if we are now thinking about evil things in our thoughts, and have kept it for a long time without abandoning them, our spiritual state is now in sin. Here, the evil thoughts that come out of the heart (Mt. 15:19) think about what the sinful nature desires (Rom. 8:5). And the things of the flesh are said in Galatians 5:19-21: “The

acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” If we have these thoughts now, the Lord is saying to us, “How long will you harbor wicked thoughts?” (Jer. 4:14).

Do you know what Paul was thinking about? Look at Philippians 1:3-4: “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.” Paul was thinking about the Philippian church saints. The reason was because he longed for them with the affection of Christ Jesus (v. 8). And he thanked God whenever he thought about the beloved Philippian church saints (v. 3) because of their partnership in the gospel (v. 5). Not only did they help Paul's evangelism ministry through Epaphroditus (2:25-30), but they also supported Paul materially (4:15-16). Also, Paul thanked God whenever he thought about the Philippian church saints because he was confident that God who had begun the good work of salvation in them would surely complete it until the day of Christ (1:6). Like Paul, isn't it natural for us to think about whom we love? The more we love, the more we think about the people whom we love. Now the question is whenever we think about them, do we thank God for them or do we complain.

In Philippians 4: 8, Paul exhorted the beloved Philippian church saints “Finally, brothers” "think about such things”. What are “such things”? I have summed up three things:

(1) Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to think about ‘whatever is true and right’ (Phil. 4:8).

Why did Paul tell the Philippian church saints to think about whatever is true and right? What is true and right? According to Park Yun-sun, "Truth" refers to the truthfulness and the fruits of good conscience, and "right" refers to conformity with God's law (Park Yun-sun). When we think about this meaning, I think that Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to live a true life with a good conscience and to obey the Word of God by living a life consistent with the Word. I think this is the worthy life of the gospel that Paul talked about in Philippians 1:27. In a word, Paul exhorted them to conduct themselves in the manner worthy of the gospel (v. 27). And in order to live like that, I think Paul told them to think about the true gospel of Jesus Christ and to think about preaching and spreading that gospel. The reason I think this way is because in the Philippian church there were some who were involving in the gospel ministry (1:5) preached the gospel with wrong motives such as selfish ambition (v. 17). Since Paul wanted them to preach Christ with “goodwill” (v. 15) and “in love” (v. 16), he exhorted them to think about the true gospel and how to preach that gospel correctly. If this is true, then we should also engrave Paul's exhortation in our hearts and think about not only the true gospel of Jesus Christ, but also how to preach that gospel correctly. Especially since there are many who proclaim false gospel as well as true gospel in Paul's time and now, we must think about the true gospel and how to preach it correctly. We also must think about how to preach the true gospel correctly because there are people who preach the true gospel incorrectly.

(2) Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to think about ‘whatever is noble and pure’ (4:8).

When I think about the word “noble” and “pure” two Bible verses come to my mind:

- (a) **The first Bible verse is Acts 17:11 – “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”** According to this Bible verse, the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians. This means that the Bereans had more noble spirit than those in Thessalonica (Park Yun-sun). Here the noble spirit refers to attitude of searching the Bible daily with zeal (Park Yun-sun). Therefore, “the Bereans were of more noble character” means that they searched the Bible daily with zeal. These Bereans with more noble character received the message with great eagerness (v. 11). Here, the phrase “received the message with great eagerness”

means the Bereans received the words of God ‘with all zeal’ (Park Yun-sun) or ‘with all volunteer’ (Yoo Sang-sup). When Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Bereans, they accepted the gospel with voluntary will. In other words, the Bereans received God's Word (cf. 8:14, 11:1) (Yoo Sang-sup). Just as the roots of the trees planted in the streams receive the water from the stream, the Bereans with noble character had the receptive capacity to the Word of God. It's like as if we press the sponge tightly and put it in a bucket of water. Then the sponge will suck the water. The Bereans had very receptive hearts toward the Word of God. And they read the word diligently, learn it, and plant it in their hearts. I hope and pray that we also have this receptive capacity to the Word of God. Every time we read, study, and hear the God's Word, I hope and pray that we can suck it in spontaneously our hearts. Another characteristic of the noble character was that they not only received the word of God well, but also they examined the Scripture every day to see if what Paul said was true (17:11). The Bereans who listened to the Word of God through Paul examined his preaching through the Scripture whether what he said was true or not instead of just accepting it. I think this is not easy. In other words, it is not easy to have balance in listening to the Paul's message receptively and examining the message whether it is true or not. For example, if we only have receptive capacity to listen to a sermon, we may receive all sermon messages that may have the unbiblical messages. That is why we need to examine the sermon messages with the Scripture. We should be capable to do so. Then, how can we apply Acts 11:17 to Philippians 4:8 that says to think about whatever is noble? We should seek the Word of God eagerly and receive the messages through His servants. Also, we must cultivate the habit of examining the messages through the Scripture whether the messages are consistent with the Word of God recorded in the Bible.

- (b) **The second bible verse is James 1:27 – “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”** According to this word, pure and undefiled religion is two: First “to visit orphans and widows in their distress and second, “to keep oneself unstained by the world.” How can we apply these words in our lives? When we think of anything that is pure, we should try to take care of orphans and widows who are in a difficult situation. Also, we should keep ourselves unstained by this world. We must do this work diligently not only for ourselves but also for the Lord's church. The reason is that the church has now become too secularized. We should not become secularized, but become more and more personified with the Word of God. We must think and think about this. And we must firmly believe that we have already been cleaned from all sin by the precious blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross for us. This reminds me the hymn “When I Saw the Cleansing Fountain”: “When I saw the cleansing fountain Open wide for all my sin, I obeyed the Spirit's wooing, When He said, Wilt thou be clean? I will praise Him! I will praise Him! Praise the Lamb for sinners slain; Give Him glory, all ye people, For His blood can wash away each stain.” We, who believe in Jesus who died on the cross and resurrected from the grave, have already been sanctified in all sins. We need to think about this again and again by faith. And we must pursue purity and live a pure life. In order to do so, we must cleanse our souls by obeying the God's words of the truth (1 Pet. 1:22). We must live the life of the holy saints. The sure hope we must have is that when the Day Jesus comes back to this world, we will be transformed into a glorious holy spiritual body. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” Look at Philippians 3:20-21: “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”
- (3) Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to think about ‘whatever is admirable, excellent and praiseworthy’ (4:8).

Here, the word 'whatever is admirable' in Greek means "pleasing" or "amiable" (MacArthur). And the implication of this word is that we the believers should be kind or gracious (MacArthur). The word 'whatever is excellent' and 'whatever is praiseworthy' are similar and what Paul said to the Philippian church saints was that they should become the praised saints by doing things that people praise them. When I apply this to our church, we are taught that our church should be a praised church. In order to become that kind of church, we must do kindly moral good things (Park Yun-sun, MacArthur). Our church can be the praised church when we do things virtuously to be praised by our church neighbors (Park Yun-sun). When I think of this, I remember the words of Acts 2:47: "praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." This refers to the Early Church. In other words, the Bible says that the Early Church was praised by all the people. What should our church do to become such a church? We must become the Christians who are praise by all the people. A good example of this is Timothy, Paul's spiritual son in Acts 16:2 – "The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him." Jesus' disciple Timothy was praised by his brethren at Lystra and Iconium because "a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). Furthermore, I think he was praised and well-spoken of because he showed his true discipleship through his life. If all of us can demonstrate Jesus' true discipleship through our lives like Timothy, then our church will be praised by all the people. Like the Antioch church, the Christian church is a praised church filled with the true disciples of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26). When Barnabas systematically taught and thoroughly did the discipleship training for the great multitudes gathered in Antioch church for one year with Paul (v. 26, Yoo Sang-sup), the result was that the disciples of Antioch Church reached qualitatively maturing maturity and got the nickname "Christian" from non-believers. It means the "followers of Christ." How could they be so well-trained in discipleship and follow Christ so well that the non-Christians around them called them "Christians", the followers of Christ'?

I hope and pray that our church can become a 'Christian church' like the Antioch church. I pray that all of us receive Jesus in our hearts, imitate Him and boast Him. Richard Foster said: "Perhaps the greatest ill of the church today is those who are members of the church but are not the disciples of Christ. It affects the overall church life and is the reason for the low spiritual level of the local congregation." We shall never have a low spiritual level. Rather, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, we must become "imitators of Christ." In doing so, our church will become a praised church.

Second and last, what did Paul exhort the Philippian church saints to put into practice?

Look at Philippians 4:9 – "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." What did the Philippian church saints learn, hear, and see from Paul? According to Dr. Park Yun-sun, after Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to consider various virtues that he listed in Philippians 4:8 precious and evaluate them, and then in verse 9 he told them to put those virtues into practice (Park). But when I thought about this question, I remembered the words from Acts 16:12. The reason is that in Acts 16:12 and on, the story about the Philippians comes out when Paul visited there during his second mission journey. So based on this Philippian story in Acts 16 and Philippians chapter 1 through 4:9, I thought about nine things that the Philippian church saints might learned, heard and saw from Paul:

(1) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was Paul's life of prayer.

In Acts 16:13, Paul and his co-workers Silas and Timothy arrived at Philippi and went outside the city gate to the river to find a place of prayer. They met Lydia among the women who were gathered there. And God opened the Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message and she believed in Jesus (v. 14). Eventually, the members of her household came to believe in Jesus (v. 15). Not only Lydia, but when we keep on looking at Acts 16, we see Paul and Silas were in prison. And there was the jailer who probably heard them praying and singing (v. 25). That jailer also believed in the Lord Jesus and his household as well (vv. 30-33). Of course, this is a story before the Philippian church was found. But what we can guess here is

that when the Philippian church was later found, I think the Philippian church saints would have prayed as Paul did since they saw him praying to God. One thing for sure was that the Philippian church saints knew that Paul was praying for them when they received this letter from Paul in prison (1:4, 9). Paul also exhorted the Philippian church saints, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (4:6). So I think we cannot deny that what the Philippian church saints learned, heard and saw from Paul was his life of prayer.

(2) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was Paul preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As we have already meditated through Acts 16, Lydia and the jailer, and their entire family, who lived in Philippi, were saved through Paul by hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ and by believing in Jesus. I think this was how the Lord had built the Philippian church. And the Philippian church saints had participated in the gospel “from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:5). They defended and witnessed the gospel even when Paul was imprisoned (v. 7). So Paul encouraged them to continue to do evangelistic witnesses, not only courageously (v. 14) but also with good will (v. 15) and pure motive (v. 17).

(3) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was Paul’s life of joy.

I thought Paul’s life of joy in five ways:

- (a) **The first one is Philippians 1:18 – “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.”** Paul rejoiced when he found out that there was the greater progress of the gospel even though he was in prison. Paul, in such joy, exhorted the Philippian church saints, “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!” (3:1) Therefore, he told them to rejoice because of the greater progress of the gospel (1:12).
- (b) **The second one is Philippians 2:17-18: “But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.”** Paul encouraged the Philippian church saints to rejoice with him, as he said that he would rejoice even if he would martyr over the sacrifice and service of the faith of the Philippians.
- (c) **The third one is Philippians 2:29 – “Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard.”** The reason why Paul told the Philippian church saints to receive Epaphroditus in the Lord with all joy and to hold men like him in high regard was “he came to death for the work of Christ” (v. 30). We must also receive and admire such a person with all joy (v. 29, Scripture of the modern man).
- (d) **The fourth one is Philippians 4:1 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.”** Paul told the Philippian church saints that they were “my joy”. I think Paul wanted them to learn, hear and see from him so that the Philippian church saints could also consider each other as “my joy”.
- (e) **The fifth one is Philippians 4:10 – “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.”** Paul was greatly rejoiced in the Lord because he knew that the Philippian church saints were concerned for Paul and wanted to support him financially in Paul’s gospel preaching ministry. So Paul wanted them to rejoice in the Lord like Paul since they learned, heard and saw Paul’s rejoicing in the Lord.

(4) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was Paul's suffering because of those who opposed the gospel.

Look at Philippians 1:28-30: "without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved--and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have." Since the Philippian church saints learned, heard and saw Paul suffering because of the gospel by those who opposed the gospel, they also went through the same struggle because of those who opposed them. Paul encouraged them to continue to do so, exhorting them to consider the suffering they were receiving for Jesus and His gospel as the grace of God.

(5) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was Paul's humility.

Look at Philippians 2:5 – "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Paul was a humble man. He served the Lord's church with humility. A good example of this is the Ephesus church. How can we know this? We can know this by looking at Acts 20:19 when Paul sent out a man from Miletus for the elders of Ephesian church and preached to them the farewell sermon. He said to them, "I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews." He told the Ephesian church elders that he served the Lord with great humility. Not only Paul served the Ephesian church with great humility, I think he served all other churches, including the Philippian church, with great humility because he was the humble servant of the Lord. And I think the Philippian church saints learned, heard and saw Paul's great humility. So Paul exhorted them to have the Jesus' humility and served the church with great humility like him.

(6) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was him pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God had called him heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Look at Philippians 3:13-14: "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Paul said to the Philippian church saints "one thing I do" and that one thing was "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (vv. 13-14). One thing that Paul was clearly doing was running towards the goal. Paul was running toward the goal, as if a runner was running and doing his best to finish the race while looking at the goal line. Then what was the goal Paul was running toward? It was "which Christ Jesus took home of me (him)" (v. 12), that was, "which God has called me (him) heavenward in Christ Jesus" (v. 14). It is the Paul's mission, his calling from the Lord. The mission was externally witnessing the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:24), and internally it was living the worthy life of the gospel as he imitate Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:27). Paul was laid hold of this by Christ Jesus. So Paul wrote to the Philippian church saints and said that he was pressing on to fulfill his upward call of God in Christ Jesus (vv. 12, 14). Since Paul wanted the Philippian church saints to learn, hear and see from him, he exhorted them to be laid hold of by Christ Jesus and to live a life of pressing toward the goal in fulfilling their mission.

(7) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was living as those who have citizenship in heaven, waiting for the Lord's return.

Look at Philippians 3:20 – "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." After Paul told the Philippian church saints to "join in following my (his) example" (v. 17), the example of Timothy and Epaphroditus and to observe those mature saints in the Philippian church, he told them about those who "are enemies of the cross of Christ" (v. 18). Paul then said that the citizenship of himself, and of Timothy, and of Epaphroditus and of the Philippian church saints, were in

heaven (v.20). The reason for this was that Paul was contrasting between those “enemies of the cross of Christ” (v. 18) “who set their minds on earthly things” (v. 19) with his co-workers and the Philippian church saints who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved by God’s grace. I think the purpose of the Paul’s contrast was to make the immature saints of the Philippian church not to imitate those enemies of the cross of Christ and not to set their minds on earthly things but to wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ to return because their citizenship was in heaven. And then he explained to them why they were waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to return like this: The Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, “who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” We are waiting for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ because the Lord will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory (v. 21). So Paul encouraged the Philippian church saints to live like the citizens of heaven, waiting for Jesus’ return.

(8) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was Paul standing firm in the Lord.

Look at Philippians 4:1 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.” I think there were two reasons why Paul exhorted so strongly to the Philippian church saints to stand firm in the Lord:

- (a) **The first reason was the external one in which there were the Judaizers whom Paul referred to them as “the dogs ... evil workers ... the false circumcision” (3:2) who put their confidence in the flesh (v. 3).** Also, there were “enemies of the cross of Christ” (v. 18) “who set their minds on earthly things” and “whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame” (v. 19).
- (b) **The second reason was the internal one in which there were “envy and strife” (1:15) within the Philippian church and some proclaimed Christ out of selfish ambition, “thinking to cause me (Paul) distress in my (his) imprisonment” (v. 17).** Also, there were people who did things “from selfishness or empty conceit” (2:3). In other words, the Philippian church didn’t stand firm in the same mind and the same love (v. 2). So Paul exhorted them “to live in harmony in the Lord” [“to agree with each other in the Lord” (NIV)] as he specifically mentioned two women’s names Euodia and Syntyche (4:2). And Paul exhorted all the Philippian church saints to stand firm in the Lord (v. 1).

Then what would the Philippian church saints have to do in order to stand firm in the Lord?

- (a) **They should live in harmony in the Lord in order to stand firm in the Lord (4:2).**

Look at Mark 3:25 – “If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” The church is same. If the brothers and sisters in Christ in the church don’t agree with each other and don’t live in harmony in the Lord, then the church cannot stand firm. Pastor John MacArthur said, ‘The sense of stability in spiritual life depends on the believers’ love, harmony, and peace.’ In the Philippian church, there were two women, Euodia and Syntyche, who didn’t get along well. They didn’t get along well because they had different minds. That was why Paul told them to live in harmony in the Lord (4:2). And in order for them to live in harmony in the Lord, they needed the Lord Jesus’ heart (2:5).

- (b) **They should help each other in order to stand firm in the Lord (4:3).**

Paul asked his “loyal yokefellow” to help Euodia and Syntyche who had contended at Paul’s side in the cause of the gospel (v. 3). He asked his loyal yokefellow to help those two women to agree with each other in the Lord so that they could do the Lord’s work together in harmony. In order for the

Lord's church to stand firm in the Lord, we must help those who don't agree with each other to work together in harmony in the Lord.

(9) What the Philippian church saints learned, heard, and saw from Paul was his gentleness that was evident to all.

Look at Philippians 4:5 – “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” Here the word “gentleness” in Greek means ‘not claiming all rights of law or custom’ (BDAG) or ‘consideration’. In the church, brothers and sisters must treat each other generously in order to stand firm in the Lord. In particular, the church leaders shouldn't argue with each other but be tolerant and treat each other gently. But in the Philippian church two women, Euodia and Syntyche didn't do it. That was why Paul strongly exhorted those two women to live in harmony in the Lord. What is needed is “the gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1). This gentleness of Christ is the wisdom that comes from heaven (Jam. 3:17). The reason why Paul exhorted the Philippian church saints to “Let your gentleness be evident to all” was because “The Lord is near” (Phil. 4:5). We must be gentle to each other so that our church can stand firm in the Lord. We must treat each other generously with the perspective that the Lord's return is near. Furthermore, we should be generous to all people, not just our church members.

We must think. What must we think? First, we must think about whatever is true and right. Second, we must think about whatever is noble and pure. Third, we must think about whatever is admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. Also, we must put what we learned, heard and saw into practice. What should we put into practice? First, we must pray to God. Second, we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Third, we must rejoice in the Lord. Fourth, we must suffer for Christ's sake. Fifth, we must humble ourselves. Sixth, we must be loyal to our mission. Seventh, we must live in waiting for Jesus' return. Eighth, we must stand firm in the Lord. Ninth, we must let our gentleness to be evident to all.

“I rejoice greatly in the Lord ...”

[Philippians 4:10-23]

This year's theme for our church is "The Giving Church." Our goal is to give love, comfort and joy to others. Among these three, I would like to think about "joy". This is what Philippians 4:4 says: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" How can we rejoice in the Lord? We have meditated on three things already based on Nehemiah 8: (1) We must not mourn or weep (v. 9). The Israelites wept because of the awareness of their sins through the Law. So Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites who taught them encouraged them not to mourn or weep because it was the day holy to the Lord. (2) We must not be grieved (vv. 10-11). The reason why the Israelites were grieved was because they didn't serve the Lord for a long time without knowing what pleased the Lord or what displeased Him (Packer). (3) We must understand the Word of God (v. 12). When the Israelites heard the words from Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites, they stopped weeping and rejoiced greatly. The reason was because they understood the words which had been made known to them (v. 12). The Mosaic Law makes us aware of our sins but faith in Jesus Christ, which the Law leads us to, justifies us. Knowing this truth, the Israelites stopped weeping and rejoiced greatly. Those saints who know the Word of God clearly look to Jesus Christ by faith. And they repent their sins by trusting in Jesus and the power of His blood on the cross. Then the Lord removes all their sadness and anxiety in their hearts and gives them peace.

In Philippians 4:10, this is what Paul said to the Philippian church saints: "I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it." Based on this Word, I want to mediate on the last section of the book of Philippians, Philippians 4:10-23, and think about three things how we can rejoice greatly in the Lord. I hope and pray that we may learn and receive the lessons humbly and apply in our lives.

First, in order for us to be greatly rejoice in the Lord, we need to have concern for each other and help each other.

Look at Philippians 4:10 – "I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it." What is your concern in these days? I am sure we all have different concerns. But there may be common concerns as well. And one of our common concerns is the family. The reason is because we all love our family. I am sure parents have concerns for their children, and children have concern not only for their parents but also their close friends who they love. Grandparents have concern for not only their children but also their grandchildren so they are praying for all of them. However, we as parents are concerned particularly for a child who is weaker than other healthy children. Like this with concern for each other, our family becomes one with concern and in love. I think the church is the same. The church, which is a spiritual family, becomes one with concern and love. Therefore, in the church we should be concerned for one another in love and we must love each other with the Lord's love. And it is natural to pray for each other with such concern and love. Especially if we have brothers or sisters in Christ who are suffering from sickness or accidents and so on, we should be more concerned and pray for them. Not only that, but we should also be more concern for those who are weak in faith. Not only we should pray for them but also we should help them to grow in faith. We also need to continue to support the missionaries with a great deal of concern for they are working in their mission fields and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what makes the missionaries rejoice in the Lord.

In Philippians 4:10, Paul wrote to the Philippian church saints and said, "I rejoice greatly in the Lord". Why did Paul rejoice greatly in the Lord? The reason for this was because Paul knew that the Philippian church

saints had renewed their concern for him (v. 10). He knew that they had thoughts of helping him financially or materially. How encouraging and strengthening this was to Paul. This was especially encouraging and strengthening to Paul because he got help from the Philippian church saints when he was in troubles (v. 14). Look at Philippians 4:14 – “Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.” Can you forget a person who approached you and did a token of good deed to you when you were in the most difficult time? I still cannot forget the pastor who came to the hospital Intensive Care Unit and left the small doll next to my first baby when she was alive. I don’t I will ever forget that because he had shown me and my wife God’s love through his good deed. Even though it was a short visit, his good little good deed is still remained in my heart as big. If my first baby was healthy and received the doll at her 1 year old birthday, then I would probably forget about what he did. No matter how big the doll was, I don’t think I would still remember what he did. But since our first baby was very sick and we were going through the most difficult time of our lives, the small good deed that he did for our baby is still engraved in our heart as great love. When I think about what Paul said to the Philippian church saints in Philippians 4:15, I think Paul couldn’t forget the fact that they share in his troubles. I think that’s why Paul mentioned it here at the end of this Philippian letter. In addition to this, this was what Paul wrote to the Philippian church saints in verses 15-16: “Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.” In this part of the letter, we can see that the relationship between Paul and the Philippian church saints was not just a day or two relationship but a long relationship. What a precious and beautiful relationship between Paul and the Philippian church in which the church shared with Paul in the matter of giving and receiving when Paul set out from Macedonia in the early days of the Philippian church saints’ acquaintance with the gospel (v. 15). Not only that, when Paul was in Thessalonica, they send him aid again and again when he was in need. They continued to help the Paul’s ministry of the gospel. So Paul said to the Philippian church saints: “I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (v. 18). That was why when Paul thanked God whenever he remembered the Philippian church saints in his prayers. The reason was because they were involved in the work of the gospel even from the first day until the very moment Paul was writing this Philippian letter (1:3-5).

I think this faithful relationship of love and concern is important. And in fact, I want to continue to make this kind of relationship with missionaries whom our church is supporting until now. Of course, our church cannot do this to all the missionaries. To some missionaries, our church may be able to support them financially with the same mind and same heart once or twice when there are in need in doing their mission work. But at least the missionaries that the Lord has raised up in our church and are sent to the mission field, our church want to continue to be faithful in helping t them and supporting them. As we continue to do so, what is important is concern. We need to have concern about them. When we do so, we will want to find about how they are doing (in terms of not only their mission but also their families and themselves), what their needs are, what their prayer requests are and so on. And as we get to know these things, we can pray for them with our hearts. So from this year I would like to have times twice a year in which those missionaries can share their mission with our church members. And I am hoping that the missionaries can upload some photos and shorts messages on our church kakaotalk room so that other church members can see and read them. By doing so, I think other church members can have ore concern about them, their families and their mission so that they can continue to pray with the affection of Jesus Christ. Let us continue to remember them in our prayers and pray for them so that God’s will be done in and through them. As we do so, I am sure our missionaries will rejoice greatly in the Lord because of our love and concern for them. And when they greatly rejoice in the Lord, their great joy will be ours as well.

In order for us to rejoice greatly in the Lord, we need to be concerned and to help each other. Especially, we need to be concerned for our missionaries and help them faithful with God’s love. As we do so, let us continue to support them not only financially but also with our prayers for them because they are the missionaries who are endeavoring to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in their mission fields. We also need to have concern for those God’s servants who are faithful to the Lord’s work for the expansion of the kingdom of God. And we need to pray for them and help them if we can. This pleases God and also makes us greatly rejoice in Him.

Second, in order for us to be greatly rejoice in the Lord, we need to learn the secret of being content in any and every situation.

Look at Philippians 4: 11-12: “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” One of the things I personally consider important is the attitude to learn. And this learning attitude is especially important to the people like me who teach the Word of God because we have tendency to like to teach others instead of to learn from others. If I speak this more biblically, those who teach the Word like me should diligently teach ourselves before we love to teach others. Look at Romans 2:21 – “you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?” If we don’t diligently teach ourselves with the Word of God ‘Do not steal from others like Pharisees’, then we will steal. Therefore, we must learn diligently first in order to teach God’s Word well.

One of the words of God that we must learn diligently is the secret of being content in any and every situation that Paul spoke to the Philippian church saints in Philippians 4:11-12: “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” The American writer Gail Sheehy said in his best-seller book, "Path Finders," the people who live with satisfaction are (Internet): (1) First, a person who knows the meaning of life and the direction to go; (2) Second, a person who is not disappointed that he has lived his life in vain; (3) Third, a person who has accomplished his goal little by little in his own way with a certain long-term plan. (4) Fourth, a person who has a genuinely loving object; (5) Fifth, a person with a good friend whom he can share his deepest things; (6) Sixth, a person who not only cheerful but also interprets a difficult situation positively and deals with it. (7) Seventh, a person who doesn’t concern too much listening to criticism or even a curse but listens with generous heart; (8) Eight, a person with mental strength to break through fear or anxiety. Do you live with true satisfaction? Maybe many people are suffering from unsatisfactory. Even if we have what we want, we are just satisfied at that moment and we want something more, something bigger. I think that there is no limit to the satisfaction of the people. The philosopher Socrates said: ‘The richest man in the world is a person who is satisfied with the smallest thing’ (Internet). Are we satisfied with the smallest thing? Don’t you want to learn the secret of being content like Paul? Don’t you want to confess to others that ‘I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation’? Then what should we do to do that? We must be satisfied with only Lord. Then, we can thank the Lord for giving us abundant grace when we are rich and can use our abundance for the God’s glory. Moreover, we can thank God for the daily bread and not complain even when we are in need. Therefore, we can confess that "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (v. 13). The important thing here is when the Lord gives us strength, we are able to live in contentment with the Lord only, whether we are in abundance or in need.

Then who is the Lord who gives us strength so that we can live in contentment whatever condition we are in? Based on David’s confession “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want” (Ps. 23:1), I want to think about who our Lord who gives us strength is in six ways in order to live in contentment with the Lord only.

(1) The Lord who gives us strength is the Lord who gives us.

Look at Psalms 23:2 – “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.” A true shepherd feeds the food and drink that the sheep need. The reason why the true shepherd makes his sheep lie down in green pastures is because there is soft grass that the sheep like to eat. Like this, the good shepherd feeds the sheep. Also, the good shepherd leads his sheep beside quiet waters. According to Calvin, “quiet waters” is slow flowing water, which makes easy for the sheep to drink and it is also beneficial for its health.’ Our Lord who is the true Shepherd not only gives us the physical foods but also the spiritual food, the Word of God. He feeds us the Word of God abundantly. He is “The Lord Will Provide” (Gen. 22:14), the Lord who gives.

(2) The Lord who gives us strength is the Lord who restores us.

Look at Psalms 23:3a – “he restores my soul. ...” Here, “he restores my soul” means the Lord makes us to repent our sins and makes us to receive the true life (Park Yun-sun). When we don’t repent our sins, the Lord’s hand will be heavy upon us. That was what happened to David: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah” (Ps. 32:3-4). A person whose sins are not solved will be always forced to feel insufficient. Not only his spirit is being crushed, but also it cannot enjoy true freedom in the Lord because it is bounded to sin. Unrepentant hearts cannot be satisfied. Dr. Park Yun-sung said this: ‘The soul only dies because of sin, only by repenting sin that lives again.’ That’s right. As we repent of our sins, our crushed souls can be revived again. But this is only possible with the grace of God. Only when the Lord exposes our sins through His holy Word, we will be able to realize and acknowledge our sins. And only by His grace, we can turn away from our sins and repent our sins with the help of the Holy Spirit. In short, only the Lord, the Shepherd, is able to restore our souls.

(3) The Lord who gives us strength is the Lord who guides us.

Look at Psalms 23:3b – “... He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.” Here, “He guides me in the path of righteousness” means the Lord guides His sheep in the straight path (Park Yun-sun). But the people of this sinful world are walking in the evil path, choosing the way of evil rather than the path of righteousness. So without the Lord’s guidance, it is impossible to walk the path of righteousness. Like the righteous Lot in the 2 Peter 2:8, we are living among the lawless men day after day and the righteous people are tormented in their righteous souls by lawless deeds they see and hear. So only when the Lord restores our tormented souls by His Word, we can arise and walk the path of righteousness. One astonishing fact is that the Shepherd guides us to the path of righteousness not because of any good condition of human convenience, but because of His Name’s sake (Park Yun-sun). Our God is not only the One who forgives our sins for His name’s sake but also He is the Lord who revives our souls. He is our Shepherd who guides us to the path of righteousness.

(4) The Lord who gives us strength is the Lord who protects us.

Look at Psalms 23:4 – “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Here, “the valley of the shadow of death” refers to the extremes of danger (Park Yun-sun). Because David made the Lord his Shepherd, he was not afraid of any danger. The reason was because he believed that God was with him. Since God was with Joseph, Joseph enjoyed the blessing of prosperity. Also, he was protected by God even when he was slaves in Potiphar's house and was in prison because he was falsely accused (Gen. 39). The Shepherd Lord was with David and he protected him with His rod and His staff. Just as the shepherd protects the sheep from the beast with his rod and staff, and leads the sheep to the green pastures and the quite waters, the Lord Shepherd also protects His people from Satan and Satan’s servants who are like the wild beasts, and guides us.

(5) The Lord who gives us strength is the Lord who exalts us.

Look at Psalms 23:5 – “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Our Lord prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies. The Lord Shepherd gave a glorious victory to David as a feast before his enemies who tried to destroy him (Park Yun-sun). Also, when David said "You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows", he had this custom in his mind in which anointing oil to the VIP of the feast (Park Yun-sun). The Lord treated David, who was

persecuted by his enemies, like a VIP who received an invitation to the banquet. And the hospitality and the portion that David received were rich and overflowing (Park Yun-sun).

(6) Sixth, the Lord who gives us strength is the Lord who fills us with love and hope.

Look at Psalms 23:6 – “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” Here, David is looking forward to the coming days with the grace he experienced in the past. In the past, David received God’s love and help (vv. 1-5). And David believed that his future would be smooth. It was because he believed that the Lord’s goodness and lovingkindness would be with him all the days of his life. Therefore, David had a definite hope of dwelling in the house of the Lord, the kingdom of God, forever. This life filled with hope is not lacking.

We must learn the secret of being content in order to rejoice greatly in the Lord. We must be content with the Lord alone, whether we are in plenty or in need. We should be content with the Lord who guides us, protects us, provides our needs, restores our souls, exalts us and fills us with His love and hope.

Third, in order for us to be greatly rejoice in the Lord, we need to live a life to glorify God.

Look at Philippians 4:20 – “To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Our life must have a clear purpose. When our purpose is clear, we can live by that purpose. Then what is the purpose of our life? It is the glory of God. Look at 1 Corinthians 10:31 – “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” Westminster Short Catechism Questions 1 asks, “What is the chief end of man?” The answer is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” How can we glorify God? How can we glorify God? I thought of three things in brief:

(1) We must praise and worship God with thanksgiving.

Look at Psalms 50:23 – “He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.” When we think about the God’s grace of salvation in Jesus Christ, we must praise and worship God with thanksgiving. This pleases God, glorifies Him and is a life of glorifying God.

(2) We must imitate the holy Jesus.

Look at 1 Corinthians 11:1 – “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” Paul imitated Jesus. Then he exhorted the Corinthians to imitate him. As he said, we must imitate Jesus Christ. When we imitate Him, we are glorifying God. This is what Jesus said in Matthew 5:48- “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” When we become perfect imitation of God the Father, it will glorify God.

(3) We must obey the Word of God by faith.

Look at Hebrews 11:6 – “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” For example, when Abraham was 100 years old, even though he faced the fact that his body was good as dead and that Sarah’s womb was also dead, he wasn’t weaken in his faith (Rom. 4:19). He didn’t waver through unbelief regarding the God’s promise (v. 20) of “So shall your offspring be” (v. 18). But against all hope, Abraham in hope believed (v. 18). He was strengthened in his faith, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised (vv. 20-21). Like Abraham, let us be people of faith who glorify God. Although when we look at the situation with our eyes of flesh, it may seem like the impossible situation, let us look at

Almighty God with the eyes of faith and believe that God will fulfill His promises to us. I hope and pray that we will stand firm in our faith and obey God's Word and glorify God.

In order for us to be greatly rejoice in the Lord, we must have concern for one another and help each other. In addition, we must learn the secret of being content in any and every situation so that whether we are in plenty or in need, we must be satisfied with the Lord alone. In particular, we must live a life of glorifying God. In doing so, we can rejoice greatly in the Lord.

Conclusion

Our joy is Jesus Christ. We must rejoice when the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached. Therefore, all of us should preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must boldly preach the gospel with fear. Also, we must participate in the gospel ministry. Specifically, we must help the missionaries with prayers and finance. At the same time, it is important that we live in the manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We must stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel. We must have the same mind, the same love and the same purpose. And we must do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. We must never put confidence in the flesh. Rather, we should imitate the humble heart of Jesus, and each of us should consider others better than ourselves, and we should look not only our interests but also to the interests of others. We need to have concern for each other and help each other. We must also learn the secret of being content in any and every situation and be satisfied with Jesus alone. We all have to live a life that glorifies God. To do so, we must think and act on whatever is true and right, whatever is noble and pure, whatever is admirable, excellent and praiseworthy.

Let us acknowledge the Lord. Let us press on to acknowledge Him. We must realize the surpassing greatness of know Christ Jesus our Lord. We must imitate Jesus. As we do so, our faith must grow. In this progress of faith, we must seek the maturity of faith. We must also stand firm in the Lord as we imitate Jesus Christ. We should not be anxious about any persecution or tribulation, but in everything we should present our requests to God by prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Then we will experience the amazing peace of God that we can never imagine that will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. Also, we must consider our sufferings that we receive for Jesus Christ as the grace of God and endure and overcome them. Even when we almost die for the work of Christ, we must not spare our lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ and Christ. Our eager expectation and hope is that Christ be exalted in our bodies, whether by life or by death. For to us, to live is Christ and to die is gain. I hope and pray that our church preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ and lives a life that is worthy of the gospel of Christ.