

Sermon – 1 November 2020

The Time of the End

12 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. ⁴But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” ¹

¹ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ὥραν ἐκείνην παρελεύσεται Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ μέγας ὁ ἐστηκὼς ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ σου, ἐκείνη ἡ ἡμέρα θλίψεως, οἷα οὐκ ἐγενήθη ἀφ’ οὗ ἐγενήθησαν ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης, καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὑψωθήσεται πᾶς ὁ λαός, ὃς ἂν εὐρεθῇ ἐγγεγραμμένος ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ. † ² καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν καθευδόντων ἐν τῷ πλάτει τῆς γῆς ἀναστήσονται, οἱ μὲν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ εἰς ὄνειδισμόν, οἱ δὲ εἰς διασποράν καὶ αἰσχύνην αἰώνιον. ³ καὶ οἱ συνιέντες φανοῦσιν ὡς φωστῆρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ κατισχύοντες τοὺς λόγους μου ὡσεὶ τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος. ⁴ καὶ σύ, Δανιηλ, κάλυψον τὰ προστάγματα καὶ σφράγισαι τὸ βιβλίον ἕως καιροῦ συντελείας, ἕως ἂν ἀπομανῶσιν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ πλησθῇ ἡ γῆ ἀδικίας.²

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Da 12:1–4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [Septuaginta: With morphology](#). (1979). (electronic ed., Da 12:1–4). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

Your Sorrow Will Turn into Joy

¹⁶ “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” ¹⁷ So some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’?” ¹⁸ So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.” ¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’?” ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹ When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. ³

16 Μικρὸν καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με. **17** εἶπαν οὖν ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἀλλήλους· Τί ἐστὶν τοῦτο ὃ λέγει ἡμῖν· Μικρὸν καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με; καί· Ὅτι ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα; **18** ἔλεγον οὖν· Τί ἐστὶν τοῦτο [ὃ λέγει] τὸ μικρὸν; οὐκ οἶδαμεν τί λαλεῖ.

19 ἔγνω [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤθελον αὐτὸν ἐρωτᾶν, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Περὶ τούτου ζητεῖτε μετ’ ἀλλήλων ὅτι εἶπον· Μικρὸν καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με; **20** ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι κλαύσετε καὶ θρηνήσετε ὑμεῖς, ὁ δὲ κόσμος χαρήσεται· ὑμεῖς λυπηθήσεσθε, ἀλλ’ ἡ λύπη ὑμῶν εἰς χαρὰν γενήσεται. **21** ἡ γυνὴ ὅταν τίκτη λύπην ἔχει, ὅτι ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα αὐτῆς· ὅταν δὲ γεννήσῃ τὸ παιδίον, οὐκέτι μνημονεύει τῆς θλίψεως διὰ τὴν χαρὰν ὅτι ἐγεννήθη ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν κόσμον. **22** καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν νῦν μὲν λύπην ἔχετε· πάλιν δὲ ὄψομαι ὑμᾶς, καὶ χαρήσεται ὑμῶν ἡ καρδιά, καὶ τὴν χαρὰν ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς αἶρει ἀφ’ ὑμῶν.

23 καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐρωτήσετε οὐδέν. * ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἂν τι αἰτήσητε τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δώσει ὑμῖν. **24** ἕως ἄρτι οὐκ ἠτήσατε οὐδέν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου· αἰτεῖτε καὶ λήμψεσθε, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν ᾗ πεπληρωμένη. ⁴

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 16:16–24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ Nestle, E., Nestle, E., Aland, B., Aland, K., Karavidopoulos, J., Martini, C. M., & Metzger, B. M. (1993). [The Greek New Testament](#) (27th ed., Jn 16:16–24). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

Greeting

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **7** It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. **9** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. **5**

1 Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις, **2** χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

3 Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μείᾳ ὑμῶν **4** πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος, **5** ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν, **6** πεποιθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ· **7** καθὼς ἐστὶν δίκαιον ἐμοὶ τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου συγκοινωνοῦς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας. **8** μάρτυς γάρ μου ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. **9** καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει **10** εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, **11** πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ. **6**

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Php 1:1–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ Nestle, E., Nestle, E., Aland, B., Aland, K., Karavidopoulos, J., Martini, C. M., & Metzger, B. M. (1993). [The Greek New Testament](#) (27th ed., Php 1). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

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Introduction

Philippi

Roman colony. Population boosted by veterans from the Roman civil wars ~ 50BC

Rome getting too crowded. Importing food. No new land.

Strong attachment to Rome. A centre of the imperial cult.

Large population of slaves, maybe up to 50%

Very few Jewish inhabitants. Appears to be no Synagogue. Conversion of Lydia – wealthy woman.

After casting out a spirit of divination from a girl, arrested, beaten and thrown into jail.

Miraculous escape for the chains with the resultant conversion of the Jailer.

Paul plays the Roman citizen card.

The “alarm” of the magistrates was understandable (v. 38). Abuse of the rights of a Roman citizen was a serious offense. Magistrates could be removed from office for such; a municipality could have its rights reduced. For instance, the emperor could deprive Philippi of all the privileges of its colony status for such an offense.⁷

Paul spent a short time in Philippi, but managed to establish a church, and now we have a letter Paul writes to them.

The church remained strong into the second century. Its location on the *Via Ignatia* made it ideally suited for hospitality to travelers. Fifty years after Paul’s letter to the church, Ignatius was escorted to Rome by Roman soldiers to be tried for his faith in Christ and he was comforted by the church at Philippi on the way.⁸

The letter is written when Paul is now in prison. Awaiting trial. Not place of punishment.

Situations.

Gentiles

Women

Generosity

Loyalty

Although written when Paul is in prison, the letter resounds with joy.

⁷ Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Acts* (Vol. 26, p. 357). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁸ Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 29). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Paul expresses his thankfulness to the church, and pleads for unity.

The letter sent by Epaphroditus who was returning to Philippi after taking their gift to Paul. He had become very ill while visiting Paul and has recovered and is on his way home. Paul intends to send Timothy to them a bit later on and hopes himself to come depending on the outcome of his trial.

V1

Describing himself and Timothy as slaves. No need to assert his authority as apostle. Takes the humblest role. Slave – person whose only identity is that of his or her master.

How would you describe your relationship to Jesus?

Paul often prepares his hearers for the major topics in the early sentences of his letters. He will remind them that they are to take the lowest place, because their Lord himself took upon himself the lowest place. They are not to think of promotion but of demotion.

Slavery was a commonplace feature of the Roman world of the first century and a fact of life seldom questioned or challenged (*OCD*, 843–44; A. A. Ruprecht, “Slave, Slavery,” *DPL*, 881–83; K. Hopkins [with P. J. Roscoe], *Conquerors and Slaves*; L. Adkins and R. A. Adkins, *Ancient Greece*, 412–13). There was no autonomy for the slave. His own will was totally subject to the will of another, so that he was a person with “no right of personal choice” (R. Rengstorf, *TDNT* 2:261). The service he provided was not voluntary but forced. He was totally in bondage to the claims of his master. He had no rights and no freedoms.⁹

How do you introduce yourself?

Mentions holy ones and roles of authority and service in the church. Overseers (bishops) and deacons. Church began to adopt formal structures early. Also Paul’s calling church members “saints” shows great respect. Setting an example.

Grace and peace – combination of Greek and Hebrew greetings. But has theological importance. Peace through the grace of God.

V3-11 one sentence. Main clause “I give thanks to God every time I think of you.”

Thankful even though the unity of the church was being threatened through internal conflict, particularly between two women. His concern for unity evident in all his letters. When people fall out then the unity of the church is strained as people begin to take sides! Paul’s solution is that, rather than taking sides, mature Christians should seek to help the parties resolve the matter.

He makes his prayer with joy. Joy is a major theme. In prison, cold smelly relying on others Paul’s letter expresses great joy and he encourages others to be joyful. Later on he will say rejoice in the Lord, again I say rejoice. All this despite his terrible circumstances.

How do you react when circumstances are bad, you are treated badly by others?

The reason for Paul’s expression of Joy – their partnership – *koinonia* – in the Gospel from the first day until now. Paul is probably thinking of the support he had received. Welcomed into Lydia’s home in Philippi, the gift sent, Epaphroditus sent to look after Paul. It is not only their affection for Paul but their fellowship IN THE GOSPEL. They supported Paul in his work as an apostle.

⁹ Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 5). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

What is our fellowship in the Gospel?

Having looked from the past to the present he now looks to the future. Paul prays not only with joy, but also with confidence.

“I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

The goal of the Good work begun in the Philippian Christians is that it is brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Our salvation, begun now, is only completed when Christ returns.

For when God is involved, whatever he begins already has the end in sight. The completed state already exists in the divine initiation. It is the nature of God that this be so. For what God creates he brings to completion (cf. Isa 48:12, 13; 44:6). So if God calls the community to faith, he stands also at the end of the call to bring each member to the desired goal of their faith—the salvation of their souls (cf. 1 Thess 5:24; see also 1 Cor 1:8, 9; 2 Cor 1:8; 2 Thess 3:3; cf. Gnllka).¹⁰

The place of the resurrection in the announcement of the Gospel! For many, the primary expression of the Gospel concerns our relationship with God now. That was not the Gospel preached by Paul. It concerned the belief in the resurrection and the “day of the Lord”. Without the belief that the end goal concerns the resurrection of the body, there is no hope in the Gospel.

Two things that were preached. Jesus & resurrection. The place of Jesus as the one with absolute authority and the future resurrection when he returns in power.

“It is right that I should **feel** this way about you” not “feel” but “think, feel and act”

All these activities of recollection, perception, accounting for, and hopeful anticipation, are included in the phrase translated as “exercising judgment” in v. 7. Because the Greek word behind this translation is so crucial to the argument of Philippians, I will spend a little time here discussing it. Φρονεῖν/*phronein* is very difficult to translate neatly into English. Although not very common in the NT outside of Philippians, the verb and its noun form φρόνησις/*phronēsis* are quite common in Greek, particularly in discussions of the moral life. The verb occurs ten times in Philippians, often at crucial places. In 2:2 (where it is used twice) and in 4:2 it describes an activity which is essential for the Philippians to engage in if they are to be unified in the ways Paul wishes. In 2:5 it reflects the patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting the Philippians are to embody in conformity to Christ. In 3:15–19 φρονεῖν/*phronein* occurs 3 times, again to talk about a comprehensive pattern of judgment that involves thinking, feeling, and acting. In 4:10 it occurs twice in reference to the Philippians’ disposition toward Paul, particularly their habit of sending him financial gifts.¹¹

Reasons – I hold you in my heart OR you hold me in your heart. You are always in my thoughts. I think about you all the time.

Partakers of grace. Grace is the privilege Paul has to share the Gospel resulting in his imprisonment, and his defence and confirmation of the Gospel – his preparation for trial. How could one regard sharing the Gospel as a privilege under these circumstances?

¹⁰ Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 25). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

¹¹ Fowl, S. E. (2005). *Philippians* (p. 28). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

When ministry gets hard, do you still consider serving Christ as a privilege, or does it become a bondage?

In his letter Paul is concerned about how Christians think – how they see things – ‘have the same mind in you that was in Christ’

V8

God is my witness. Paul expresses his deep emotion for the Philippian Christians. In Paul's day people felt with their guts – the word Paul uses here. The heart was the seat of thinking and decision.

Two requests

That your love may abound more and more with “knowledge and all discernment” Why add this?

Paul knows that if the love they already possess increases steadily (μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον, “more and more”) and continues to abound (περισσεύη, “may keep on increasing”—the total context indicates that the present tense is preferred to the aorist περισσεύσῃ, “may increase”), it will overflow into deeds of kindness; wrong attitudes and actions toward each other will disappear, and the problems at Philippi will be resolved (2:3–4; 4:2–3). Paul's prayer, therefore, borders on exhortation (Collange).¹²

He is also praying for them to abound in a certain type of love, that is, love with knowledge and discernment. He will soon find it necessary to warn them about the ever-present danger of false teachers (3:2, 18–19). The Philippians would make themselves easy prey for such teachers if, in the interest of being loving, they were uncritically to accept everything that these teachers were presenting.

If we are to follow Aquinas and, ultimately, Paul in this, we will have to shift our notions of love away from the overly romantic and sentimentalized versions of love so common in our current culture. Instead we should see love as a “habit.” Love needs to become an established disposition within us. This does not simply happen overnight. Rather, love becomes a habit for us as we undergo spiritual formation. Over time through prayer, contemplation, and action we become loving people. To the extent that such a disposition becomes stable within us, we have developed that habit of love. Then that love informs our judgments and actions so that they generate knowledge and moral wisdom. In this way abounding love leads to knowledge and moral wisdom. Paul's claim in v. 7 also demonstrated this. Remember that Paul's wisdom and judgments about the Philippians and God's action in their lives are expressed in the context of prayer and thanksgiving and supported by the love he has for them.¹³

We should be keenly aware of this danger. How often the church today has refused to stand against doctrinal error because someone argued that we must be loving! And, of course, love was understood to mean being agreeable and tolerant.

¹² Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 30). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

¹³ Fowl, S. E. (2005). *Philippians* (p. 33). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

No one believed more firmly in love than Paul, and yet he did not hesitate to rebuke a fellow apostle for compromising the truth (Gal. 2:11–21). Paul did this because he understood that love and truth are not enemies. The most loving thing we can do is stand for the truth in a loving way¹⁴

A growing love, fed by proper knowledge and moral insight, enables one to see the best way to live in light of the day of Christ.¹⁵

Discerning what is best develops character. A growing love provides for character development and completion. As Paul prayed, his thoughts moved to the day of accountability. He prayed that the Philippians would live in such a way that they would be without blame at that time. In this second petition, therefore, Paul saw the end of life on earth. As always, the return of the Lord and Christians' preparation for it occupied his thoughts. Paul identified through prayer the nature of complete character, the means to it, and the purpose of it.¹⁶

“They may approve what is best” probably between the Judaizers and the libertines

¹⁴ Ellsworth, R. (2004). [*Opening up Philippians*](#) (pp. 19–20). Leominster: Day One Publications.

¹⁵ Melick, R. R. (1991). [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#) (Vol. 32, p. 66). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁶ Melick, R. R. (1991). [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#) (Vol. 32, p. 66). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.