

Philippians 10-04-30b

Let's pick up our study now right at the end of chapter 1 of the book of Philippians. We began in our first session this evening in verse 27 looking at conduct that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, representing being a person who embodies a thing, palatuma, palatuo. And Paul says, if I come and witness this at first hand or just hear about it, that you will be standing fast with one spirit and one mind.

And you say, you know, what is the difference between the spirit and the mind, the pneuma and the psuche? Well, spirit is in the New Testament always used of either God's Holy Spirit or the things of spirit that pertain to believers. You don't find pneuma being used of unbelievers. You don't really find pneuma being used for faithless believers.

It is as though there is an active part of the believer's makeup that is a reflection, is a harmony of God's Holy Spirit. It is as though when the Holy Spirit is active in our lives, there is a part of us that wakes up, that mirrors that, that partakes of it. And in the absence of the Holy Spirit's active ministry, that seems to be dormant.

And I'm not trying to be technical. I'm not doing a study on pneumatology or is man, what do they say, bipolar, tripolar, bipartite, tripartite. There are people who try to say, are we body, soul and spirit, or are we just matter and non-matter, is the soul and the spirit all one thing, is it separate? The Bible doesn't agonize over that question and therefore I don't either.

But what is clear is that when you see the Apostle Paul talking about believers sharing a pneuma, this is not the Holy Spirit. This is a like-minded reflection of what the Holy Spirit does. It's being transformed by the renewing of the nous, that's the mind.

It doesn't use nous here, it uses pneuma and it uses psuche. It's not enough to assent to a creed, that would be being of one nous, being of one logos, we share the same word, we affirm the same statements. He doesn't make that claim here, does he? He doesn't encourage that.

It isn't the detail of the doctrine that is most important, it is the spirit, the immaterial part of us that partakes of the eternal being alike, being united. And our soul, soul is the seat of emotion, it is where our norms and standards reside, it is the part of us that survives beyond death, it is the real self, this is our thinking, this is our pattern of perception and approach to life in general. Everybody has this, unbelievers have a soul, personality, character, intents, motives, we're a big stew of stuff, well that's your psuche.

And as I mentioned recently, I don't remember exactly where, talking about the ancient thinkers and what Socrates thought and his followers after and what the nature and relationship was between the soma and the psuche, the psyche, and their ideas of perfecting themselves apart from God by using the days of the flesh to perfect the soul. Well, this is a unified group of believers that Paul is talking about, and he doesn't say each of you individually as little spiritual

entities, he says you as a group. And how many times in the New Testament, well over 50 times you have the phrase one another, love one another, serve one another, consider one another, encourage one another.

We function in fellowship, we function as a group, we should cultivate and nurture fellowship, one spirit, one soul, like heartedness, it doesn't use cardia here, but in the way we use it in English, we say about somebody, he's really got a heart for ministry, well what are you saying? His attitude, his bent of thinking, his enthusiasm, his efforts and energy, his direction in life is that way, that's psuche, that's pneuma, together. One spirit, one mind, striving together. You can't strive together for the faith of the gospel with division, and dissent, and argument, and grievous rifts, says how Paul has to start the book of 1 Corinthians, isn't it? I hear there are wars and divisions among you, it shouldn't be that way.

You shouldn't be saying, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas. Are you not all in Christ? Are not all things yours in Christ? Why do you divide? And this really, in my opinion, is a condemnation of the unfortunate fact of denominations. It's unfortunate that groups of us are so far apart that we say, I am of Luther, I am of Wesley, I am of whoever.

All of the denominations have got to start somewhere, and we have split off into these creeds. I started out as a Methodist persuasion and ended up as a Baptist persuasion, and I am still heavily connected in the Baptist world. I have Baptist family heritage going back to the dim ages of the past.

It's unfortunate. It's kind of like other things where the Bible says, this wasn't God's intent, but he had to permit it because you're imperfect. So it is what it is now.

But the ideal, the goal to which we strive is unity, and to the extent that we can foster that, and that's why it's a judgment call. On the one hand, Paul says, if you're going to strive together, you need to have one pneuma and one psuche. On the other hand, he says, don't let there be divisions among you.

What if this person doesn't believe Jesus really rose from the dead? Do I schism from that person or not? Am I of one pneuma and one psuche with somebody who doesn't believe that the Bible is actually true? And we do. There is discernment. There is a time to unite, and there is a time to separate.

There are essentials and there are non-essentials. We get to figure that out. It's part of maturity.

You train your kids when they're little. When they get bigger, you turn them loose, and you don't micromanage their lives and say, let me tell you what to do in each situation. You hope that they've got the stuff to do that themselves.

It's the whole point. I don't want my 80-year-old dad coming back and telling me how to live my

life. I'd like to try that myself, and he doesn't.

He's been a great dad. I don't tell him how to live his life either, as far as that goes. We all have to hoe our own row, and yet, this is why within the space of five verses, in one place, Paul says bear one another's burdens, and two verses later he says each one must carry his own load.

That's why you have Ecclesiastes. There is a time for being united and affirming and ignoring divisions and differences, and there's a time when you have to discern and you have to make a distinction. So, the goal, the ideal, and he's talking to the Philippian church and he says, you Philippians, what I want to hear about you, whether I show up and see it or only hear about it secondhand, is that this is the case.

Not in any way intimidated by your opponents, your antagonists, those who lean against you, which is a demonstration that they have lost. That's the best, it's not quite faithful to the Greek, but that's the colloquial connotation here. When you are confident, when you are joyful, when you all are like-minded, when you treat the truth of the gospel as reality, your hope of the return of Jesus Christ, your hope of blessing and reward in eternity, your hope of that bright future with God is so real to you that nothing in this life intimidates you proves that they've lost.

They cannot match it. You remember the, I think one of the funniest scenes in the Bible is when Moses and Aaron go in there and they're telling Pharaoh, you know, you've got to let the people go, and then they throw down the rod and the rod becomes a snake and they pick it up and it turns back into a rod and the Egyptians say, ah, we can do that. So, they throw their rods down, their rods turn into snakes, and then Aaron's rod goes over and eats their snakes and they don't have a rod to pick back up.

Then Aaron picks his back up and they have nothing to pick back up. They match the first demonstration or two and then they just start failing. That great scene in Cecil B. DeMille where they touch the water and everything starts turning red and that great technicolor spread of the Nile turning to blood and Yul Brynner gets the pot and he says, no problem, and he pours the clear water and it just turns red right while he's pouring it.

The Egyptians can no longer match that. The demonstrations of God's power and God's presence and the truth of God's word overwhelm them. It is a demonstration that they have lost.

But of course, they didn't get it and they've got to go through nine more plagues after the Nile turns to blood before they even begin to get it. But it's a demonstration. It's a demonstration at the very outset.

Same thing here. How can you most effectively witness to a lost, fallen, dying world? Be one in spirit, be one in soul, contend, strive together for the faith of the good news of Jesus Christ and never be intimidated, never be crushed, cowed, caused to wilt. That's the demonstration that they've lost.

Now, have you ever seen the case where people have picked a side and that side begins to be obviously the losing side and people start abandoning it because they don't want to be on the losing side? Well, what is the most effective way to make people or to help people realize that they're on the losing side? Satan has been judged. Those who oppose God are losers. They are sons of perdition.

That realization that I am hopeless, helpless, and useless, I am without hope and without God in this world, I stand condemned, sin, righteousness, and judgment, that realization is key to repentance, to change of mind, to claiming Christ as Savior by faith. We can't always communicate the details of the work of Christ on the cross to people and quote unquote lead them to Christ. What we can do is stand as a silent witness to the world that that view has lost.

Apollia. This word Apollia is really fascinating. The first time I really studied it in depth was when we started looking at the perdition associated with the lake of fire and the second death and the description of Judas as a son of Apollia.

What does that mean? Well, when you go to the exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, you find that there is a fairly extensive entry under Apollumi, which is the verb to destroy, to lose, to die, to be lost. Apollia is the related noun, destruction, waste, annihilation. This goes back before the days of the New Testament, classical Greek writing.

If you want to find out what a word's history was, what its etymology is, you go back and look at Xenophon and Thucydides and Herodotus and Plato and Homer and so forth. It is used in different ways. We use the word dead or death in different ways, don't we? Get home after a long, hard day of work, I am just dead on my feet.

Well, you are not dead on your feet. This is hyperbole. This is an expression that means something less than actual physical death.

Apollia has both a literal and a figurative usage. In fact, the Bible says that a tree can be dead being fruitless. A fruitless tree is said to be dead in that it has no production.

It doesn't mean that the tree itself has no life whatsoever, but it's dead in terms of producing anything. Sarah's womb was dead. Think about it.

Think about the actual internal organs of an elderly woman. Is this necrosis and non-living tissue? No. Dead in the sense of no production, fruitless, unable to conceive and bear a child.

But the word is figurative. We understand this in English, but it gets tricky when you're translating a foreign word, a Greek word in this case. In the New Testament, the verb apollumi occurs 90 times, which is fairly frequent, and Luke uses it slightly more than everybody else.

So you find, for example, in Luke 17.33, quoting Jesus, whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it.

Apollia, apollumi. Whoever loses his life, whoever apollumies his life, will preserve it.

What's it talking about here? Whoever seeks to keep, hang on to, his life, will lose it, will apollumi it. Whoever apollumies his life will preserve it. If you try to seize and lay hold of your life and live it for yourself, you're going to find it turning to ashes and dust in your hands, and you find that you have ended up with nothing.

If you let go, if you deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Christ as he enjoins his disciples, suddenly you find that life has overtaken you. You have gained life. God has given you life in abundance.

What did Jesus say? I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. So what does apollumi mean in that context? It means basically letting go of something so that you are not retaining possession and benefit from it. It's no longer under your control, no longer in your grasp.

It doesn't mean that it has been ultimately and finally wiped out and annihilated. It means it's not in your control, not in your possession. You have this statement, by the way, made by the Lord Jesus in all four Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. He that seeks to save his life will lose it. He that loses his life, in some cases it says, for my sake in the Gospels, will find it.

That's the idea. You have this in Mark 8.35. You have it in Matthew 10.39. You have it in John 12.25. Interesting, in John you get a great insight into what apollumi means because in John 12.25 it says, He who loves his life loses it, apollumi. And he who hates his life in this world will keep it, ace, with a view toward life eternal.

It doesn't get much more clear than that. He who loves his life in the here and now will forfeit it, will lose it, have nothing to show for it. He who hates, and what does hate mean in the New Testament? Jacob if I loved, Esau if I hated, sense.

It means to not respect, to not hold dear, to not honor, to not treat as valuable. God says, I will honor those who honor me and those who don't, I will lightly esteem. And to hate means to lightly esteem, to offer no benefit, to do no favors for.

He who hates his life, who doesn't nurture, grasp, love his life in this world, will preserve it unto life eternal. You let go now, you are laying hold of eternal life in the future. It's kind of a counterintuitive thing.

It's one of those constantly, God loves to be, not perverse, but counterintuitive. God does the unexpected. You think the older is going to inherit and the younger inherits? You think the older is going to be the master and the younger is going to serve? No, the older will serve the younger.

You think the older son is going to get a blessing and Jacob crosses his hands? You think the

great will be great and the least will be least in the kingdom? No, the last will be first and the first will be last. Any man who wants to rule in the kingdom, let him be your servant. Serve now, rule later.

Take up your cross, deny yourself and follow Jesus and you are going to end up in glory with Him, seated with Him on His throne, walking with Him in white, sharing in inheritance and opportunity and reflecting in the glory of the Father. What a great thing. But it's the unexpected.

You have to think outside the human box. So, standing in this way, united with fellow believers, striving together for the faith of the good news, is to the adversaries and the antagonists and the opponents a demonstration. Proof is not a good translation here.

It is a demonstration. It is a manifestation. It is an object lesson of loss that they have lost.

In Greek this is great, which is to them a demonstration of Apollia, their Apollia. But, for you, Soteria, deliverance, salvation, not just, I'm not going to hell, salvation, but vindication, blessing, up-building, deliverance in the first class cabin. You're not just riding in a dingy, hanging on for dear life.

You're not just hanging on to a life ring, dodging sharks. You have been brought aboard in great abundance and luxury and provision. But, deliverance and this from God.

And, personally, as I look at the Greek, do you see in your Bible there, when you say, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, comma, and that from God, period, verse 29. You see that? My suggestion. That's only a suggestion.

They didn't come and ask me when they printed these Bibles. I think the 29 goes after salvation. And it should only be a comma.

You're not being intimidated. One mind striving together and so on is a demonstration to them of loss. Fresh thought here.

We're turning a little bit of a corner. And, that from God, to you, it is favored on behalf of Christ. In other words, this being granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but to suffer for His sake, is what is from God.

So, not only is it a demonstration to the enemies, manifestation that they're losing out, but, and you have here the conjunction chi, chi to ta apothea, theu actually, chi to ta apotheu, and this from God, colon. It's a demonstration that they've lost, and it's a demonstration that this is from God, the following. That, to you, it has been given.

Has been granted, it says in your New King James. This is from karizomai, the word we get karis, grace from. It's been graced.

This is the verb from which we get the grace noun. It's a demonstration that this is from God, that to you, it has been graced, it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to trust in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf. Now, this, when I remember when I was in Sunday school, I was a little kid all the way up into my twenties, I would look at this verse and I would say, some gift.

It's not only been, I like the part where it's been granted that I have the opportunity to believe, but it's a gift to suffer for Christ? What a deal. Why am I happy about this? Why should I be, hey, it's been granted to you to be persecuted and to be ground under the heel of adversaries and to go through adversity and tribulation and sorrow and suffering and pain. Oh boy, that's for me.

What kind of person would get excited about that? Well, it's not quite that garish, it's not quite that contrasty in Greek. And if you look at the context, when we have that like-mindedness, when we're not intimidated by whatever befalls us, and it is not only a demonstration to those who are opposed to Christ that they have lost, but it is a demonstration that it is of God that we not only believe, but that we suffer. God has a purpose, in other words, in the suffering, and that becomes evident, it is manifested, it is brought out, that the opportunity has been given to us.

That's what charis grace is. It's unmerited favor. You are given the opportunity, not only to trust in Christ, but also to pascho, P-A-S-C-H-O, and to trust in Jesus Christ.

It is generally translated suffer, but the basic meaning is to undergo, or to experience. It means to experience. Most experience, you know, man is born to suffer, surely his sparks fly upward.

But the lexicon says the active verb pascho has the passive basic meaning undergo, experience, or suffer. It occurs 42 times in the New Testament. So, in Luke 13-2, remember that Jesus is talking about the tower that fell on the people in Galilee, and he says, do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate, because they experienced this tower falling thing, because they pascho'd this, they underwent it, they went through it.

In Acts 28-5, when Paul has survived with the other soldiers and sailors, the shipwreck, and they've gone and crawled up on the island, they're building a fire, and they're gathering wood, and the asp, the fire, and they're building a fire, and it's horrid, because they know he's going to be dead within minutes, and Paul shakes off the snake into the fire, and it says in Acts 28-5 that Paul shook the creature off into the fire, and pascho'd no harm, experienced no harm. We say in English, suffered no harm, but it doesn't mean suffered in the sense of pain, it means experienced. He underwent no harm, didn't feel any harm, pascho'd, to experience.

So, it has been granted to you not only to believe in Christ, not only to get your foot in the door of the kingdom, not only to be rescued from eternal damnation, but to experience, to live, to undergo whatever life brings for the sake of Christ, to experience everything in your life counts. Good stuff, bad stuff, blessing, adversity, it all counts. It has been granted to you.

It doesn't mean to agonizo, to bleed and be martyred, to undergo crushing pain and unremitted bad stuff. Pascho'd, it just means your experience counts now. Every minute, every decision, that's why Paul says you have to take your thoughts captive for Christ, because everything you pascho'd counts.

It's all on the books, it's all part of the conflict, it's all in the game, you're not on the bench, you're not in the stands, you're on the field, you're playing. Your life counts. Pascho'd, it has been granted not only in him to trust, but also on behalf of him to live, to experience, to undergo stuff.

This is the same contest. Here's your agona, the same contest which you have seen in me and now you hear in me. When Paul was in Philippi, he was opposed, remember? We went through that in the latter chapters of Acts, when he went and saw Lydia and Luke is with him and it's a we section and there's all that defugally in town and so on.

He says you saw that contest. Did Paul get stoned in Philippi? Was he left for dead? Did he get the 40 stripes minus one? No, it was what he experienced. You saw this contest.

Agona in Greek, it comes in English as agony and we say, oh, it's just the worst, most horrible pain. Agona means it's a striving, it's a struggle, it's a contest, you pit yourself against something. And he says, it's been granted to you that what you experience can be on behalf of Christ instead of on behalf of yourself, instead of just being meaningless.

Your experiences, you're just putting up with creaky joints, you're just putting up with a lack of money, you're just putting up with perverse and cantankerous people, you're just getting through the day with its downs and its ups. And all of that posko is on behalf of Christ. You can convert it as Christian life.

It's an amazing thing and 99% of us as Christians miss it. Most Christians think, well, you know, got saved, got my ticket out of the lake of fire, I need to try to share Christ with a few people, try to live a good life, wait for the flaming chariot to take me to glory. And we think, well, maybe there will be these episodes, these opportunities, maybe there will be a short-term mission trip or maybe there will be, whatever it may be, an opportunity to teach a class or opportunity to this, but we forget that all of the stuff in between, all of those gaps between these formal acts of ministry or righteousness or whatever, getting up in the morning, conversations with the spouse, chasing the kids around, flipping out the lights, mowing the lawn, doing the dishes, washing the laundry, making sure all the I's are dotted and the T's are crossed in our daily life, this is our posko, this is what we experience.

It has been granted to us that all of that can be on behalf of Christ. Nobody else has that opportunity. Old Testament saints didn't have that opportunity.

Have you ever noticed how in the law of Moses, there is nothing telling them what they ought to be thinking on a daily basis? Moses never tells the Israelites, take your thoughts captive for God

in heaven. He doesn't say, do you know God is weighing out the thoughts and intents of your heart in the law? You get that some in David in the Psalms, but in the law, it's just show up for the feasts, pay your tithe, don't muzzle the ox that treads out the grain, burn the priest's daughter that commits fornication. They've got these little rules and all of the gaps, they're kind of on their own.

The law doesn't tell them what to think or how to behave. It's very general and very behavior oriented. Not us.

It has been granted to us, it has been granted to us to convert all of our experience into something that is on behalf of Christ. Not just to enter in and believe in his name, but to live a transformed life. This is Romans 12, 1 and 2. Don't be like the world.

Don't be conformed to the world. Be transformed. Present your body, your life, your day, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

This is your service. It's reasonable. It's a gift.

So, it has been granted, and you can see why the word order is important here. It says it has been granted on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake. But, it says, literally, it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to trust in him, but to be faithful but also on behalf of him to experience, to undergo, to live a circumstance filled life.

And you have two cases of on behalf of him, which they translate in the second instance as for his sake. Having the same context which you observed in me, and now here is continuing. You saw this when I was with you in Philippi, and now you've heard that it's still going on.

My circumstance. That brings us to chapter 2. Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Now, how much sense does this make in the context that we have seen, in what Paul has been describing and calling them to, that one spirit, one soul.

So when you get to this, and he says, therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, and the word encouragement is the same exact word used for the Holy Spirit. Remember the paraclete? I'm going away, but I will not leave you orphans. I will send you another comforter.

Paraclete. This is paraclesis. The one who Kaleo means to call, para-alongside.

This is like a paramedic, except it's paraclete. If there is any calling alongside in Christ, what does that mean? How many people does it take in order for somebody to be called alongside? You've got to have a minimum of two. If I am stranded on an island all by myself, there is no paraclesis.

Call alongside. Somebody's got to have a side to which I can be called, right? You can't have consolation in Christ, as they translate it here, if there's not at least two believers involved. This is

comfort in the sense of coming alongside someone.

There's countless stories in the Navy about a ship that is in distress. It's been through a battle or it has suffered a mechanical breakdown or whatever, and there's nothing that heartens and encourages the sailors on that ship more than seeing another ship of the friendly sort come over the horizon and come alongside to offer aid and support and supplies and repairs and encouragement. Come alongside.

So Paul says, if there is any such thing as one of you coming alongside the other one to encourage in Christ, constant theme, everything he's talked about, all of their fellowship, all of their friendship, all of their enthusiasm, their rejoicing, their expectation and their longing to see each other is all in Christ. That's what binds them together. If there is any comfort in that, if any comfort of love, love is agape, this is the active kind of love, it's not an abstract sort of ethereal thing.

Agape means you do something. Agape is the John 3.16 love. God so loved the world that he gave.

And this is paramouthion. And para once again is alongside and you basically have this word only here. It is comfort of love and it's another contact based thing.

That's why I'm not too sure about the texting thing. How alongside are you? I guess it depends on how you're built. If there is any koinonia numitas, spirit fellowship, and this I think is small s for spirit, the same spirit we had up above, one spirit, one soul.

If there is spirit fellowship, that's what he's been talking about all along, isn't it? Koinonia numitas. If there is any splachna kai oiktirmoi, splachna, that's the guts, it almost sounds like your innards. Splachna, s-p-l-a-g-h-n-a, splachna.

I just like to say it. It's your inner organs, literally in Greek. The abstract or non-literal meaning is your inner yearning.

Most of us can remember way, way back when you're a teenager and you start having the stirrings of getting a crush on somebody and you get that weird sensation inside. You see that person and your heart rate goes up and you just get that weird, something has gone on down in the middle of you. And it's just different.

Something sets it off. Well, that's splachna. It's an internal strong feeling for someone.

And it's translated here as an internal strong feeling for someone. Affection, which is really kind of mild. When I had crushes in high school, I wouldn't have characterized that as affection.

I would have described it as intense turmoil. It's a mixture of excitement and fear and interest. Well, this is the concern.

You really deeply care about a thing. Splachna and oiktyrmoi, which is translated here as mercy. And interestingly here, splachna and oiktyrmoi, these are plurals.

Affections and mercies. They're plural. And these are overt expressions of everything that has come before.

Your comfort of love, your encouragement in Christ, your partnership or fellowship of spirit. And what results from this? These affections and mercies. It's plural.

So if there is any such thing, and this is a first class condition, if and it's true. Of course there is. That's everything he described in the first chapter, right? That's all he's been talking about.

He's sticking around instead of going to glory and being with Christ on account of these things. Right? So he says, it's almost since there is encouragement in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of spirit, affections and compassions, mercies. Since these things exist, complete my joy.

Fill up my joy. This is pleirao. The same word that's used for the filling of the spirit.

But here he says, fulfill my joy. There's that word again. Fulfill my joy by thinking the same thing.

Having the same love together in soul. This is as far as we're going to get tonight. But we're going to start to see these words of thinking.

After he has talked about unity of soul, unity of spirit, he's going to bring that epinosis and isthesis idea back. Because those are functions of thought, of reason, of knowledge and discernment. These are thinking processes.

You can't feel your way to maturity. Fill up my joy and really hina means in order that. Fill up my joy.

This is an aorist active imperative. In order that, you might think. Froneo.

The same thing. Think the same. Love the same.

Being together in soul. Sun sukoi. One souled.

With souled. The same soul. Just like he said up above.

One thinking. Hen fronuntes. There's the second use of froneo in the noun form here.

One thought. And it says, let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit. That's where we'll start next time.

But you can already see where he's going. If you really have that community spirit, that citizenship attitude, I am a part of the gospel and the body of Christ and my experience, my

pascha is on behalf of Christ and we're all thinking that way, what could make Paul happier than for the whole group to share that attitude and that view, that perspective, that understanding. Fulfill my joy by everybody thinking this way.

Everybody loving this way. Everybody agreeing with this way. Everybody loving this way.

One accord, one mind. Sun sukoi is what they translate as one accord. But it's really having souls with one another.

It's a beautiful expression of what our community of believers can be, should be, will be when we dedicate ourselves to our calling. This is the gift that God has given us. This is the opportunity that we have in Christ, not only to believe in him, but to live our lives on his behalf together as a group.

Christian fellowship is extremely important. We're not built to be alone just like the man, not good that man should be alone. Nothing's changed.

It's not good for us to try to fly solo. A fellowship of believers is important, like-minded, like-souled, same love, same heart, same understanding, same perspective. It's important for us to find those believers.

They exist. It's a matter of finding them, getting with them, and pursuing this great opportunity that God has graced us with. This is what is on Paul's heart.

This is what he thinks of. This is what he writes to the Philippians. He's now, having given us the piece of bread of the Philippians, the middle section of what's going on with him in the Praetorian Guard and his incarceration, coming back to the Philippians and what he wants them to be again.

Now we're going to get a fresh perspective. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here's Paul.

Here's the Philippians. Here's some more Philippians. Here's some more Philippians.

All believers growing toward Christ. Now he's going to focus on Christ and talk about the mind that is in Christ. You know from the passage, since we've memorized it, where this is going.

With this background and this backdrop, this view of Christ is so much more meaningful because he has already described the kind of mind that Jesus exhibits. It's just going to be an appreciation of the Lord Jesus as the ultimate example and reflection of these things. So that's what we'll look at next week, but let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the power that it contains, the healing and the strengthening that it provides. We thank you for the ministry of your Holy Spirit enabling us to understand it and benefit from it.

We thank you for the fellowship that we enjoy and the blessings that come from it. We ask your

blessing on us as we go forth that the truth from your word will be active and will leave its mark and its imprint on our thoughts and actions so that our lives will reflect your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus. We ask it in his name.

Amen.