

Introduction to Paul's letter to the Philippians

The Dating of the Prison Epistles

Paul's Epistles, or letters, to the Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians are known collectively as his Prison Epistles. They were evidently written while Paul was in prison and uncertain whether he would be freed or face death (see particularly Philippians 1:12-25). But the key question is when and from where were they written?

Many have argued that they were written from Paul's final imprisonment in Rome, therefore dating them after his letter to the Romans. Others have thought that they may have been written during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea, after his arrest in the Temple at Jerusalem but before his transportation to Rome. These are the only occasions of lengthy imprisonment recorded in the Book of Acts.

However, in recent years many scholars have suggested that Paul may have been imprisoned in Ephesus in the early to mid 50s. N T Wright has provided what I believe to be persuasive arguments for this view. In particular, he and Michael Bird provide the following four arguments for this view in their excellent co-authored book, *The New Testament in Its World* (p. 439), which I summarise as follows:

1. Paul stayed in Ephesus for some time. An Ephesian imprisonment is a reasonable deduction based on Luke's report of the riots his preaching stirred up, his own reference to, "the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia" (2 Corinthians 1:8), and to his enigmatic remark about fighting "wild beasts in Ephesus" (1 Corinthians 15:32).
2. In his letter to the Romans, Paul states that he hopes to travel from Rome to Spain. But in his prison letter to Philemon, Paul suggests that if he is released from prison he hopes to come and visit Philemon in Colossae. Paul's comments to Philemon, along with the fact that Philemon's slave, Onesimus, fled to find Paul in prison, fit in with an Ephesian captivity rather than imprisonment in Rome.
3. Timothy is the co-author of Paul's letter to the Philippians. We have no evidence that Timothy accompanied Paul to Rome. The later Pastoral Epistles suggest he remained in Ephesus.
4. The suggestion that mention of "the praetorium" and the "saints of Caesar's household" in Philippians 1:13 and 4:22 suggest an imprisonment in Rome is unwarranted. "Given the prominence of the city, an imperial residence with imperial administrators and a skeleton garrison would be found in Ephesus."

Philippi and the history of its Church

Philippi was a Roman colony situated at the far eastern end of a large fertile plain in central Macedonia and was the urban political centre of its region. It was about 10 miles inland from the seaport of Neapolis and was situated on the Egnatian Way. "Its population was both Roman and Greek; and although Latin was the official language, Greek was the predominant language of everyday life" (Fee).

The church evidently included people from a variety of social backgrounds: Lydia the well-to-do business woman, the Philippian jailer and the a slave girl. The church had taken Paul to heart and supported him in his continuing missionary activity (Phil 4:15-16 cf. 2 Cor 8:1-5), and now sent a gift to him in prison (Phil 4:10,18).

It is evident that the church has experienced opposition and has had to face suffering (Phil 1:27-30). Paul's words suggest that they may be suffering at the hands of the Roman authorities even as he is presently imprisoned by that same power. However, Paul is also concerned that the Philippians may face pressure from Judaisers to may seek to persuade them

to adopt the protection of Judaism and its law-code (Phil 4:2-3 and following). Paul is concerned that, at this critical moment in history, these Christians live lives distinct both from Roman society and from Judaism.

Paul's letter to the Philippians

Paul's letter to the Philippians is an informal letter rather than a doctrinal treatise or a logical argument. Paul makes use of Epaphroditus' return to Philippi as an opportunity of writing as a friend to friends¹. Paul is writing to the firstfruits of Europe, not to settle a debate or to correct errors (though he does address local difficulties Phil 4:2), but to express his appreciation of these Christians, thanking them for their gift and encouraging them to single-minded devotion in following Christ.

If there is a single theme to this letter it is the effect of Christ's death and resurrection for the believer. The Christian is one who knows Christ, and this means more than knowing that they benefit from Christ's death and resurrection; it involves being united with Christ in his death and resurrection. This was the burden of Paul's preaching and the driving reality of his life. It is evident in Phil 3 where he describes the radical transformation knowing Christ has made on his thinking, his values and his hopes and ambitions. More than that, knowing Christ has transformed his whole pattern of life; his driving desire is to know more of Christ even though this means being conformed to him in his death that he might be conformed to him in his resurrection life.

Christians are those who must live in union with Christ under the shadow of the cross. They are to be a people transformed in heart, mind and character of life. They are to be visibly different. Thus Paul exhorts the Philippians to possess the mind of Christ, to possess a common mind one with another, to do all things without murmuring or complaining, to rejoice in the Lord always...

This dynamic, which comes from the life of Christ in the life of the Christian, is seen in Paul's own behaviour – in prison, under threat of death, yet remaining useful, pressing on to glory, content and rejoicing in whatever circumstance may befall him. Paul's words, 'for me to live is Christ and to die is gain' are no mere words but voice the passionate conviction that shapes his life.

Nor does Paul think himself at all extraordinary, but exhorts the Philippians to follow his example and to take special note of those who live according to the same pattern (3:17).

This is a very special letter that breathes a passion for Christ. It was written that, by God's grace, the same passion might dominate those to whom it was sent – and that includes us.

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Philippians

Drane, John	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Eadie, John,	<i>A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians</i> , T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1894
Fee, Gordon D	<i>Paul's Letter to the Philippians</i> (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995
Hendriksen, William	<i>Philippians</i> , Banner of Truth, London, 1962
Lightfoot, JB	<i>St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians</i> , 3 rd Ed., MacMillan, London, 1873
Motyer, J Alex	<i>Studies in the letter to the Philippians</i> , IVF, London, 1966

¹ Fee categorises Philippians as a 'letter of friendship.'

Philippians 1:1-2

The letter begins with the common threefold salutation consisting of writer, addressees and greeting.

Philippians 1:1

Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δούλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν
ἐν Φιλίπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις·

"Timothy is associated with Paul as one who was well known to this church, and who had been with him on his first visit, who afterwards was sent by him to labour in Macedonia, and who cherished a fervent regard for the welfare of the Philippian saints. Acts 16:1,10; 19:22; Phil 2:19,20." Eadie.

Fee suggests that Timothy may also have acted as secretary or amanuensis.

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

Cf. Paul's use of this term to describe Christ in 2:7.

ἅγιος, α, ου holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

"The saints' i.e. the covenant people: a term transferred from the old dispensation to the new. The chosen race was a holy people (λαος ἅγιος), the Israelites were saints (ἅγιοι), by virtue of their consecration to Jehovah: see e.g. Exod 19:6; Deut 7:6; 14:2,21 ... The Christian Church, having taken the place of the Jewish race, has inherited all its titles and privileges; it is a 'chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation (ἔθνος ἅγιον), a peculiar people' (1 Peter 2:9)." Lightfoot

Motyer draws attention to the contrast between the common Christian language which speaks of 'The Letter of *Saint Paul* to the Philippians' (see for example, the title of Lightfoot's commentary), with these words in which Paul speaks of himself as a slave and the Philippians as saints. Christians are termed 'saints' or holy ones because they belong to a holy God. The term implies a holy calling.

οὖσιν Verb, pres ptc, m & n dat pl εἰμι
Φιλίπποι, ων Philippi, Proper name, plural in form

ἐπισκοπος, ου m overseer, guardian;
bishop

"The official term ἐπισκοπος, of Greek origin, is in the diction of the New Testament the same as πρεσβυτερος, of Jewish usage... The mention of ἐπισκοποι in the plural, and the naming of both classes of office-bearers after the general body of members, indicates a state of things which did not exist in the second century." Eadie.

"No evidence exists for a single leader as the 'head' of the local assembly in the Pauline churches." Fee – though Fee suggests that this may be due to the fact that Paul, though not regularly present with them, was viewed as their leader.

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper,
minister, deacon

"From our distance it is nearly impossible to know either what their function was or how they are to be distinguished from the 'overseers,' although it is almost certain that they are. If the functional sense of these terms is also the clue to their titular use, then the 'overseers' are probably those who give general oversight to the congregation, while the 'deacons' are distinguished by their actual deeds of service." Fee

Philippians 1:2

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν
καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

χαρις, ιτος f grace
εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Cf. Eph. 1:2. "Here is a marvellous example of Paul 'turning into gospel' everything he sets his hand to. The traditional greeting in the Hellenistic world was χαρειν – the infinitive of the verb 'to rejoice,' but in salutations meaning simply 'Greetings!' (see Acts 15:23; Jas 1:1). In Paul's hands this now becomes χαρις ('grace'), to which he adds the traditional Jewish greeting *shalom* ('peace,' in the sense of 'wholeness' or 'well-being'). Thus instead of the familiar 'greetings,' Paul salutes his brothers and sisters in Christ with 'grace to you – and peace.'" Fee

Philippians 1:3-8

The salutations in Paul's letters are commonly followed by a thanksgiving. The thanksgiving anticipates the contents of the letter itself.

Verses 3-8 are a single convoluted sentence in Paul's Greek.

Philippians 1:3

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνείᾳ
ὑμῶν

εὐχαριστω thank, give thanks
μνεια, ας f remembrance, mention

It is just possible that the Greek could mean 'because of *your* every remembrance [of me]' – ἐπι has the sense 'on the basis of' in v.5. But the traditional view, 'at all *my* remembrance of *you*' is the more likely, particularly in context.

His remembrance of them would have included all that is recorded of his work in Philippi in Acts 16.

Philippians 1:4

πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος,

παντοτε always

χαρα the first of 16 occurrences of this word in this letter.

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

Some suggest that ὑπὲρ παντων ὑμων is to be connected with the εὐχαριστω of the previous verse.

"Not only is he a man of prayer, but a man whose prayer is filled with thanksgiving as with petition, and whose thanksgiving is for God's people, for whom Paul himself feels deep and passionate longing... Here, then, is the paradigm of Pauline spirituality: thanksgiving and prayer, filled with joy, on behalf of *all* of God's people in Philippi." Fee. It is good when our prayers are marked by thanksgiving for *all* whom we name in prayer.

Philippians 1:5

ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν,

κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in, participation

This term is used by Paul in 2 Cor 9:13 and Rom 15:26 for (financial) 'contribution' to Paul's Gospel work – and it could have that sense here (cf. 4:15-16). But the term seems here to be used in a more general sense. Eadie takes it in the wider sense of 'participation' (cf v.7): "Thus understood, it denotes participation, or community of interest in whatever had the gospel for its object. All that belonged to the defence and propagation of the gospel was a matter of common concern to them – of sympathy and co-operation. The pecuniary contributions sent to the apostle and acknowledged in this epistle, are, of necessity, included." Fee thinks that the meaning is that they are contending for the gospel *in Philippi* as Paul does *in Rome*. So they both participate in the one work of spreading the gospel.

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel

"It does not take much reading of Paul's letters to recognise that the gospel is the singular passion of his life; that passion is the glue that in particular holds this letter together." Fee

πρωτος, η, ον first, leading, foremost
ἄχρι until, as far as

Philippians 1:6

πεποιθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ·

πεποιθως Verb, perf act ptc, m nom sπειθω persuade; perf act & pass have confidence, be confident

πεποιθως αὐτο τουτο 'since I have this very confidence'. For this construction cf. Gal 2:10; 2 Cor 2:3.

Motyer draws attention to the connection with the previous verse: "It was when he recollected their partnership in the gospel (verse 5) that he was led on to express his certainty of their eternal security ... In other words, Christian assurance is the product not only of the truth that God will never forsake his people or let them slip from his grasp, but also arises from certain observable facts which give immediate evidence that these individuals in particular are true members of the people of God."

ἐναρξάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s ἐναρχομαι (deponent) begin, make a beginning

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

The 'good work' of the gospel, realised in them by God. This is the foundation of their 'participation' in the gospel.

ἐπιτελεω complete, accomplish

Paul's confidence is expressed in the face of his awareness of the opposition they already experience and his fear that they may suffer further attacks upon the gospel. It is a confidence that is rooted not in circumstances but in God.

The work that his goodness began
the arm of his strength will complete;
His promise is yea and amen,
and never was forfeited yet.

Toplady

The work of grace in the believer has its beginnings in an act of God (cf. Acts 16:14 for reference to the Lord opening Lydia's heart) and we may be confident that he will never leave a work half finished.

"Believers in Christ are people of the future, a sure future that has already begun in the present. They are 'citizens of heaven' (3:20), who live the life of heaven, the life of the future, in the present in whatever circumstances they find themselves. To lose this future orientation, and especially to lose the sense of 'straining towards what is ahead, toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward' (3:13-14), is to lose too much. Thus, triggered by their present gift, Paul digresses momentarily to remind them that even in the midst of present difficulties, God has in Christ both guaranteed their future and blessed their present situation in Philippi." Fee

Philippians 1:7

καθώς ἐστὶν δίκαιον ἔμοι τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογία καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου συγκοινωνούς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας·

δίκαιος, α, ον righteous, just

Here 'quite right,' 'proper'

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

τουτο 'this way' "probably refers to the whole sentence [beginning at v.3] to this point." Fee

φρονεω think, have in mind

Having or developing a certain 'mindset.'

δια το ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς The infinitive takes two accusatives and it is therefore impossible to judge which is subject and which object simply by case. The proximity of με to the verb, and the general context, indicate that it should be read "I have you in my heart" rather than "You have me in your heart."

δεσμος, ου m (& n) chain, imprisonment
ἀπολογία, ας f verbal defence, defence
βεβαιωσις, εως f confirmation, establishing firmly

ἀπολογία and βεβαιωσις have a single definite article linking them together as two aspects of one activity: a negative aspect, defending against prejudice and false accusation; a positive aspect, declaring and establishing the truth.

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel
συγκοινωνος, ου m sharer, participant

'Both in my bonds and in my defence and maintenance of the gospel, you are all participants with me in grace.' "If it is a privilege to preach Christ, it is not less of a privilege to suffer for Him: cf. v.29." Lightfoot

How are the Philippians participants in 'the grace' of Paul's imprisonment and defence of the gospel? "The language and the context suggest that Paul minimally has in mind their most recent 'sharing with him in the gospel,' by means of a material gift while he was in prison. That, after all, is the immediate cause of his thanksgiving. Nonetheless, in light of how the rest of the letter unfolds, he seems here also to be embracing them for their long-term association with him in the gospel – by their helping him to share the gospel in other settings to be sure, but also by their own activity in Philippi, especially in the face of similar hostility to his. The hostility, after all, comes from the empire itself, of which they are both citizens, both of whom are now in trouble because they hold allegiance to a citizenship in which Lord Christ holds sway even – especially – over Lord Caesar." Fee

Philippians 1:8

μάρτυς γάρ μου ὁ θεός, ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος m witness

"This is one of several such oaths in Paul's letters, where he wishes to emphasise a point that usually has to do with his own thinking or feelings. God must serve as witness, of course, because this is a matter of the heart, and only God can know his heart in this way. In effect, he says to them, 'God himself knows how I feel about you.'" Fee

ἐπιποθεω long for, desire

It is not that he longs for something from them, he longs after them. Note the continual repetition of 'you all.'

σπλάγχνον, ου n one's inmost self, affections, heart

His longing for them and for the continuation of God's work in them is one with Christ's longing for them. "A powerful metaphor describing perfect union. The believer has no yearnings apart from his Lord; his pulse beats with the pulse of Christ; his heart throbs with the heart of Christ." Lightfoot

Philippians 1:9-11

Paul now tells the Philippians the substance of his prayers. Although he is confident of God's continuing work in them, yet he prays for them. The two are not contradictory but complementary. "Paul's prayer for them is that they may live the life of the future in the present, so that they might thereby be blameless at its consummation on the day of Christ. The concern is with present life in Christ; the orientation is toward its consummation – that they live for Christ now, and do so in the light of the coming Day." Fee

Philippians 1:9

καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει,

προσευχομαι pray

The love, ἀγάπη, is the root and sustaining power of the κοινωνία: thus the love spoken of here is love for Christ, love for his work, love for his people, love for the gospel... It is this love that is evident also in Paul (v.8). Fee, drawing on the similar expression in 1 Thess 3:12, suggests that the primary emphasis is upon love *for others*.

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

μᾶλλον adv more

περισσεύω increase, abound, excel

ἐπιγνώσις, εως f knowledge

αἰσθησις, εως f insight, judgement

Here only in the NT.

"While ἐπιγνώσις deals with general principles, αἰσθησις is concerned with practical application." Lightfoot
The first deals with knowledge of the truth, particularly the truth concerning God, while the second is moral discernment and insight, the application of truth to life.

Philippians 1:10

εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ,

The two purpose clauses in this verse express: i) immediate purpose, and ii) ultimate purpose.

δοκιμάζω test, examine, prove, discern
διαφέρω be worth more than, be superior to

'Discern what is best' or 'discern what counts' – make proper assessments about how they should live as disciples of Christ; discern the things that matter and what do not.

εἰλικρινής, ες pure

The meaning of the term is 'not mixed (with any impurity).' Could here refer to unmixed motives, following the thought of v.9.

ἀπρόσκοπος, ον blameless, faultless

Not causing any offence, not causing any to stumble.

Cf. end of verse 6. As Christ will continue his work in them so it will result in their faultless presentation before him. εἰς here expresses direction – a goal which must govern their conduct *now*, cf. 3:12-14.

Philippians 1:11

πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ.

πεπληρωμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
πληρω fill

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness

The phrase 'fruit of righteousness' is taken from the Old Testament, see Prov. 11:30; Amos 6:12; see also James 3:18. The OT background and the context here suggest that the sense is 'fruit that *consists in* righteousness,' rather than 'fruit that *comes from* righteousness.' The call is to display the righteous behaviour fitting to one who is in Christ. In the context of this letter it is a call to the Christ-like life of a servant – the cruciform life.

"What Paul wants is for them to stand on *that* day 'full of the fruit of righteousness.' But to do so they must *now* be *living out* such righteousness." Fee

Christian righteousness is the result of the life of Christ in the life of the Christian (cf. Gal 2:20).

δόξα, ης f glory

ἔπαινος, ου m praise

Cf. Eph 1:6. The glory of God is the proper end of the work of Christ, including his work in the believer.

Postscript on Paul's Prayer

"Here is one who has a keen sense of priorities in Christ, and is concerned when those in his care grow slack in some areas. That this prayer anticipates so much of the letter itself tells us much about Paul in prayer. Before talking to them about some matters that need an 'increase,' he talks to God about them – and tells them so. We could learn much here." Fee

Philippians 1:12-14

Paul now speaks of his circumstances. The Philippians knew of his imprisonment. He wants to allay their fears by showing them that he continues to be in God's hands and that even his present circumstances, like those of his imprisonment in Philippi, are planned by God for the furtherance of the Gospel. His words are designed also to encourage the Philippians in the face of the similar trials which they are experiencing (1:30) – he provides them with a model of how the believers at Philippi should respond to such difficulties.

Vs 12-14 form a single sentence in the Greek.

Philippians 1:12

Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν,

βούλομαι want, desire, wish

τα κατ ἐμὲ my circumstances (cf. Eph 6:21; Col 4:7). Cf. the balancing τα περι ὑμῶν in v.27.

What were the things that had happened to Paul? He had nearly been lynched by a mob in Jerusalem and had scarcely escaped a flogging in a Roman prison (Acts 22:22ff). He had been the subject of an assassination plot (23:12ff), had been kept languishing in prison at the whim of a local official craving popularity or seeking financial gain (24:26,27), had survived storm and shipwreck only to be delivered into imprisonment in Rome. And all this, says Paul, has turned out for the advance of the Gospel. Here, Paul's primary reference is to his current imprisonment – note the repeated phrase 'my chains' in vv. 13, 14, 17.

μᾶλλον adv more; rather

προκοπή, ης f progress, advancement
ἐλήλυθεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐρχομαι

The Philippians might have thought that Paul's imprisonment would have put a stop to his Gospel work. The reverse has proved to be the case.

Philippians 1:13

ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν,

ὥστε so that, with the result that

"The conjunction ὥστε is followed by the infinitive denoting result." Eadie

δεσμός v.7

φανερός, α, ον known, evident, plain

Eadie argues that the words φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ belong together i.e. "it has become evident that it is for the sake of Christ that I am imprisoned." (so NIV rather than AV). Fee suggests that the awkwardness of the phrase may be the result of Paul seeking to express something more, something about the nature of discipleship. "He probably means something like, 'it has become clear that I am in chains because I am a man *in Christ*, and that my chains are in part a manifestation of my discipleship as one who is thereby participating in the sufferings of Christ himself.'"

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, entire

πραιτωριον, ου n palace guard

The word may mean the palace of a king or judgement hall of the praetor. Here it seems to mean the barracks of the imperial guard, and thereby the guards themselves (this was the common usage of the term in later writings). Paul's testimony was well known among the guards who by shift came to keep charge of him. And through such guards, and also other visitors (cf. Acts 28:30,31) his testimony became widely known throughout the barracks, among the Roman authorities and maybe throughout the city.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

Philippians 1:14

καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν.

πλειων, πλειον most, the majority, many

των ἀδελφων i.e. the believers in Rome.

Lightfoot, Eadie and Fee argue that ἐν κυρίῳ belongs with πεποιθότας and not with τῶν ἀδελφοί as read by AV (and NIV).

πεποιθότας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

περισσοτέρως adv all the more, to a greater degree

τολμᾶν Verb, pres act infin τολμαω dare, be brave

ἀφοβως without fear

λαλεω speak, talk

λογον λαλειν the text here is uncertain. This shorter reading is rather weakly supported. There are several longer readings. Metzger writes, "It must be acknowledged that, on the basis of weight and variety of external evidence, the reading λογον του θεου λαλειν seems to be preferable. Because, however, the position and wording of the genitive modifiers vary, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading λογον λαλειν as that which best explains the other readings, which have the appearance of scribal expansions."

Paul's imprisonment might have been expected to discourage others, but, on the contrary, most were encouraged by Paul's readiness to endure imprisonment for the Gospel and by his determination to continue to testify of Christ even though in chains. "The sight of the apostle inspired them with his own heroism." Eadie.

Fee draws attention to the historical situation in Rome. "Nero's madness was peaking and the church there had begun to fall under suspicion, as Nero's pogrom against them just a couple of years later bears witness. The present situation in Rome for the followers of Christ had perhaps (understandably) led them to a more quiescent form of evangelism than was usual for early Christians. For good reason, then, Paul joyfully explains to the Philippian believers that the net effect of his own imprisonment has been to give their Roman brothers and sisters extraordinary courage to proclaim Christ, at the heart of the empire itself, where storm clouds are brewing."

Philippians 1:15

Τινες μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινες δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουν·

φθονος, ου m envy, jealousy, spite
ἐρις, ιδος f strife, rivalry

Lightfoot believes these may have been members of the Judaizing party who call down the apostle's rebuke in 3:2ff. Eadie thinks simply an anti-Pauline faction (see below).

εὐδοκία, ας f good will, pleasure, favour, desire

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Those spoken of here are probably the πλειονες of v.14.

Verses 16 & 17

The 16th and 17th verses are transposed in the Received Text but with very little textual evidence to support that ordering.

Philippians 1:16

οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαὶν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κεῖμαι,

'Love' here is love for Paul.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἀπολογία v.7

κεῖμαι lie; stand; be destined or appointed for

Motyer says that the term used here is a military term. Just as the praetorian guards were *set* to guard him by shift, so Paul himself, as a man under authority, was *set* for the defence of the Gospel. Paul was on guard just as much as were his captors.

"As they well knew that he had been set for the defence of the gospel, they felt that they could not better prove their love to him than by appreciating his vocation, acting in his spirit, and seeking, above all things, to realise the noble end to which he had devoted his life." Eadie. Cf. what Paul says concerning the Philippians partnership in the Gospel, vv 5,7.

Philippians 1:17

οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἀγνῶς, οἰόμενοι θλίψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου.

ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition

Party spirit, or a mercenary spirit.

καταγγελλω proclaim, preach

No difference of meaning between this and κηρυσσω

ἀγνως adv with pure motive

"They did God's work in the devil's spirit."

Eadie

οἰομαι, οἰμαι suppose, think

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

ἐγειρω raise

δεσμος v.7

Eadie argues that these were not Judaizers since Paul speaks of them as preaching Christ and does not condemn them as he did those in Galatia. Eadie thinks that the 'suffering' Paul speaks of is not the same as his bonds/imprisonment but is mental anguish: they thought to cause Paul anguish in addition to his bonds. Eadie suggests that they were Jewish Christians (not Judaizers), perhaps similar to those in Corinth who said that they were "of Cephas". They were "a company of believing Jews, who held the essential doctrines of the gospel, but [were] combative on points of inferior value, and ... were bitter and unscrupulous antagonists of the apostle." They may have thought Paul's imprisonment their opportunity to further their party. Fee adopts a similar view, suggesting that Paul's earlier letter to the Romans shows that there were divisions between Jewish and Gentile believers at Rome. He suggests that these divisions had not entirely been healed by Paul's letter and that it is now a Jewish faction who are taking advantage of Paul's imprisonment to seek to advance their own cause. Fee believes them to be evangelising Jews and seeking to keep Jewish believers faithful to the Mosaic law. They are not seeking to impose Jewish law-code on Gentile believers otherwise Paul's response to them would have been more hostile (cf. 3:2).

Philippians 1:18

τί γάρ; πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει
εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν
τούτῳ χαίρω· ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι,

τι γαρ What then?

πλην nevertheless, however

τροπος, ου m way, manner

ειτε if, whether

προφασις, εως f false motive, pretence

αληθεια, ας f truth, reality

χαιρω rejoice, be glad

Paul's concern was not for himself or for his own cause but for Christ.

χαρήσομαι Verb, fut pass dep indic, 1 s
χαιρω

The beginning of a new thought which continues in vv 19 & 20.

Philippians 1:19

οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς
σωτηρίαν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως καὶ
ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
οἶδα know

What is the 'this' which will result in his salvation? Various opinions are expressed by commentators, some rather odd. It is perhaps best to understand it simply of the sum total of his present circumstances – as Rom 8:28, and as Paul had said of the Philippians in verse 6 above.

ἀποβήσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀποβαινω result (in)
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Does not necessarily mean his physical deliverance from prison. The meaning is expanded by the thought of the following verse. Fee draws attention to the parallel between this phrase and Job 13:16 and suggests that Paul is echoing Job's expectation that he will be *vindicated*.

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea
ἐπιχορηγια, ας f supply, support, help

ἐπιχορηγιας του πνευματος – is the genitive του πνευματος subjective or objective? Is the Spirit the giver or the gift? Lightfoot thinks that since the phrase will bear either sense, both are intended.

Eadie and Fee both argue that the Spirit is the gift. Eadie writes, "The apostle's thought seems to be that the supply of the Spirit to him would be the result of their prayers for him." Fee points to the parallel with Gal 3:5 and comments, "Paul knows that Christ will be glorified in his life or death only as he is filled with the Spirit of Christ himself. That is, it is Christ resident in him by the Spirit who will be the cause of Paul's – and therefore the gospel's – not being brought to shame and of Christ being magnified through him."

Philippians 1:20

κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαραδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου ὅτι ἐν
οὐδενὶ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ
ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς
ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ
θανάτου.

The κατα points back to what precedes: 'My knowledge that it shall issue in my salvation is based upon ...'

ἀποκαραδοκια, ας f eager longing, deep
desire, expectation

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope

Qualifies the previous noun by grounding expectation in the certainty of Biblical hope.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
αἰσχυνθήσομαι Verb, fut pass dep indic, 1 s
αἰσχυνομαι be ashamed, be made
ashamed

Cf. Rom 5:4 and context which, though using a slightly different form of the verb, expresses similar convictions. Fee suggests that Paul is "picking up a motif from the Psalms, where the same words ('shame' and 'be exalted') often stand in collocation (e.g., Ps 34:3-5 [LXX 33:4-6]; 35:26-27 [LXX 34:26-27])."

παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance
παντοτε always
μεγαλυνθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s
μεγαλυνω enlarge, make or declare
great, praise

"The meaning here is that Christ should be evinced in His greatness – disclosed in his majesty." Eadie

σωμα, τος n body
ειτε if, whether
ζωη, ης f life

I.e. his deliverance.

θανατος, ου m death

Philippians 1:21

ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος.

Many commentators, including Calvin, treat κέρδος as governing the whole sentence – 'for me in life and in death Christ is gain.' This is not the natural meaning of these words. The traditional translation, 'for me, to live is Christ and to die is gain' reflects the natural meaning and fits with what follows.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ
ζῶω live, be alive

Cf. Gal 2:20. For Paul, his devotion to Christ so dominated his life that it may be characterised as Christ living in him and pursuing his ends through him.

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death
κέρδος, ους n gain

We often speak of death as a loss, and so indeed is the death of a loved one to those left bereft. But for the Christian, death is gain for it is to be with Christ, which is better by far (v.23). For all that Paul now considered 'gain' see 3:4ff. Death, for him, will be entering totally into the possession of all that he now counts gain – it will be to gain *Christ* in an ultimate and complete sense (cf. v.23).

Philippians 1:22

εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου – καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω·

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body
καρπος, ου m fruit, grain, harvest,
outcome, offspring

καρπος ἔργου 'fruitful labour.'

αἰρεομαι choose, prefer
γνωρίζω know

Lightfoot suggests the disjointed grammar reflects the apostle's hesitancy as he does not know what to prefer. He thinks the meaning of the verse is, "But if my living in the flesh will be fruitful through a laborious career, then what to choose I know not."

Fee takes a different view. He says that the sense could be either:

- If [it is] 'to live' in the flesh, *then* this for me [means] fruitful labour; and which I shall choose, I cannot tell. Or,
- If 'to live' in the flesh this [means] fruitful labour for me, *then* what I shall choose, I cannot tell.

Fee, contrary to Lightfoot, prefers the former.

"Here the apostle asks himself whether it would be better for him to live or to die. This question has often presented itself to us, and perhaps we have answered as the apostle did; but, it is to be feared, in a very different feeling. When we have desired death, it rather meant, 'I know not which is most fearful, the afflictions of life, from which death would deliver me, or the terrors of death, from which life preserves me;' that is to say, that life and death appear like two evils, between which we do not know which is the least. To the apostle they appeared as two immense blessings, of which he doubted which was the greatest." Adolphe Monod, *Farewell to his Friends and to the Church* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1858), p.9

Philippians 1:23

συνέχομαι δὲ ἐκ τῶν δύο, τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῶ γὰρ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον,

συνεχω hem in, hold prisoner; pass. be
occupied with

"I am hemmed in between the two" Lightfoot

δυσ gen & acc δυο two
ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing
ἀναλωω return home, depart

Lightfoot suggests that this term, which is used of breaking up camp, reflects the camp-life of the Israelites in the wilderness in contrast with their permanent dwellings in the promised land. Motyer adds that Paul, the old tent-maker, "resorts to the language of his trade... Camp-life is exchanged at death for home-life with Christ." Cf 2 Cor 5:1ff.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι
μαλλον adv more; rather
κρειττον and κρεισσον adv. better

πολλῶ γὰρ μάλλον κρείσσον "for it is much by far better." Eadie

Philippians 1:24

τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς.

ἐπιμενω remain, stay, persist in

σαρξ see v.22

ἀναγκαιότερος, α, ον (comparitive from ἀναγκαιος, α, ον) more necessary, more pressing, more urgent

"Departure is better, stay more necessary; the one better for himself and the other more necessary for the churches." Eadie

Philippians 1:25

καὶ τοῦτο πεποιθῶς οἶδα ὅτι μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως,

πεποιθῶς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

μενῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s μενω remain, stay, abide

παραμενῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s παραμενω remain, continue in office, serve

Note the use again of the adjective 'all' when Paul mentions the Philippian believers. "This otherwise unnecessary mention of 'all' most likely points to the friction that is currently at work among them." Fee

προκοπή, ης f progress, advancement
πίστις, εως f faith

Belongs with both of the previous nouns. "These two words together summarise his concerns for them in this letter: the first refers to the quality or character of their life in Christ, and especially to their 'advancing,' moving forward, in such; the second denotes the quality of their experience of it. And both of these are 'with regard to the faith,' which may refer to their own faith in Christ, as in 2:17, but in this context more likely refers to the gospel itself." Fee

Philippians 1:26

ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

καύχημα, τος n boasting, pride

περισευω increase, abound, excel

"Although a bit strained in its expression, the sense of this clause is straightforward enough. The occasion of Paul's coming to them again (thus 'in me') will cause their 'glorying/boasting' to overflow, and all of this takes place 'in Christ Jesus.' This is how Christ's being glorified 'through life' (v.20) is to find fulfilment." Fee

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
παρουσία, ας f coming, arrival, presence
πάλιν again, once more

"The return of the released prisoner to Philippi would be of incalculable benefit. It would furnish occasion for deeper and more extended lessons on Christianity, so as that their faith might make progress, and its joy might be resuscitated, and this possession of a faith conscious of progress and buoyant with gladness, would furnish matter of abundant boasting in Christ Jesus, through the apostle's visit." Eadie

Eadie discusses the difficulty of reconciling Paul's words in v.25 with Acts 20:25. He points out that the contradiction is not eased by the supposition of two imprisonments separated by a period of freedom during which Paul may have visited them: that would still be contrary to Act 20:25. Eadie suggests that Paul had no revelation concerning what might be the outcome of his imprisonment and therefore is merely expressing his hopes, sometimes optimistically while at other times less so.

Verse 27

Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε, ἵνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε ἀπὼν ἀκούω τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθροῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου,

μονος, η, ον i) adj; ii) adv μονον only

ἀξίως adv (from ἀξιος) worthily

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

πολιτευομαι live, conduct one's life

Means literally, perform your duties as a citizen' cf. Acts 23:1; 3:20 and 2 Tim 2:12 and also the cognate noun πολιτευμα in 3:20. Paul plays on the fact that Philippi was a Roman colony and the Philippians Roman citizens. His meaning is 'live in the Roman colony of Philippi as worthy citizens of your heavenly homeland.' "As Philippi was a colony of Rome in Macedonia, so the church was 'a colony of heaven' [Moffatt 3:20] in Philippi, whose members were to live as its citizens in Philippi." Fee

εἴτε if, whether

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὁραω see

ἄπων Verb, pres ptc, m nom s ἀπειμι be away, be absent

τα περι ὑμων cf. 1:12.

On Paul's expectation that he will hear of them, cf. 2:19.

στήκετε Verb, perf act indic & imperat, 2 pl ἵστημι pf stand firm, hold ground.

Paul's concern is that they stand fast in the face of opposition.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

Eadie says that 'spirit' here is human spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. "The image here is that of spiritual conflict, to which unity of action on their part was indispensable." Fee disagrees and maintains that the reference is to the Holy Spirit, cf. Eph 2:18; 4:24. He says that Paul never speaks of people possessing a common 'spirit' meaning one mind. The prepositional phrase is locative – it defines the 'sphere' in which they are to stand firm. The Spirit is the key to the unity of the church.

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'

συναθλοῦντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom pl συναθλω fight together with, strive together with, work together with

Cf. 4:3. Eadie (contra Luther, Bengel and Meyer) thinks that this is a reference to the Philippians working one with another rather than with the apostle.

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith, trust, the Christian faith

Lightfoot thinks ἡ πιστις here means 'The Christian faith' or 'the teaching of the Gospel'. Fee, 'the faith that is the gospel.'

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

Verse 28

καὶ μὴ πτυρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων (ἥτις ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἐνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ,

πτυρομαι be frightened or afraid

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing ἀντικειμαι oppose, be against

"In the light of several hints within the letter, especially the emphasis on Christ as 'lord' and 'saviour,' and of the loyalty of this colony to the cult of the emperor, it seems very likely that the (Roman) citizens of Philippi, who would have honoured the emperor at every public gathering, were putting special pressure on the Philippian believers; their allegiance had now been given to another *kyrios*, Jesus, who had himself been executed at the hands of the empire. The present context, in which Paul asserts that they are undergoing 'the same struggle' he is *now* engaged in – as a prisoner of the empire – gives us good reason to believe so." Fee

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which

ἐνδειξις, εως f evidence, indication

Eadie thinks that the token or indication spoken of is this lack of alarm. Fee argues that the reference is to the Philippians conducting themselves as Paul has instructed in the previous verses – walking worthily of the gospel and having an eschatological outlook. However, it is surely better, and simpler, to understand the opposition itself as the indication or token spoken of (cf. v.29 and also Paul's argument in 2 Thess 1:5).

ἀπωλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Cf. 2 Thess 1:4-7. Lightfoot argues that *τοῦτο ἀπο θεου* belongs with *ἐνδειξις* not *σωτηρια*". He considers the metaphor of these verses to be taken from gladiatorial combat and says, "The Christian gladiator does not anxiously await the signal of life or death from the fickle crowd ... The great ἀγωνοθετης Himself has given him a sure token of deliverance." Eadie argues that it is *both* the token and the salvation to which it points that are of God.

Verse 29

ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν),

ἐχαρίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s χαρίζομαι grant, give

Cf. v.7.

μονος, η, ον see v.27.

This clause appears to interrupt Paul's flow. Fee suggests that this is the result of dictation. Paul began to speak of them being granted 'to suffer on behalf of Christ' but interrupts himself with a 'not only' clause.

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

πασχω suffer

"Those who oppose them as they proclaim 'the faith of the gospel of Christ' are of a kind with those who crucified their Lord in the first place. And for believers, as with their Lord, the path to glorification leads through suffering and the cross." Fee

Verse 30

τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες οἷον εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοῖ καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοῖ.

τον αὐτον provides the foundation for Fee's argument that the Philippians are suffering at the hands of the Roman Empire.

ἀγων, ωνος m struggle, fight

"A gladiatorial or athletic contest, as in 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; compare συναθλοντες v.27." Lightfoot. Paul had suffered persecution at Philippi.

οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun such as, of what kind

εἶδετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ὄραω see, observe, perceive, recognise

"Among the recipients of this letter ... are the jailer and his family and (perhaps) the young slave girl whose having been set free from Satan's tyranny had resulted in the first of his sufferings on behalf of Christ that they 'had seen.'" Fee

ἐμοῖ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

"It is evident that he spoke from experience when he tells the Philippians of the double grace of faith and suffering." Eadie

Philippians 2:1-4

These verses are again a single complex sentence in the Greek.

Philippians 2:1

Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμῦθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί,

Paul's exhortation here is a continuation of the thought begun in 1:27.

"In using εἰ, the apostle does not doubt the existence of these graces or feelings ... but he says, If these do exist among you, put them into action, or manifest them, so as to fill up my joy." Eadie

"The 'if' clauses turn out not to express supposition, but presupposition, and should therefore be translated something close to 'since there is ...'; and the apodosis, instead of expressing the 'then' side of a supposition, takes the form of an imperative based on the presupposition." Fee

παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, appeal

Paul "begins by appealing to their common experience of Christ's comfort, as a direct response to their common experience of suffering for Christ in the preceding clause (1:29-30)." Fee. Fee thinks παρακλησις here bears the sense 'comfort' rather than 'exhortation' or 'appeal' which is favoured by Lightfoot and others.

παραμυθιον, ου n comfort, incentive

παραμυθιον can mean comfort, and this is the sense preferred by Fee who translates it 'solace.' Lightfoot and Eadie think that it bears the meaning 'incentive' or 'constraint' (so Lightfoot, Eadie), that which constrains behaviour.

Fee thinks that the structure here may be trinitarian and that the love spoken of is the love of God (the Father) cf. 2 Cor 13:13 (14).

κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in, participation

Fellowship with the Spirit himself and also fellowship generated by the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 13:13). "The fellowship of the Divine Spirit is the very basis of that like-mindedness, the existence and development of which the apostle covets among them... participation of the Spirit would provide similarity of tastes, pursuits and predilections." Eadie
"If they have been made into a fellowship by the Spirit can they live in any other way but in fellowship?" Motyer.

σπλάγχνον, ου n one's inmost self, affections, heart

οἰκτιρμος, ου m compassion, mercy

The distinction between σπλάγχνα and οἰκτιρμοι is that between "root and fruit, the feeling and the act" Motyer. σπλάγχνα means deep inward yearnings.

Fee draws attention to the change in structure and suggests that the sense is 'If God's compassion and mercy have produced these same qualities in you towards me, as you know I have towards you, then complete my joy by having a single mindset among yourselves ...'

Philippians 2:2

πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες,

πληρωω fill, make full, fulfill

An expression of Paul's pastoral heart – his joy is bound up with their walking worthily of their calling and advancing the gospel in Philippi. Cf. 1:4.

φρονεω think, have in mind

το αὐτο φρονητε "A general expression of accordance which is defined and enforced by the following clauses." Lightfoot. It is a common mindset, common purpose – a common possession of the 'mind of Christ'. Of την αὐτην ἀγαπην ἔχοντες Eadie writes, "We regard this [love] as the great or only source and accompaniment of unanimity... Offensive individualism disappears in brotherly love." The sense is the 'same love for one another' that they have experienced in God's love for them.

σὺμψυχος, ον united in spirit, as one

This compound adjective occurs here only in the NT. 'like-souled' The adjective harks back to 1:27.

Philippians 2:3

μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθειαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ τῆ ταπεινοφροσύνη ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν,

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition,
party-spirit

Cf. 1:17. "The apostle here rebukes the passions which are so fatal to unison ... ἐριθεια is self-seeking – the restless battle to be first, no matter what opposition be encountered, or whose feelings or interests may suffer." Eadie

μηδε negative particle nor, and not
κενοδοξια, ας f conceit, cheap desire to
boast

"personal vanity" Lightfoot. The noun occurs here only in the NT. The adjective is used by Paul in Gal 5:26 in the context of a church where people are 'eating and devouring one another.'

ταπεινοφροσυνη, ης f humility

Lightfoot says that classical writers generally used this word in a negative sense, "grovelling", and comments, "It was one great result of the life of Christ (on which Paul dwells here) to raise 'humility' to its proper level."

"This humility is one of the distinctive features of Christianity, for it rests in absolute dependence upon God for everything." Eadie. It is "a uniquely Christian virtue." Fee

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one
another

ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

ὑπερεχω be of more value than, be better
than, surpass

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"Humility is not undue self-depreciation, but may co-exist with fervent gratitude for gifts enjoyed, a thorough consciousness of their number and value, and the utmost desire to lay out 'the ten talents' to the utmost possible advantage. But where there is self-assertion or rivalry to secure the 'chief seat' and win applause, then the impulses of such vanity necessarily create alienation and disorder." Eadie.

"As with humility, this does not mean that one should falsely consider others 'better.' As v.4 will clarify, we are so to consider others, not in our *estimation* of them – which would only lead to the many vices Paul has just spoken against – but in our *caring* for them, in our putting them and their needs ahead of our own. After all, this is precisely how Christ's humility expressed itself, as Paul narrates in v. 8. Thus, it is not so much that others in the community are to be thought of as 'better than I am,' but as those whose needs and concerns 'surpass' my own. Here, of course, is the sure cure for 'selfish ambition and vain conceit,' not to mention 'grumbling and bickering' (v. 14)." Fee

Philippians 2:4

μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
σκοπεω pay attention to, watch out (for),
be concerned about

The phrase ἀλλὰ καὶ softens the contrast. The command is not to ignore all matters to do with oneself but rather to put others first in one's thinking.

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

Philippians 2:1-4 Reflection

"As Barth rightly pointed out, here is a vivid, miniature expression of the heart of Pauline ethics, not simply because its predicate is grace, but because it is grounded in the character of God as that has been revealed in Christ Jesus, which is the point to be taken up next. As with so much else in this letter, here, too, is a word for all seasons. One can only imagine what might happen if we were to rethink – and re-experience – the love and encouragement that is ours through the Trinity, and on that basis also rethink – and thus reorient – our life in Christ in terms of our relationships to one another. If we ourselves were more truly characterised by the contents of this appeal, we might become a more effective people in the world." Fee

Philippians 2:5

τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

Many MSS read *τοῦτο γὰρ*, seeking to tie these verses with what precedes them. *τοῦτο* "is best understood as pointing backward, in this case to vv. 2-4." Fee. The particular aspect of Christ's character which is to the fore here is his self-denying generosity and condescension which is the mark also of the Christian (v.4).

φρονεῶ see v.2

The 'mind' implied here is 'mind-set'.

ἐν ὑμῖν = 'in the community' [of believers].

Philippians 2:6-11

The majority of modern commentators consider these verses, or at least 6-8, to be an early hymn, though several think Paul to be the author. Fee is less convinced of its hymnic origin.

Concerning these verses Eadie writes, "The example of Christ is living legislation – law embodied and pictured in perfect humanity. Not only does it exhibit every virtue, but it also enjoins it. In showing what is, it enacts what ought to be. When it tells us how to live it commands us so to live... He develops that "mind" which was in Christ and which was manifested in His self-denying incarnation and death... the extent of our Lord's self-denying grace is measured by the distance between equality with God and a public execution on a gibbet."

Philippians 2:6

ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,

μορφη, ης f nature, form

μορφη has to be understood in the light of its dual use here – Christ was in the *form* of God, but took the *form* of a servant. Eadie writes, "It was not the divine nature, but the visible display of it – that which enables men to apprehend it and prompts them to adore it." Fee thinks that the word means more than appearance, "μορφη was precisely the right word for this dual usage, to characterise both the reality (his being God) and the metaphor (his taking on the role of a slave), since it denotes 'form' or 'shape' not in terms of the external features by which something is recognised but those characteristics and qualities that are essential to it. Hence it means *that which truly characterises a given reality.*"

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

ἄρπαγμος, ον m something to grasp after; something to hold on to

Fee provides a "mini word study" on ἄρπαγμος. He considers two possible meanings for the term:

- i) Moule and others suggest that Greek nouns ending in –μος usually refer not to a concrete thing but are abstract nouns carrying the sense of the cognate verb. Here the meaning is 'grasping' or 'seizing.' "Thus, Christ did not consider 'equality with God' to consist of 'grasping' or being 'selfish'; rather he rejected this particular view of kingly power by 'pouring himself out' for the sake of others. In Moule's terms, equality with God means not 'grasping' but 'giving away.'"
- ii) The noun is a synonym of its cognate ἄρπαγμα ('booty'). The meaning would be 'a matter to be seized upon' in the sense of 'taking advantage of it.'

Fee thinks both suggestions have much to commend them and, "in either case, it should be pointed out, the clause comes out very much at the same point."

Yoder (*Politics of Jesus*) thinks that Paul suggests a contrast with the "Godlikeness promised by the serpent to Adam in the garden, which would have consisted in unchecked dominion over creation. Or perhaps it refers as well to the kind of Godlikeness claimed by Caesar." Ridderbos (*Paul*) also detects a contrast with Adam.

ἠγήσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἠγεομαι think, regard, consider

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

ἴσος, η, ον equal, the same; ἴσα adv equally; το εἶναι ἴσα equality

Fee argues that the meaning is not that Christ abandoned equality with God but that he did not consider equality with God to be exemplified in 'grasping' but in 'emptying.' "In the cross God's true character, his outlandish, lavish expression of love, was fully manifested." The question at issue is "What does it mean to be like God?"

Philippians 2:7

ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι ἐρέθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

κενωω deprive of power, make of no effect

Of what did Christ empty himself? Lightfoot and Eadie are typical of older commentators: He "*emptied*, stripped himself of the insignia of Majesty" Lightfoot. "He laid aside the form of God, the splendour of divinity." Eadie.

Fee, in contrast, argues that it is wrong to suppose that he must have emptied himself *of something*. "That is precisely *not* in keeping with Pauline usage. Just as ἀρπαγμον requires no object for him to 'seize,' but rather points to what is the opposite of God's character, so Christ did not empty himself *of anything*; he simply 'emptied *himself*,' poured himself out. This is metaphor, pure and simple." The meaning of the verb elsewhere is 'to become powerless' or 'to be emptied of significance' cf. 1 Cor 1:17; Rom 4:14. So AV, 'he made himself of no reputation' and NIV 'made himself nothing.' Fee concludes, "The concern is with divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive being, grasping and seizing, but self-giving for the sake of others."

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

Eadie understands this service to be service to God. In becoming man, the Son took on the role of Servant to the Father's will. He took on the part of obedient man which Adam had abandoned. However, the context would seem to demand also the sense that he became a servant of all – a model for our service of one another.

ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness

"He came in the 'likeness' of human beings, because on the one hand he was fully identified with us, and because on the other hand in becoming human he was not 'human' only. He was God living out a truly human life, all of which is safeguarded by the expression." Fee

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι

There is some variation here in versification. Verse 7 ends with γενομενος in some MSS and versions.

σχημα, ατος n outward form, present form, form, likeness

εὔρεθεις Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s εὔρισκω

"He showed Himself possessed of a true body and a rational soul – that body no phantom or disguise, but an organism like that of all men born of woman, and within it a soul that grew in wisdom as His body grew in stature, being subject to human emotions, and possessed of the usual powers of thought and will. He was 'found in fashion as a man' by those who lived with Him, who saw Him in all aspects, and in every variety of attitude and circumstance; – His mother and kinsmen; His fellow-villagers and friends; His disciples and followers; His enemies and executioners." Eadie

Philippians 2:8

ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ·

ταπεινωο humble

"From heaven to earth He descended by emptying Himself, but after being on earth, He humbled Himself by His obedience to the death ... He laid aside the form of God, and took the form of a servant; but in that servant's form He still abased Himself even to the cross." Eadie

ὕπηκοος, ου obedient

In becoming a servant, he took on not only the duty of obedient man but also of Saviour – obedience to the demand for atoning sacrifice.

μέχρι unto, as far as

θανάτος, ου m death

σταυρος, ου m cross

Cf. Heb 12:2

It is worth quoting here a longer section from Fee. "Here is the very heart of Pauline theology, both of his understanding of God as such and of his understanding of what God has done and is doing in our fallen world. Here is where the one who as 'equal with God' has most fully revealed the truth about God: That God is love and that his love expresses itself in self-sacrifice – cruel, humiliating death on a cross – for the sake of those he loves. The divine weakness (death at the hands of his creatures, his enemies) is the divine scandal (the cross was reserved for slaves and insurrectionists). No one in Philippi, we must remind ourselves, used the cross as a symbol for their faith; there were no gold crosses embossed on Bibles or worn as pendants around the neck or lighted on the steeple of the local church. The cross was God's – and their – scandal. God's contradiction to human wisdom and power: that the one they worshiped as Lord of all, including Caesar, had been crucified as a state criminal at the hands of one of Caesar's proconsuls; that the Almighty should appear in human dress, and that he should do so in this way, as a 'Messiah' who died by crucifixion. Likewise, this is the scandal of Pauline ethics: that the God who did it this way 'gifts' us to 'suffer for his sake' as well (1:29)."

We should not forget that he who was equal with God became accursed of God.

Philippians 2:9

διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα,

διο therefore, for this reason

ὑπερυψωο raise to the highest position, highly exalt

"Paul virtually holds the copyright on ὑπερ compounds in the NT, and in the vast majority of cases they magnify or express excess, not position." Fee. Cf. Rom 8:37.

"It is the doctrine of Scripture that Christ, in dying for men, and because he did die for them, has won for himself eternal renown...

Infinite condescension surely merits highest glory." Eadie

Christ's exaltation is the divine vindication of his emptying himself and humbling himself.

χαριζομαι grant, give, bestow

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, authority

What is this 'name'? Lightfoot thinks that it is not any name in particular but rather reflects the Hebrew use of the term 'name', meaning "office, rank or dignity". If any particular name is meant, Lightfoot thinks it is most probably Κύριος. Fee also favours 'Lord as the equivalent of 'Yahweh.' However, in the light of v.10, it could be argued that the 'name' here intended is the name Ἰησοῦς ("Jesus! the name high over all..."). Thus saving grace is enthroned in the highest place in heaven. Neither should we miss the 'Last Adam' theme here. He is enthroned as the *man* Christ Jesus. "He that was known as Jesus among men, specifically as Jesus of Nazareth, He it is who in this very nature commands the homage of the universe." Eadie

Philippians 2:10

ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντων γόνων κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων,

This verse is modelled on Is 45:23.

γονοῦ, γονατος n knee

κάμψῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s κάμπω trans & intrans bend, bow (of the knee)

ἐπουράνιος, ον heavenly, celestial

ἐπιγείος, ον earthly, of the earth

καταχθονίος, ον under the earth, subterranean

Both Lightfoot and Eadie argue that Jesus is not the medium through whom adoration is offered to God, but is himself the object of that adoration: he is the Saviour God. All creation (the simple meaning of the three adjectives) is to acknowledge the person, work and authority of the Lord Jesus. He demands universal submission.

"There is in this language no hint that those who bow are acknowledging his salvation; on the contrary they *will* bow to his sovereignty at the End, even if they are not now yielding to it." Fee

Philippians 2:11

καὶ πάντα γλῶσσαι ἐξομολογήσονται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

γλῶσσαι, ης f tongue

ἐξομολογήσονται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s

ἐξομολογεω agree; midd confess, acknowledge, praise

"The the Lord is Jesus Christ,' cf. 1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9.

Despite the occasional demurrer, there can be little question that this confession arose in the early Jewish Christian community, as the Aramaic 'Maranatha' in 1 Cor 16:22 bears striking evidence. Thus, in the very earliest Aramaic-speaking communities, the language that belonged to God alone is now being addressed to Christ in corporate invocation. One can scarcely gainsay the christological implications of this confession in the present passage." Fee

δόξα, ης f glory

πατήρ, πατρος m father

"The acknowledgement of Christ's exaltation tends to or issues in the glory of God the Father." Eadie

Philippians 2:12

Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε, μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἐαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε,

ὥστε so that, with the result that

In Paul's teaching, ethical demands are made on the basis of what God has done for us in Christ.

Paul is returning now to the matters that prompted him to speak of Christ's self-emptying – his concern that the Philippians live out the gospel. Verses 12-18 bring the argument that began in 1:27 full circle.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

παντοτε always

ὑπακούω obey, be subject to

Whom have they obeyed? The sense here is probably obedience *to the gospel* – hence obedience to the instruction they had received from Paul, but above all obedience to Christ.

παρουσία, ας f presence

μονον adv only, alone

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

μαλλον adv more; rather

ἀπουσία, ας f absence

φοβος, ου m fear

τρομος, ου m trembling

Cf. 1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 7:15; Eph 6:5, also the OT background in Ex 15:16; Deut 2:25; 11:25; Ps 55:5 (54:6 LXX) and Is 19:16.

Calls for a fear, or proper awe, before God. "One does not live out the gospel casually or lightly, but as one who knows what it means to stand in awe of the living God." Fee

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see v.7

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

κατεργαζομαι work hard at, accomplish

The compound verb here carries the sense of carrying out or of making perfect.

The working out of our salvation is part of that process by which we grow in likeness to Christ. Such growth is not effortless.

In context, the command is not just to them as individuals but also concerns their corporate life – how they are to live out the gospel as a company of the people of God, cf. v.15.

Philippians 2:13

θεος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

"work mightily", 'work effectively'" Lightfoot
The Philippians are able to work out their salvation *precisely because* God is himself at work in them and among them.

θελω wish, will

"Not only does God empower their 'doing' (ἐνεργεῖν the infinitive of the verb just used to describe God's own activity), but also the 'willing' that lies behind the doing. This is fully in keeping with Paul's understanding of Christian ethics, which has not to do with obedience to a set of rules that regulate conduct, but first of all with a 'mind that is transformed' by the Spirit. Such a mind is 'conformed' not to this age, but to the character of God, so that behaviour is a reflection of God's will, what is good and pleasing and perfect to him (Rom 12:1-2)." Fee

ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

εὐδοκία, ας f good will, pleasure

Lightfoot links this with 1 Tim 2:4. God's will is that all should be saved. Hence God is working out his saving purpose.

Philippians 2:14

Πάντα ποιεῖτε χωρὶς γογγυσμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν,

χωρὶς without, apart from

γογγυσμος, ου m complaining, quarreling, whispering

"The word is constantly used in the LXX of Israel in the wilderness; compare 1 Cor 10:10." Lightfoot

διαλογισμος, ου m dispute, inward questioning, controversy

A reference, perhaps, to disputes among the Philippians. Murmuring is rebellion against God and a failure to recognise his purpose. He is at work to refine us and make us like Christ. We are to understand that we are not abandoned but worked upon. The clay is not to complain at the potter but, to change the picture, actively work with the purpose of the potter to display the form of Christ. Paul himself presents us with an example in his reaction to his imprisonment (cf. 1:12; 2:17).

Philippians 2:15

ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, τέκνα θεοῦ ἄμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης, ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ

γένησθε Verb, aor midd depo subj, 2 pl

γίνομαι

ἄμεμπτος, ον blameless, faultless

Cf. Gen 17:1.

ἀκέραιος, ον innocent, guiltless

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

ἄμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish

Echoes Deut 32:5 (LXX).

μεσος, η, ον middle

Here, μεσον is used adverbially

γενεα, ας f generation, contemporaries, age

σκολιος, α, ον crooked, perverse,

dishonest

διεστραμμένης Verb, perf pass ptc, f gen s

διαστρεφω pervert, distort, mislead

φαινω shine, give light; midd. and pass.

appear, be seen

"ye appear' not 'ye shine' (φαίνετε) as in the AV. The same error is made in Matt 24:27; Rev 2:7 ... φαίνεσθε here should be taken as an indicative not an imperative." Lightfoot. But Fee argues that this is to miss the echo of Daniel 12:3 – the meaning is 'shine.'

φωστηρ, ηρος m light, star; radiance

Cf. Jn 3:19 "They did not only enjoy the light, but they reflected it. They appeared as luminaries in the world, and its only spiritual light came from them. There was deep gloom around them, but they tended to disperse it." Eadie

Philippians 2:16

λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες, εἰς καύχημα ἐμοὶ εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα.

ζωη, ης f life

"By λογον ζωης we understand the gospel"
Eadie

ἔπεχω hold firmly to or offer

Eadie understands it to mean 'hold forth', and says it "describes the mode in which believers are luminaries ... The possession of the gospel is in itself a source of individual enlightenment; but the exhibition of that gospel throws its light on others."
Fee thinks that the parallel with Dan 12:3 suggests that the meaning is 'hold firm.'

καυχημα, τοσ n ground for boasting,
boasting, pride

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose

ἔδραμον Verb, aor act indic, 1s τρεχω run,
exert oneself

Cf. Gal 2:2

κοπιαω work, work hard, labour

"Probably a continuation of the same metaphor, referring to training for the athletic games: compare 1 Cor 9:24-27." Lightfoot.
"What purer joy can be imagined than this – what joy nearer in fulness and loftiness to His, who, on the same day, 'shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied'?" Eadie

Philippians 2:17

ἀλλὰ εἰ καὶ σπένδομαι ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ
leitourgia τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν, χαίρω καὶ
syngairō pāsiv ὑμῶν·

σπένδομαι be poured out as a drink-
offering (of one's life), give one's life in
sacrifice

Cf 2 Tim 4:6

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim

leitourgia, ας f service

leitourgia has the connotation of priestly service (cf. Lk 1:23; Heb 8:6; 9:21). This much is clear, but the picture itself is not without difficulty. Fee writes, "Pictured is the Levitical priest, whose 'service' included the offering of a sacrificed animal, and often a grain offering accompanied by a 'drink offering' of wine poured out in the sanctuary (Num 28:7). In the present application Paul is pictured as the drink offering and the Philippians (apparently) as 'serving' by offering the sacrifice, which has to do with their faith in some way. But none of this is easy to decipher, in part because of the context and in part because Paul's use of sacrificial imagery is so flexible that usage elsewhere is of little or no help here." Many see σπένδομαι as a reference to Paul's possible death on the basis of the parallel with 2 Tim 4:6 – e.g. Eadie who writes, "The apostle's death as a martyr, was felt by him to be a very likely event; and while that death would be a judicial murder, it would yet be an offering poured out on the faith of the Philippian converts." Fee thinks that this is doubtful as Paul goes on to express confidence that he will be released. He thinks that Paul "is suggesting that his imprisonment, besides being a 'drink offering' to the Lord, is to be understood as his part of their common suffering, the 'drink offering' poured out in conjunction with their 'sacrifice.' ... Thus, it seems most likely, but by no means certain, that both sides of the imagery recall 1:29-30, that God has 'graced' them not only to 'believe' in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake. Paul's present imprisonment serves as the 'drink offering,' which accompanies their own suffering in behalf of Christ."

"Thus St Paul's language expresses the fundamental idea of the Christian Church, in which universal priesthood has supplanted the exclusive ministrations of a select tribe or class: see 1 Peter 2:5." Lightfoot

πιστις, εως f faith

χαρω rejoice, be glad

συγχαρω rejoice with, rejoice together

Lightfoot argues that the verb here means 'congratulate'. Eadie thinks it means "I rejoice and give joy to you all." Fee that it means that Paul and the Philippians are able to share a common joy in being granted to suffer for the gospel (so v.18). "The joy comes from our relationship with Christ and with one another in Christ, as well as from our eschatological certainty; the suffering must be the direct result of trying to bring others in on the joy, or it deflects from Christ's suffering. Only so can we also rejoice in one another's suffering – as evidence that the proper 'sacrifices' are being offered up to God."

Philippians 2:18

τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ὑμεῖς χαίρετε καὶ συγχαίρετέ μοι.

το δε αυτο in the same way

Philippians 2:19-30

Paul's great concern is for the progress of the gospel in Philippi, even as he wants them to know that the gospel is served in his own circumstances. It is for this reason he sends this letter and with it Epaphroditus (vv. 25-30), and also hopes to send Timothy (vv. 19-24) before coming himself to Philippi (v.24).

Philippians 2:19

Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ εὐψυχῶ γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν.

ἐλπίζω hope, expect

On the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Lightfoot comments, "The Christian is part of Christ, a member of His body. His every thought and word and deed proceeds from Christ, as the centre of volition. Thus he loves in the Lord, he hopes in the Lord, he boasts in the Lord, he labours in the Lord, etc. He has one guarding principle in acting and in forbearing to act, μόνον ἐν Κυρίῳ (1 Cor 7:39)."

Eadie says it expresses dependency, "Only if Christ willed it could it happen, and he felt and hoped that his intention to send Timothy, after a brief interval, was in accordance with the mind of Christ."

ταχέως adv. quickly, at once, soon

Here 'as soon as possible.'

πέμπω send

κάγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγώ

εὐψυχεῖω be encouraged, be cheered

This verb is found here alone in the New Testament.

γνοῦς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s γνωσκῶ

Philippians 2:20

οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω ἰσόψυχον ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει,

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing ἰσοψυχος, ον sharing in the same feelings

This adjective occurs nowhere else in the NT. Lightfoot says that Paul's meaning is that he has none *like Timothy* who has such genuine concern for the Philippians.

Eadie suggests that the comparison implied in the adjective is not between Timothy and other of Paul's helpers but between Timothy and the apostle himself – i.e. there is no-one, other than Timothy, who cares for the Philippians in the way Paul does. So Fee who says, "Paul emphasises that the primary reason for *Timothy's* coming is that he can count on him to carry Paul's own deep concerns at heart."

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅτι who, which

γνησίως adv genuinely

μεριμναῶ be anxious, be concerned about

Philippians 2:21

οἱ πάντες γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see v.7

ζητεῶ seek, search for, look for

Cf. 2 Tim 4:10.

Fee argues that 'all' is not a reference to other co-workers who are not quite like Timothy: "Given what we know of Paul elsewhere and the high regard with which he holds those who travel with him, and that in 4:21 he sends greetings from 'the brothers who are with me,' it does not seem possible that he should here slander them with this kind of barrage." He thinks rather that Paul is referring to people like those mentioned in 1:15 and 17 who preach Christ but for their own ends. The words are also intended also for the Philippians for they are to beware of such people and to follow rather the example of Paul and Timothy – or more correctly of Christ. They are to put the needs of others before self-interest and so follow Christ in the way of the cross.

Philippians 2:22

τὴν δὲ δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ γινώσκετε, ὅτι ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

δοκιμη, ης f character, proof, proven character

"approved character" as in 2 Cor 2:9; 9:13 ...

Timothy was personally well known to the Philippians." Lightfoot

πατηρ, πατρος m father

τεκνον, ου n child

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

δουλεω serve, be a slave

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

In the ancient world it would have been common for a son to learn his trade from his father. Timothy had been like a son to Paul, learning from him the business of being a minister of the gospel.

Philippians 2:23

τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἐλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς·

ἐλπίζω see v.19

ἀφίδω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἀφοραω fix one's eyes on; ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τα περι ἐμε as soon as I know my situation

Another verb which occurs here only in the NT.

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

ἐξαυτῆς adv immediately, at once

"Although the clause is awkwardly expressed in the Greek, Paul's point is clear. As soon as he has any inkling as to the outcome of the trial, he will send Timothy to fill them in further on 'my affairs.' Thus Timothy's reason for coming is twofold: in the first instance for Paul's sake, to see how the letter has affected them; and second for their sakes, to be encouraged and brought up to speed about the outcome of his imprisonment." Fee

Philippians 2:24

πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι.

Cf. 1:24-26.

πέποιθα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

ταχέως see v.19

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s ἔρχομαι

Philippians 2:25

Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἠγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιῶτην μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

ἀναγκαιος, α, ον necessary, urgent

ἠγησάμην Verb, aor midd dep indic, 1 s ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

An 'epistolatory aorist' (as also ἐπεμψα v.28). The perspective of the verb is from the time of expected receipt of the letter, not the time of writing.

We know nothing of Epaphroditus except what we read of here.

συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker

συστρατιωτης, ου m fellow soldier

Fee thinks that "the imagery is that of a wounded comrade-in-arms, who is being sent back home for a rest."

"The true Apostle, like St Peter or St John, bears the title as the messenger, the delegate, of Christ himself, while Epaphroditus is only so styled as the messenger of the Philippian brotherhood; and in the very next clause the expression is explained by the statement that he carried alms to St Paul... For this sense of ἀποστολος, 'a delegate or messenger of a church,' see 2 Cor 8:23." Lightfoot

λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister

χρεια, ας f need, want

πεμψω send

"In a culture where prisoners were not cared for by the state, but whose 'necessities' for life (especially food) had to be supplied by friends or relatives, this is no small thing that they had done. They have thus 'offered priestly service' (to God, is implied) by their sending Epaphroditus with the gift necessary for him to sustain life in prison. This present word about Epaphroditus anticipates the full acknowledgement in 4:14-20." Fee

Philippians 2:26

ἐπειδὴ ἐπιποθῶν ἦν πάντας ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἀδημονῶν διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν.

ἐπειδὴ since, because, for

ἐπιποθεω long for, desire

The present participle indicates continual longing.

ἀδημονεω be distressed or troubled

Cf. Matt 26:37; Mk 14:33 where the verb is used of Jesus' agony.

"It describes the confused, restless, half-distracted state, which is produced by physical derangement, or by mental distress, or grief, shame, disappointment, etc." Lightfoot

διότι because, for, therefore

ἄσθενεω be sick, be ill, be weak

Fee suggests that Epaphroditus may have been taken ill on his way to Rome (cf. comments of Eadie on v.30), and one of his travelling companions returned to Philippi with the news. Epaphroditus continued on his way to Rome at great risk to his health and even his life (v.30).

Philippians 2:27

καὶ γὰρ ἠσθένησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτω· ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἠλέησεν αὐτόν, οὐκ αὐτόν δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἵνα μὴ λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην σχῶ.

παραπλησιον Adv. nearly, almost

θανατος, ου m death
 ἐλεω and ἐλεω be merciful, show
 kindness
 μονος, η, ον only, alone
 λυπη, ης f grief, sorrow, pain

Perhaps meaning the sorrow of Epaphroditus's death on top of the sorrow of his present sufferings.

σχω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s έχω

Philippians 2:28

σπουδαιοτέρως οὖν ἐπεμψα αὐτὸν ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτὸν πάλιν χαρῆτε καὶ γὰρ ἀλυπότερος ὤ.

σπουδαιοτέρως all the more eagerly; with
 greater urgency
 πεμψω send

"I.e. with the letter, as in Eph 6:22; Col 4:8; Philemon 11 and perhaps also 2 Cor 9:3."
 Lightfoot

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω
 see

πάλιν again, once more

χαρῆτε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl χαίρω
 rejoice, be glad

Eadie provides evidence that Paul, almost always puts πάλιν before the verb to which it relates. Hence the sense is that they will rejoice again.

κάγω a compound word = και ἐγω
 ἀλυπότερος, α, ον relieved of sorrow or
 anxiety

ὦ Verb, pres subj, 1 s εἶμι

Philippians 2:29

προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς, καὶ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε,

προσδεχομαι receive, welcome, accept
 τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and
 adjective such, of such kind
 ἐντιμος, ον valuable, honoured, esteemed

"and hold such in honour,' that is, such as Epaphroditus. The more usual classic form of expression is, ἐντιμας ἔχειν ... The class of men οἱ τοιοῦτοι, of whom Epaphroditus is a noted example, deserve the esteem and gratitude of the church for their self-denying and disinterested labours." Eadie

Philippians 2:30

ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἠγγισεν, παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας.

μεχρι unto, as far as
 θανατος, ου m death
 ἐγγιζω approach, draw near

παραβολευσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc,
 m nom s παραβολευομαι risk
 ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul',
 living being, person

ἀναπληρωση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
 ἀναπληρωω complete the full measure
 of, fill

ὑστερημα, τος n what is lacking

"The lack was not in the gift itself, but in the ministration of it. They were absent and could not minister to the apostle; but Epaphroditus, by his kind and assiduous attentions, fully made up what was necessarily wanting on their part." Eadie

λειτουργια, ας f service

"The probability is, either that his attendance on the apostle in Rome had exposed him in some way or other to a dangerous malady, or that, in his extreme haste to convey the Philippian gift and tender personal service to the prisoner, he had brought on an alarming sickness during his journey." Eadie

Philippians 3:1

Τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίrete ἐν κυρίῳ. τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining: (το) λοιπον
 adv. finally, henceforth, from now on

Many think that Paul begins his conclusion, but then breaks into a new subject only to resume his conclusion in 4:8. Fee disagrees and suggests that the meaning here is not 'finally' but 'as for the rest [of what needs to be spoken to].' It marks "a transition to the final matters to be taken up in the letter, not its conclusion." Cf. 1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 3:1.

χαρω rejoice, be glad; imperat used as a greeting

Lightfoot argues that the verb means 'farewell' but also carries with it the injunction to rejoice. Fee, however, argues that this is a call to rejoice and "serves as Paul's first antidote to their being taken in by the possible attractiveness of the Judaising option."

γραφω write

τα αὐτα γραφειν What are these 'same things'? Lightfoot thinks the words introduce what was intended to be a closing exhortation against dissent, a topic needful to the Philippians and which chapter 2 had touched on by way of exhortation to Christ-like humility. Fee thinks that the reference is to the warning and exhortation that follows and that v.18, and the insistence that this repetition is for their safety, provide confirmation for this view.

ἐμοι Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

ὀκνηρος, α, ον troublesome, irksome

ἀσφαλης, ες safe, sure; safeguard;
definite; the facts

Philippians 3:2-19

Fee comments, "Given the frequency with which Paul speaks to this issue in his letters, one must assume that the arguments of the Judaizing faction had a surface attractiveness to many, despite the (literally) painful consequences if Gentiles were to submit. But Paul appeals not to the physical pain, but to historical and theological realities. *Why* the Philippians should need to be warned again against such 'rubbish' (v.8), and whether it is related to teachings espoused by either of the women in 4:2, are matters of conjecture. Among the better guesses is that which sees a relationship between the attractiveness of 'becoming Jewish' (a *religio licita*) and the Philippians' present suffering at the hands of fellow Roman citizens, because they were followers of a *Kyrios* who had been executed as a state criminal. Perhaps by embracing the outward expressions of Jewish identity, they could still belong to Christ but ward off some of the opposition. In any case, and despite the emotive language of v.2, there is little hint either here or elsewhere in the letter that such people are actually *present in Philippi* at the time of this writing or that a serious threat is at hand. After all, Paul's primary response takes the form of personal narrative, not argumentation as such; and not once does he threaten them with the *consequences* of such an action."

Philippians 3:2

Βλέπετε τοὺς κύννας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν.

"What Paul is about to repeat for their 'safety' begins with the threefold warning, 'look out for,' expressed with powerful rhetoric, full of invective and sarcasm against (apparently) Jewish Christians who promote circumcision among Gentile believers... Such people have been 'dogging' him for over a decade, and as the strong language of Gal 5:12 and 2 Cor 11:13-15 makes clear, he has long ago had it to the bellyful with these 'servants of Satan' who think of themselves as 'servants of Christ' (2 Cor 11:15,23)." Fee

βλεπω see, beware of
κυων, κυνος m dog
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, harm
ἐργατης, ου m labourer, workman

"Such people, Paul proffers, in trying to make Gentiles submit to Torah do not work 'righteousness' at all, but evil." Fee

κατατομη, ης f mutilation

The term occurs here only in the NT. "The cognate verb occurs in Lev 21:5 (LXX), which prohibits priests (who 'serve' God) from 'cutting' their flesh as pagan priests did (cf. 1 Kings 18:28)." Fee. "The term justly designates the men whose creed was, 'Except ye be circumcised and keep the whole law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.' Viewed in this light, and as enforced for this end, it was only a cutting, and so the apostle calls those who make so much of it 'the slashers.'" Eadie

"Traditionally, on the basis of centuries of Protestant theology, it has been assumed that they were putting forward Torah observance as a way of getting right with God. But there is serious doubt as to whether that would have been their primary intent; after all, these Gentiles are already believers in Christ, as are all those upon whom the Judaizers urge circumcision. Most likely, therefore, at issue for them is Torah observance as evidence of Gentiles' truly belonging to God's people and therefore of their genuine obedience to Christ. Nonetheless, even though their first interest is in making Jews out of Gentiles, in the sense of securing their place within the Abrahamic covenant, Paul clearly sees through to the ultimate theological consequences for those who would capitulate – that it has the effect of adding a plus factor to grace, and thus of eliminating grace altogether by exchanging it for boasting in 'one's flesh.' This in turn explains why the following argument and illustration from Paul's personal history takes the form it does." Fee

Philippians 3:3

ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες,

The emphatic ἡμεῖς responds to the challenge concerning who are the true people of God.

περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those circumcised

The expression encompasses Paul and the Philippian church, including both Jews and Gentiles. Cf. Gal 3:9,14; Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2,6. Paul goes on to summarise the true marks of the people of God under the New Covenant.

λατρευω serve, worship

Many MSS read θεω rather than θεου (and p⁴⁶ omits both). Metzger writes, "The singular reading of p⁴⁶ is to be explained as due to accidental oversight, and the reading θεω appears to be an emendation introduced in order to provide an object for λατρευοντες (as in Rom 1:9 and 2 Tim 1:3)."

Of λατρευοντες Fee writes, "Paul's usage is determined by the LXX, where it is used almost exclusively to denote the Levitical 'service' in the temple cultus. Here it stands in ironical contrast to v.2. 'Mutilation' is what those who 'serve' in the temple cultus were forbidden to do. Now, in contrast with the 'workers of iniquity' who are engaged in such illegitimate 'service,' Paul says we are the true circumcision, who 'serve' by the Spirit, over against serving by the flesh. The verb, therefore, is not the one for 'worship' in the sense of what the congregation does together as a gathered people, but represents the 'service' of God's people in terms of their devotion to him as evidenced in the way they live before him. Rather than offering such service by 'cutting away the flesh,' so as to be identified with the people of God under the former covenant, the true circumcision live (= 'serve') in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Thus Paul has in view not external rite over against internal 'spiritual' service, but two ways of existing – in the 'flesh,' which he understands as life centred in the creature as over against God, or as the eschatological people of God, evidenced to be so by the Spirit of God, through whom all life in the present is now service and devotion to God."

καυχασμαι boast, boast about

Cf. Jer 9:23,24 and 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17. "They gloried not in themselves, in anything about themselves – not in circumcision or in Abrahamic descent but in Christ Jesus, and in Him alone – ... in His great condescension; His birth and its wonders; His life and its blessings; His death and its benefits; His ascension and its pledges; His return and its stupendous and permanent results." Eadie

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Paul makes a play here on the word σαρξ, cf. Gal 3:2-3.

πειθω persuade; perf trust, rely on, have confidence, be confident

These are the marks of the true child of God: service of God in/by the Spirit; glorying in Christ Jesus (note the Trinitarian structure here); placing no confidence in one's own abilities.

Philippians 3:4

καίπερ ἐγὼ ἔχων πεποιθήσιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί.
Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί, ἐγὼ μᾶλλον·

καίπερ though, although

Introduces an implied conditional – "Though I might ... " Paul is saying that if they (the 'mutilators') want to play that game then he, Paul, can beat them on their home ground.

πεποιθήσιν, εως f confidence

δοκεω think, suppose

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

πεποιθέναι Verb, perf act infin πειθω

μᾶλλον adv rather, instead

Philippians 3:5

περιτομῇ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ,
φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος,

"For the dative περιτομῇ 'in respect of circumcision' compare 2:7 σχηματι εὐρεθεις" Lightfoot

ὀκταήμερος, ον on the eighth day

γένος, ους n family, race, people, nation

φυλη, ης f tribe, nation, people

Benjamin was called the 'beloved of the Lord' (Deut 33:12), gave Israel their first king and was alone faithful to Judah. The Holy City itself was in their territory. No Gentile converts who submitted to the Torah could ever claim like privileges.

'A Hebrew of the Hebrews' – "descended from a long line of pure ancestry without any accidental infusion on either side of foreign blood." Eadie. Fee thinks the term sums up the previous three – 'in every way a Hebrew.'

νομος, ου m law

Cf. Acts 26:5. "The combined evidence of Matt 23:15 and Acts 15:5 suggests that Jewish Christians who came to Philippi to promote Torah observance on the part of Gentiles would most likely also belong to this sect." Fee

Philippians 3:6

κατὰ ζήλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος.

ζήλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

διωκω persecute, seek

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

An evidence of his former zeal for the law and traditions of his fathers.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι

ἀμεμπτος, ον blameless, faultless

"He thought himself, and others thought him, without a flaw." Eadie. "Paul has no 'blemishes' on his record, as far as Torah observance is concerned, which means that he scrupulously adhered to the pharisaic interpretation of the Law, with its finely honed regulations for sabbath observance, food laws and ritual cleanliness. His former blamelessness in these matters makes his Christian pronouncements on these items all the more telling." Fee.

Wright, in his commentary on Romans (*New Interpreter's Bible*) comments on this verse: "Presumably he [Paul] meant that, as a good Jew, he regularly used the means of forgiveness and purification that were on offer in the Temple and the sacrificial cult and took part in the great fasts and feasts through which the devout Jew was assured of God's forgiveness and favour. Thus at any moment he was a Jew in good standing; not that he had always done what Torah prescribed (we must not suppose the pre-Christian Paul to have been so ignorant of his own motivation and behaviour), but that he had always repented and sought God's forgiveness through the appropriate methods. Torah, he might have said, can show me that I am a sinner and can also show me the way of forgiveness. We must assume that someone who followed this path would consider themselves 'blameless according to the law.'" See on Romans 3:19-20 for fuller notes on Wright's understanding of Paul.

Philippians 3:7-11

Fee suggests that these verses begin with the theme of gain and loss, echoing earlier language of the letter (1:21) before introducing the main theme which is *knowing Christ*. The theme of righteousness and the law (picking up v.6) is then introduced against the background of this foundational theme which then returns to occupy the foreground in vv.10-11. Paul's primary focus is on what it means to *know Christ*.

Secondly, Fee suggests, "Even though the content differs considerably, both the linguistic echoes and the general 'form' of the narrative seem intentionally designed to recall the Christ narrative in 2:6-11. While Christ did not *consider* God-likeness to accrue to his own advantage, but 'made himself nothing,' so Paul now *considers* his former 'gain' as 'loss' for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. As Christ was 'found' in human likeness, Paul is now 'found in Christ,' knowing whom means to be 'conformed' (echoing the μορφή of a slave, 2:7) to his death (2:8). Finally, as Christ's humiliation was followed by God's 'glorious' vindication of him, so present 'suffering' for Christ's sake will be followed by 'glory' in the form of resurrection. As he has appealed to the Philippians to do, Paul thus exemplifies Christ's 'mindset,' embracing suffering and death. This is what it means to 'know Christ,' to be 'found in him' by means of his gift of righteousness; and as he was raised and exalted to the highest place, so Paul and the Philippian believers, because they are now 'conformed to Christ' in his death, will also be 'conformed' to his glory."

Philippians 3:7

Ἄλλα ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

Fee thinks that the text without ἄλλα is more likely original but recognises that it is a tough call.

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which, whoever, whichever, whatever
κερδος, ους n gain

The things he has listed in the previous verses.

ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

"While he cannot renounce – nor does he wish to – what was given him by birth (circumcision, being a member of Israel's race, of the tribe of Benjamin, born of true Hebrew stock), he does renounce them as grounds for boasting, along with his achievement that expressed his zeal for the Law. Hence the significance of his use of the verb, 'I *have come to consider* them as a loss,' rather than a simple affirmation, 'what things *were* gain *are now* loss.'" Fee

ζημια, ας f loss

The transition from the plural, 'whatsoever things', to the singular 'loss' carries the idea that all these things *put together* amount to less than nothing – they are loss.

Philippians 3:8

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἠγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι
διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ
τοῦ κυρίου μου δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην, καὶ
ἠγοῦμαι σκύβαλα ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω

μενουν and μενουνγε rather, on the
contrary

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ 'not only so but what is
more' Fee

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ὑπερέχον Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s

ὑπερεχω be of more value than, be
better than, surpass

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

"As v.10 will clarify, 'knowing Christ' does not mean to have a head knowledge about him, but to 'know him' personally (BAGD) and relationally. Paul has thus taken up the Old Testament theme of 'knowing God' and applied it to Christ. It means to know him as children and parent know each other, or wives and husbands – knowledge that has to do with personal experience and intimate relationship. It is such knowledge that makes Christ 'trustworthy.' The intimacy will be expressed in v.10 in terms of 'participation in his sufferings.' In the light of such expansive language, therefore, the object of his 'knowing' is not simply 'Christ,' nor even 'Christ Jesus,' but 'Christ Jesus *my* Lord.'

"Here is the evidence of intimacy and devotion. Paul regularly refers to Christ with the full title and name, 'our Lord, Jesus Christ'; only here does he reverse the order and substitute the first person singular pronoun. The 'Christ Jesus,' because of whom he gladly considers all else to be loss, is none other than 'my Lord.' The reason for such devotion and longing is not expressed here, but it rings forth clearly in Gal 2:20, 'who loved me and gave himself for me.' This is not simply coming to know the deity – it is that, of course – but even more so, it is to know the one whose love for Paul, expressed in the cross and in his arrest on the Damascus road, has transformed the former persecutor of the church into Christ's 'love slave,' whose lifelong ambition is to 'know him' in return, and to love him by loving his people. There is something unfortunate about a cerebral Christianity that 'knows' but does not 'know' in this way." Fee

"Is it not super-eminent knowledge to know Him as the 'Christ,' not simply because He has been anointed 'with the oil of gladness.' but because we too 'have an unction from the Holy One.' – to know him as 'Jesus,' not simply because He wears our nature, but because we feel His human heart throbbing in unison with ours under trial and sorrow – to know Him as Prophet, not simply because He is Light, but because we are light in Him, – to know Him as Priest, not simply because He has laid Himself on the altar, but because the blood of sprinkling is manifest upon our consciences, – to know Him as 'Lord,' not simply because He wears a crown and wields a sceptre, but because we bow to His loving rule and gather the spoils of the victory which He has won and secured?" Eadie

ἐζημιώθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s ζημιωω
(only in pass) lose, suffer loss

σκύβαλον, ου n dung, garbage

The term can mean 'refuse,' "especially of the kind that was thrown out for the dogs to forage through. Although it could possibly mean 'dung' here, more likely Paul is taking a passing shot at the 'dogs' in v.2." Fee

κερδαινω gain, win

Philippians 3:9

καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν
δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ
πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ
τῇ πίστει,

εὑρεθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s εὑρισκω

To be found in Christ now and in the day of resurrection. Fee thinks that the primary reference here is future though within the context of Paul's 'already but not yet' eschatological perspective. "On the other hand, the modifying participial clause ('having righteousness') is oriented toward the present, as is the final purpose clause (vv. 10-11), which is grammatically dependent on the present clause... Paul uses his own story as the paradigm for looking to the future on the basis of the 'presence of the future' found in the righteousness that Christ has provided. He expects to 'gain Christ and be found in him' on the day of Christ, precisely because this is *already* his experience of Christ. Second, *where* Paul is now 'found' – and expects to be at the end – is 'in Christ.' He now lives in fellowship with Christ, who is both the source of this new life and the sphere in which it is lived."

ἐμος, η, ου 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
δικαιοσυνη, ης see v.6

Paul picks up the theme of v. 6b. "Circumcision – and all other forms of Torah observance – means to 'boast' in human achievement; and its 'blamelessness' is expressed in ways that count for nothing at all. One is thus neither righteous in the sense of being rightly related to God nor righteous in the sense of living rightly as an expression of that relationship." Fee

Eadie's comment on Paul's understanding of righteousness is worth quoting. "This righteousness – δικαιοσύνη – which the apostle aspired to possess, is the only ground of acceptance with God. In itself it is not ἐμῆ, but of God – ἐκ Θεοῦ – as in His grace He has provided it, so that it is said of us – δαιουμένοι δωρεαν τη αὐτοῦ χαριτι. Rom 3:24. It is wrought out by Christ, and in His blood – ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ – Rom 5:9; or it is δια της ἀπολυτρώσεως της ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Rom 3:24. It becomes ours through faith, being in one aspect ἐπι τη πιστει, in another δια πιστεως, and in another still, ἐκ πιστεως. Rom 5:1. And this connection of faith is further described thus – λογιζεται ἡ πιστις εἰς δικαιοσυνην; or, subjectively, καρδια πιστευεται εἰς δικαιοσυνην. Rom 10:10. Of the possessor of such righteousness it may be said – δικαιουται παρα τῷ Θεῷ. Gal 3:11. Christ obeyed the law for us, and for us suffered its penalty, and the merit of this obedience unto the death becomes ours, as soon as we can say of ourselves, και ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστον Ἰησουν ἐπιστευσαμεν. Gal 2:16. He who was ἀδικος becomes δικαιος, and escapes that κατακριμα which sin merits, Rom 8:1, the ὀργη Θεοῦ – Rom 1:18; nay, enjoys the benefit of redemption – την ἀφεσιν των παραπτωμων. Eph 1:7. When ἐργα του νομου – works of law, are disclaimed, and faith is simply reposed on God – ἐπι τον δικαιοτητα τον ἀσεβη – guilt is cancelled, acceptance is enjoyed, and such a change of state entails a change of character: those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, 'walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' Rom 8:4. The sinner is not indeed held by any legal fiction to be innocent. The entire process implies his guilt, but he is no longer exposed to the penalty; he is held, or dealt with, as a righteous person, 'the eternal justice of Christ Jesus being imputed to him.' (Hooker) And the result is – οὐς δε ἐδικαιωσε, τουτους και ἐδοξασεν. Rom 8:30. This righteousness, divine in its origin, awful in its medium, and fraught with such results, was the essential element of Paul's religion, and the distinctive tenet of Paul's theology."

πιστις, εως f faith

There is considerable debate over whether the genitive Χριστου here is subjective, 'through Christ's [own] faith[fulness],' or objective 'through faith in Christ.' Fee outlines the debate and, while acknowledging that the subjective genitive has some attractiveness in that it would then refer back to the narrative in 2:6-8," concedes that the context demands the objective genitive. He concludes, "Thus, as usual in Paul, the contrast is between 'works' and 'faith,' not so much referring to forensic 'justification' of those who have 'broken the law' – but referring to the means to and expression of one's relationship with God. Such righteousness comes 'from God,' he insists, in contrast to being 'my own' predicated on the law. And it has been made available through Christ, in whom Paul is now 'found' and in whom he 'boasts,' hence it is 'through faith in Christ.'"

ἐπι τη πιστει 'which is on the basis of faith' cf. Acts 3:11. Eadie says this is a dative of instrument.

Philippians 3:10

τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ,
γνῶναι Verb, aor act infin γινωσκω

"From this statement and the following clauses, it is plain that this knowledge is that of deep and deepening experience." Eadie Fee thinks the first και is epexegetic – the sense is 'so that I may know him, *that is*, the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings.'

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection

The resurrection is linked with the power of the Spirit both in the sense of Christ himself being raised in the power of the Spirit and in that his resurrection life is conveyed to us by the Spirit. To know the risen Christ is to know something of the power of his resurrection life, cf. 2 Cor 4:11.

"Along with the gift of the eschatological Spirit, it was the resurrection of Christ that altered Paul's (and the early church's) understanding of present existence – as both 'already' and 'not yet.' In Jewish eschatological expectations these two events, above all, would mark the beginning of God's final wrap-up. Very early on the church recognised that *the* Resurrection (Christ's) had already set the future in motion... In contrast to the backward-looking Judaisers, Paul and the Philippians live the life of the future by the power of the (eschatological) Spirit of God (v.3)." Fee

κοινωνία, ἀς f fellowship, sharing in,
participation
πάθημα, τοῦς n suffering

We must not lose sight of the context of Paul's letter: both he and the Philippians were suffering for the gospel. Furthermore, the Judaizers were perhaps offering an option which might enable the Philippians to avoid a measure of suffering for Christ. "But Paul will have none of that, precisely because from his perspective any genuine knowing of Christ means participation in his sufferings, since only in such sufferings does one truly know Christ – as 2:6-8 has made plain... It is difficult to imagine that Paul is not here reflecting on the teaching of his Lord, that those who follow Christ will likewise have to 'bear the cross' on behalf of others." Fee

συμμορφίζομαι take on the same form as

Recalls the Christ narrative of 2:6-11.

θάνατος, οὐ m death

There can be no participation in Christ's resurrection without participation also in his death. "In all things Paul coveted conformity to his Lord – even in suffering and death." Eadie. What he means is expounded by Paul in 2:6-11. "Christian life is cruciform in character; God's people, even as they live presently through the power made available through Christ's resurrection, are as their Lord forever marked by the cross. The heavenly Lion, one must never forget, is a slain Lamb (Rev 5:5-6) ... All of Christian life is stamped with the divine imprint of the cross as we live out the gospel in the present age, while we await the hope of resurrection." Fee

Philippians 3:11

εἴ πως καταστήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

κατανατῶ come, arrive, reach, attain

εἴ πως καταστήσω 'if so be I may attain' This is the goal or aspiration to which all outlined in the previous verses tends. The εἴ πως which may appear to express uncertainty, may:

- i) Have the sense of 'in this way' i.e. the resurrection is to be attained only through the present path of suffering with Christ, cf. Rom 8:17;
- ii) Reflect uncertainty as to whether the final state will be attained through resurrection *from the dead* or transformation at the parousia (cf. vv.20-21).

The future prize itself is not in doubt.

ἐξανάστασις, ἕως f resurrection
νεκροῦ, ἀ, οὐ dead

Postscript

"If suffering and the temptation to become religious were causing the dimming of such vision for some in Philippi, in contemporary Western (and much of the rest of the world) culture the dimming is for different reasons, more often connected with values related to material gain. Paul's 'vision' seems to have the better of it in every imaginable way; and a common return to 'the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord' could go a long way toward renewing the church for its task in the post-modern world. Our lives must be cruciform if they are to account for anything at all; but that word is preceded by the equally important one – the power of his resurrection, which both enables us to live as those marked by the cross and guarantees our final glory." Fee

Philippians 3:12-14

These verses should not be seen as starting a new theme; they form part of Paul's continuing argument. Fee argues, "In light of what has just been said in vv 10-11, the 'goal' is not 'perfection' but the eschatological conclusion of present life, while the 'prize' is none other than the final realisation of his lifelong passion – the full 'knowing' of Christ. To this end, all else is not only 'loss' and 'street garbage' (v.8) but is to be 'forgotten' altogether."

Philippians 3:12

Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ.

ἤδη adv now, already

"In the verb ἔλαβον there is the idea of laying hold of something before him that he had not yet reached ... The figure of the race and its prize rose up directly in the apostle's mind, and as he is about to give it shape, other ideas intrude themselves and claim a prior expression; that is to say, what the apostle had not yet attained to is what he has been describing in the previous verses, but now especially imagined to his mind as the prize given to one who is victor in the race course. In the first clause of the 13th verse the apostle resumes the figure, and in a few vivid touches, completes it." Eadie
"What he has not yet 'obtained' ... is the eschatological realisation of the goal expressed in vv. 10-11, the kind of knowing Christ that will be his only when he has 'attained unto the resurrection from the dead' – or its equivalent, as vv.20-21 clarify." Fee

ἢ or

Some Western MSS read ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη δεδικαιώμαι ἢ ἤδη τετελειώμαι. This would seem to be a gloss by a "pious copyist who imagined that the Divine side of sanctification was left too much out of sight." Kennedy

τετελείωμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s
τελειῶ make perfect, complete

The focus is not so much on perfection as reaching the goal.

διώκω seek after, pursue

The intense action of the runner in a stadium.

καταλάβω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s
καταλαμβάνω obtain, attain
κατελήμφθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s
καταλαμβάνω

"He means to say, not merely that he pursues a certain course of action because he has been converted, but because this course of action is in unison with the purpose of his conversion." Eadie.

"While Paul is indeed pursuing the eschatological goal with all his might, that is only because Christ was there first, pursuing him as it were, and 'apprehending' him so as to make Paul one of his own. Paul's point, as always, is that Christ's work is the prior one, and that all his own effort is simply in response to, and for the sake of, that prior 'apprehension' of him by 'Christ Jesus my Lord.'" Fee

Philippians 3:13

ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ ἔμμαντὸν οὐ λογιζομαι κατειληφέναι· ἐν δέ, τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθανόμενος τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος,

ἔμμαντὸν Pronoun, acc s ἔμμαντου

Many MSS read ὅπου rather than οὐ. Metzger comments, "The reading οὐ, which is simply supported, appears to have been changed to οὐπω by copyists who considered Paul to be too modest in his protestations."

λογίζομαι reckon, count, suppose
κατειληφέναι Verb, perf act infin
καταλαμβάνω

"self-complacency was no feature of the apostle's character ... He viewed not so much the progress made as the progress still to be made – surveyed rather the distance before him – between him and the goal, than the space that now lay behind him – between him and the starting point." Eadie

There is some difference in versification here. Some versions begin v.14 with ἐν δε

εἰς, μια, ἐν one
ὀπίσω behind
ἐπιλανθανομαι forget, neglect

"Paul as a runner who 'pays no attention to the things that are behind' is probably a parting shot at what some of the Philippians might now be finding attractive. By 'pursuing' Torah observance as 'advancement,' they would in fact be after the very things Paul has gladly put behind him as refuse. In any case, as the rest of the analogy makes clear, the present accent is on 'straining toward what is ahead.'" Fee. Eadie thinks the reference is to past Christian attainments – though we could extend it to include past Christian failures. He says, "In his Christian course he did not repose on memories. What had been gained was only an incitement to further progress."

ἔμπροσθεν before, ahead, in front
ἐπεκτεινομαι stretch towards, reach for

Philippians 3:14

κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

σκοπος, ου m goal (κατα σ.) toward the goal

The noun σκοπος is used in the LXX for a Hebrew word denoting the point (or target) at which an archer aims (Job 16:12,13; Lam 3:12).

διώκω see v.12
βραβεῖον, ου n prize

The coveted crown – the incorruptible crown.

ἄνω from above
κλῆσις, εως f call, calling

Cf. κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μετοχοί Heb 3:1. Of εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ Fee comments on the series of genitive qualifiers that their "sense is easier to sort out than its grammar. Whatever names we may give to his genitives, Paul intends the following relationships: First, God has 'called' Paul to himself, which will culminate in glory; second, that call, which began at his conversion, is 'heavenward' in terms of its final goal; third, God's call found its historical and experiential locus 'in Christ Jesus'; and fourth, at the end of the race Paul will gain the prize, the tangible evidence that the goal of God's call has been reached."

Philippians 3:15

ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν· καὶ εἴ τι ἐτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει·

Paul now turns to application to the situation at Philippi. Paul uses the first person plural rather than the second – it is application and appeal rather than polemic. He is urging them to join him in following.

ὅσος, ἡ, ον as much as; pl. as many as
τελειος, α, ον perfect, mature

A play on words, cf. v.12. Grown men, those who have put away childish things (cf. 1 Cor 13:10-12). Eadie says that Paul "elsewhere speaks of two classes in the church – "babes and perfect men." 1 Cor 2:6; Eph 4:12,13; Heb 5:13,14. The terms νηπιος and τελειος are in contrast. See also 1 Cor 14:20."

φρονεω think, have in mind

Looks back to 2:5. A renewed appeal to a certain mindset – the mindset of Christ.

ἕτερος otherwise, differently

ἀποκαλυπτει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

ἀποκαλυπτω reveal, make known

"The meaning of the apostle is that God, by revealing the difference and showing the fault of it, would remove it." Eadie

Philippians 3:16

πλὴν εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν.

πλὴν nevertheless, however

'whether you see *all* things fully my way or not.'

ἐφθάσαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl φθανω
reach, come to

στοιχεω walk, conduct oneself

'let us live up to what we have already come to (an understanding of)' cf previous verse. "He who employs what he has, prepares himself for further gifts." Eadie

Philippians 3:17

Συμμιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς·

συμμιμητης, ου m one who joins in
following the example of another

Cf. 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7,9. This compound verb appears here only in the NT and has not been found in other Greek literature. The meaning would seem to be, 'join together in imitating me.' The emphasis is again on unity.

σκοπεω pay attention to, watch out (for)

The force here is 'mark and follow'

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way

περιπατεω walk, live

τυπος, ου m pattern, example

E.g. Epaphroditus. "Since Philippi was a small city on the main highway East and West, a full day's walk from Neapolis on the coast, the Christian community in Philippi was undoubtedly frequented by all sorts of itinerants, who would be given the normal Christian hospitality... Fully aware that not all who would come through were of the same mind as Paul regarding walking in the ways of Christ, he has frequently warned them of such itinerants (as vv. 1 and 18 indicate). This imperative therefore, besides specifying the reason for vv. 4-14, moves toward warning, that when others come among them, they mark well those who 'walk' in the way of the cross and who are living in eager anticipation of the future." Fee

Philippians 3:18

πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὓς πολλακίς ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ γεν πολλου, ης, ου much,
many

The grammar is a little awkward. Eadie says "The verb περιπατουσιν stands emphatically, and without any added characteristic... The apostle, in the previous verse, had referred to his own life and to those who walked like himself ... and now he speaks of others who do not so walk. But he does not formally express the difference by an adverb – he does it more effectively by an entire clause."

Fee thinks πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν "suggests people associated with the Christian community but outside Philippi."

πολλακίς often, repeatedly, frequently
κλαω weep, cry; trans weep for

"He grieved that the gospel should, through them, be exposed to misrepresentation, that the world should see it associated with an unchanged and licentious life" Eadie

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

σταυρος, ου m cross

They are people who make a profession of being Christians but who refuse to live a life patterned by the cross.

Philippians 3:19

ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες.

τελος, ους n end, conclusion

Perhaps a play on on this term – now by way of contrast with vv. 12,15.

ἀπώλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin

Cf. Rom 6:21

κοιλία, ας f stomach

"'Stomach' may be a metonymy for the craving after sumptuous fare, or perhaps for surfeiting. One cannot be sure. Perhaps it is intended to be more representative – of those who are so given over to present bodily desires of all kinds, represented by the 'appetites,' that such has become a 'god' to them." Fee

δοξα, ης f glory
αισχυνη, ης f shame, disgrace

"That is, they find their glory in what is really their shame." Eadie

ἐπιγειος, ον earthly, of the earth
φρονεω think, have in mind

Cf. Col 3:2. Again, the focus is on 'mindset.'

"These people over whom Paul weeps are first of all 'enemies of the cross'; they are now characterised as those who have abandoned the pursuit of the heavenly prize, in favour of what belongs *only* to the present scheme of things. Their focus is altogether earthward... He is probably describing some itinerants, whose view of the faith is such that it allows them a great deal of undisciplined self-indulgence." Fee

Philippians 3:20-21

"Here is a classic expression of the eschatological framework of Pauline theology, that present life is 'already/not yet,' predicated on Christ and his coming(s). Although the passage begins with the 'already,' the accent falls on the 'not yet,' thus giving perspective to the Philippians' present situation – and to much else in this letter. Christ has gained his present glory through humiliation (2:7-11); he is now 'in heaven' where we 'eagerly await' his coming as 'Saviour'; when he comes he will 'transform' us into his 'likeness,' so that our present bodies that know weakness and 'humiliation' are conformed into the likeness of his present 'glory'; and he will accomplish that in keeping with the same divine 'energy' (cf. 2:13) whereby he will also subject 'all things' to himself (= 'every knee shall bow')." Fee

Philippians 3:20

ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτήρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,

πολιτευμα, τος n place of citizenship

Paul is making a play on their Roman citizenship, cf. 1:27. Moffatt translates "we are a colony of heaven" and Fee adds, "Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome, whose citizens thereby exemplified the life of Rome in the province of Macedonia, so the citizens of the 'heavenly commonwealth' were to function as a colony of heaven in that outpost of Rome."

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

Cf. Col 3:3. "He who has his home in the future will be only a pilgrim for the present." Eadie

οὗ adv where

σωτηρ, ηρος m saviour

"Only once heretofore (Eph 5:23) [Fee thinks Ephesians predates Philippians] has he used this title ['Saviour'] to describe Christ. That he does so here is almost certainly for the Philippians' sakes, since this is a common title for Caesar. That he does so at all is especially significant christologically, since the title occurs frequently in the OT to refer to God as our (my) Saviour. As with the title 'Lord,' therefore (cf. 2:9-10), Paul has co-opted yet another OT term for God and unflinchingly attributed it to Christ. None of this would be missed by the Philippians, who know the term well in both of its contexts." Fee

ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for

Carries the sense of eagerness or longing.

Philippians 3:21

ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.

μετασχηματιζω change, transform

This and σύμμορφον pick up the language of 2:6-8.

σωμα, τος n body

ταπεινωσις, εως f humble state, humiliation

Our present body, subject to all the weakness and frailty consequent upon the fall. The AV's translation 'vile' is unfortunate. Again, there are echoes of the 'humiliation' of Christ in 2:8. The contrast is with those whose shameful glory is in present excess, v.19.

συμμορφος, ον having the same form, sharing likeness

Of this glory that belongs to Christ's risen and ascended body, Eadie remarks, "When he appeared at the arrest of Saul in the neighbourhood of Damascus, His glory dimmed the mid-day sun, and before the symbolical apparition at Patmos, the disciple who had lain in his bosom was so overpowered that he 'fell at his feet as dead.'"

ἐνεργεῖα, ας f (supernatural) working, power
ὑποτάξαι Verb, aor act infin ὑποτασσω
subordinate, put in subjection

Cf. 1 Cor 15:36-50. "In some ways this is the most remarkable 'transformation' of all, in that Paul here uses language about Christ that he elsewhere uses only of God the Father... The phrase 'able to subject all things to himself' is Paul's eschatological interpretation of Ps 8:7, where God will 'subject all things' to his Messiah, who in turn, according to 1 Cor 15:28, will turn over all things to God the Father so that 'God might be all in all.' Remarkably, in the present passage the 'subjecting' of all things to himself is said to be by Christ's own power." Fee

"With Paul we would do well not merely to 'await' the end, but eagerly to press on toward the goal, since the final prize is but the consummation of what God has already accomplished through the death and resurrection of our Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord." Fee

Philippians 4:1

ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου, οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ, ἀγαπητοί.

Echoes the exhortation of 1:27

ὥστε so that, with the result that

"Paul uses this conjunction specifically to apply the preceding 'argument' to the local situation." Fee. Cf. 2:12.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved
ἐπιποθητος, ον longed for

This adjective occurs here alone in the NT.

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown, prize

Cf. 1 Thess 2:19. "The apostle refers ... to the Lord's coming. His converts will then be his wreath of victory, for it will appear that he οὐκ εἰς κενον ἔδραμεν (2:16), and he will receive the successful athlete's reward; comp 1 Cor 9:25)" Lightfoot

Eadie suggests it also has a present reference: "as he had been so instrumental in their conversion, they were to him even now a wreath of honour."

οὕτως and οὕτω see 3:17

The reference may be back to verse 17.

στήκετε Verb, perf act indic & imperat, 2 pl
ἵστημι stand, stand firm, hold ground.

"During their present distress they are to 'stand fast in the Lord,' firmly planted in relationship with the same Lord whose coming they eagerly await and who will then subject all things to himself (3:20-21). And they are to 'thus stand firm' (NIV, 'that is how'), referring probably to the whole of 3:1-21, but especially to their 'imitation' of Paul by their upright 'walk' even as they bend every effort to attain the eschatological prize." Fee. It is not just an exhortation to the individual, Paul is here addressing the church.

ἀγαπητοὶ "The Apostle's love finds expression in the accumulation and repetition of words. In the final ἀγαπητοὶ he seems to linger over this theme, as if unable to break away from it." Lightfoot.

Philippians 4:2

Εὐδοκίαν παρακαλῶ καὶ Συντόχην παρακαλῶ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
φρονεω think, have in mind

Echoes the language of 2:2

It is theoretically possible for the names to be those of men, but the αὐταῖς of the following verse removes any ambiguity: these two are women. We know nothing of who these women were or what was the nature of their disagreement. Many suppose they were 'deaconesses'. Fee considers that this appeal "is where most of the letter has been heading all along."

Philippians 4:3

ναὶ ἐρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε, συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς, αἵτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησάν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζῶῃς.

ναὶ yes, yes indeed, certainly
ἐρωταω ask, request, beg, urge
γνησιος, α, ον genuine, true, loyal
συζυγος, ου m fellow-worker, partner or perhaps a proper name

Lightfoot thinks it probable that Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, is intended here. Some suggest that it is a reference to the individual who would receive this letter on behalf of the church – its first reader. Others suggest the reference is to the whole church but Fee thinks this most unlikely. He thinks it probably refers to one of Paul's itinerant co-workers who was currently in Philippi – perhaps Luke.

συλλαμβανω sieze; midd help, assist
 ὅστις, ἡτις, ὅ τι who, which
 εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel
 συναθλεω fight together with, strive
 together with, work together with

Cf. Acts 16:13. They may have been among the women who first responded to the gospel at Philippi. Fee comments, "Here is one of those pieces of 'mute' evidence for women in leadership in the NT, significant in this case for its off-handed, presuppositional way of speaking about them. To deny their role in the church in Philippi is to fly full in the face of the text. Here is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is 'gender-blind,' that he gifts as he wills; our task is to recognise his gifting and to 'assist' all such people, male and female, to 'have the same mindset in the Lord,' so that together they will be effective in doing the gospel."

Κλημης, εντος m Clement

Probably belongs with συλλαμβανου αυταις

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
 συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker

"The clause probably functions as a gentle reminder to all who lead the believing community in Philippi to 'have the same mindset as the Lord,' even though that is not specifically said of or to them." Fee

ὄνομα, τος n name
 βιβλος, ου f book, record
 ζωη, ης f life

The register of the Covenant people.

Philippians 4:4

Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε.

Paul regularly begins the concluding part of his letters with "staccato imperatives." Fee

χαίρω rejoice, be glad
 παντοτε always
 παλιν again, once more
 ἐρῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s λεγω

Cf. 3:1. 'Joy' is a repeated theme in this letter – this word and its cognates appearing 16 times in all. "As they traced all blessing to Christ and to union with Him, they would rejoice in the Lord; not in themselves as recipients but in Him as Source, not only in the gifts conferred but in Him especially as the gracious benefactor." Eadie. "'Joy,' unmitigated, untrammelled joy, is – or at least ought to be – the distinctive mark of the believer in Jesus Christ." Fee

Philippians 4:5

τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.
 ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς·

ἐπιεικης, ες gentle, forbearing,
 considerate; το ἐπιεικες = ἡ ἐπιεικεια
 kindness, forbearance, gentleness

Cf. Psalm 86:5 where this quality is attributed to God. Eadie points out that it is "that grace which was defective in one or another, or both of the women, who are charged by the apostle to be of one mind in the Lord. For, slow to take offence, it is swift to forgive it." Having cited 1 Peter 2:23, Fee says, "It is this 'gentle forbearance' and 'meekness' of Christ, to which Paul appealed in 2 Cor 10:1, which he here calls the believers to exhibit in Philippi."

γνωσθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s
 γνωσκω
 ἐγγυς adv near

Cf. James 5:8 There is some debate as to whether 'the Lord is near' belongs with what precedes or what follows. Eadie suggests that it may be a link phrase, relevant to both. Fee also thinks it may be a 'bit of both,' "perhaps something as close to intentional double entendre as one finds in the apostle? On the one hand, this looks very much like another instance of intertextuality, purposely echoing Ps 145:18, 'the Lord is near all who call upon him.' In which case it introduces vv 6-7 as an expression of 'realised' eschatology: 'Because the Lord is ever present, do not be anxious but pray.' On the other hand (or perhaps at the same time), it also echoes the apocalyptic language of Zeph 1:7 and 14 ('the Day of the Lord is near'), picked up by Paul in Rom 13:12, and found in Jas 5:8 regarding the coming of the Lord.

"On the whole it seems likely that this is primarily intended as the last in the series of eschatological words to this suffering congregation, again reminding them of their sure future, despite present difficulties. Thus it is a word of encouragement and affirmation."

Philippians 4:6

μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ' ἐν παντί τῇ προσευχῇ
καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετ' εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα
ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθε πρὸς τὸν θεόν·

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
μεριμναω be anxious, worry

On the antithesis between worry and prayer, cf.
Matt 6:25; 1 Peter 5:7.

The παντι may refer to 'every circumstance' (so
Fee) or 'at any time'. Maybe it embraces both.

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

"While προσευχη is the general offering up of
the wishes and desires to God, δεησις implies
special petition for the supply of wants."
Lightfoot. For the use of the two terms
together cf. Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1; 5:5.

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

"... Since thankfulness for past blessings is a
necessary condition of acceptance in preferring
new petitions. Great stress is laid on the duty
of εὐχαριστια by St Paul; e.g. Rom 1:21; 14:6;
2 Cor 1:11; 4:15; 9:12; Ephes 5:20; Col 2:7;
3:17; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 2:1. All his own
letters addressed to churches, with the sole
exception of the Epistle to the Galatians,
commence with an emphatic thanksgiving."
Lightfoot.

αἴτημα, τος n request, demand
γνωρίζω make known, disclose, know

Philippians 4:7

καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα
νοῦν φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ
νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

The και is "that of result, and might be
paraphrased 'and then,' or 'and so.'" Eadie.
Fee says that "to pray in trusting submission
and thanksgiving" is "God's alternative to
anxiety."

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

Cf. Col 3:15. Eadie says that this is not simply
the objective peace with God consequent upon
reconciliation with him – since they possessed
that always. "What the apostle refers to is a
state of mind which has that reconciliation for
its basis. The former peace has a special
relation to God, the controversy between Him
and the soul being terminated – the latter is
more personal and absolute. This peace is but
another name for happiness, for it is beyond
the reach of disturbance ... To know that it is
well with me now, and that it shall be so for
ever – to feel that God is my guide and
protector, while His Son pleads for me and His
Spirit dwells within me as His shrine – to feel
that I am moving along a path divinely
prescribed and guarded, to join the eternal
banquet in the company of all I love and all I
live for – the emotion produced by such strong
conviction is peace, ay, the 'peace of God.'" It
is *shalom*. It is not simply individual, it is
also social, cf. Eph 4:3.

ὑπερέχω be of more value than, surpass
νοῦς, νοος, νοι, νοῦν m mind, thought,
understanding

Lightfoot thinks this phrase means 'better than
every human device or counsel', and that Paul
is saying that it is better to live together
peaceably before God than to argue with each
other and seek to get the best of each other.
Eadie has a rather different conception of this
peace (see above), and says, "The mind cannot
rightly estimate this peace, or rise to an
adequate comprehension of it." Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.
Fee says, "his peace totally transcends our
merely human way of perceiving the world."

φρουρεω guard, hold prisoner
νοημα, τος n mind, thought

The mind is guarded from disquieting thoughts
and the heart from upsetting emotions. The
location of such protection is 'in Christ Jesus.'

Postscript to Philippians 4:4-7

Fee writes, "Joy, prayer, thanksgiving, peace –
these identify Pauline spirituality. Such lives
are further marked by gentle forbearance and
no anxiety. The key lies with the indicative,
'the Lord is near' – now and to come. The Lord
is now present by his Spirit, who prompts
prayer and thanksgiving, among whose 'fruit'
in the life of the believer and the believing
community are joy and peace. Here is God's
ultimate gift to those who trust in Christ,
shalom and joy.

"In a post-Christian, post-modern world, which
has generally lost its bearings because it has
generally abandoned its God, such spirituality
is very often the key to effective evangelism."

Philippians 4:8

Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἀγνά, ὅσα προσφιλή, ὅσα εὐφημα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἐπαινος, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε·

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining: (το) λοιπον
adv. finally, from now on

Cf. 3:1

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
pl. as many as; ὅσα whatever things
ἀληθης, ες true, honest, genuine

Truth "both in reference to God and men"
Eadie

σεμνος, η, ον of good character,
honourable, respectable

"It is opposed to what is mean, frivolous,
indecorous and unworthy." Eadie

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
ἀγνος, η, ον pure, holy

Cf. Prov 15:26.

προσφιλης, ες pleasing, lovely

Another word that occurs here only in the NT.
"In common parlance, this word could refer to a Beethoven symphony, as well as to the work of Mother Teresa among the poor of Calcutta; the former is lovely and enjoyable, the latter is admirable as well as moral." Fee

εὐφημος, ον worthy of praise
ἀρετη, ης f moral excellence, goodness
ἐπαινος, ου m praise, commendation; a
praiseworthy thing

λογιζομαι reckon, consider, think

Paul uses the language of Stoicism (though there are parallels with Jewish wisdom, cf. Jas 3:13-18), but his ethical instruction remains Christocentric. Fee writes of Paul, "using language the Philippians would have known from their youth, he singles out values held in common with the best of Hellenism. But as v.9 implies, these must now be understood in the light of the cruciform existence that Paul has urged throughout the letter." Fee comments on Paul's use of the verb λογίζομαι here rather than φρονεω. The Philippians are to *reckon* as worthy of embrace (rather than set their minds on) those things in the world which possess these characteristics. His concern is that, "even though they are presently 'citizens of heaven,' living out the life of the future as they await its consummation, they do not altogether abandon the world in which they used to, and still do, live. As believers in Christ they will embrace the best of that world as well, as long as it is understood in the light of the cross."

Philippians 4:9

ἂ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἠκούσατε καὶ εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί, ταῦτα πράσσετε· καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν.

ἐμάθετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl μανθανω
learn, find out

The language of discipleship.

παραλάβετε Verb, aor act ind, 2pl
παραλαμβάνω receive, accept

εἶδετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl ὁραω trans
see, observe

πρασσω practice, do

The Gospel is to be lived.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

"The phrase *God of peace* is parallel to the preceding one – peace of God. In the former case the peace is described in its connection with God, and now God is pointed out as the inworker of that peace." Eadie

Philippians 4:10

Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε ἠκαρεῖσθε δέ.

ἐχάρην Verb, 2nd aor pass dep indic, 1 s
χαίρω rejoice, be glad

μεγάλως greatly

ἤδη adv now, already; ἤδη ποτε now at
last

"Paul's own qualifier that follows makes it clear that even though not intending these words pejoratively, he recognised that they could be taken so." Fee

ἀνεθάλετε Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 2 pl
ἀναθαλλω revive

The verb is a botanical metaphor meaning literally 'to blossom again.'

φρονεω think, have in mind

"Their care for him had been for a time like sap and life in the veins of a tree, but an inclement season had prevented it from forming foliage and blossom." Eadie

ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε 'in reference to which you were indeed continually concerned.' Fee argues that καὶ here bears an intensive force 'indeed' rather than simply 'also.'

ἀκαίρομαι be without opportunity

Another word that occurs here only in the NT.

Philippians 4:11

οὐχ ὅτι καθ' ὑστέρησιν λέγω, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι·

οὐχ ὅτι is intended to guard against wrong inferences being drawn from what he has just said.

ὑστέρησις, εως f need, want; καθ' ὑ· because of need

Paul does not deny his need, but his thankfulness is more than a response to want relieved – just as his joy is not dependent upon material circumstances.

ἔμαθον Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
μαθῶ v.9

ἐν οἷς εἰμι Eadie says is not 'in whatever state I may be' but the particular 'in the condition I am in.' Nevertheless he adds, "His mind calmly bowed to the will of God in every condition in which he was placed."

αὐτάρκης, ες self-sufficient; satisfied

"The idea of αὐτάρκεια is 'independence of external circumstances.' Compare 2 Cor 9:8; 1 Tim 6:6." Lightfoot

Fee comments that, "On the surface, his explanation looks like a meteor fallen from the Stoic sky into his epistle." But Fee points out that Paul's sufficiency, unlike that of the Stoics, is not self-sufficiency but a sufficiency found in Christ, cf. v.13.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

Philippians 4:12

οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν· ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι, καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν, καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι·

οἶδα know, understand

ταπεινω humble; midd live in humble circumstances

Refers here to physical conditions rather than mental state.

περισσευω abound, excel, have plenty

ἐν παντι και ἐν πασιν "A general expression, corresponding to the English 'all and every'." Lightfoot

μεμύημαι Verb, perf pass dep indic, 1 s

μυεομαι learn the secret of

χορτάζω feed, satisfy

πειναω be hungry

ὑστερω lack; pass be lacking; midd be in want

He had learned to accept from God every situation and circumstance.

Philippians 4:13

πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με.

ἰσχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient
ἐνδυναμοω strengthen, make strong

"It is ... to be borne in mind that this ability came not from his commission as an apostle, but from his faith as a saint. The endowment was not of miracle but of grace." Eadie
He knows the continual provision of Christ's power through the Spirit, enabling him to face each situation with contentment and joy and to continue undaunted in the work of the gospel.

Philippians 4:14

πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει.

πλην nevertheless, however

συγκοινωνήσαντές Verb, aor act ptc, m nom
pl συγκοινωνεω take part in; help

Implies fellow-feeling or sympathy. "This returns to the language of 1:7, where Paul gives reason for his thanksgiving in terms of their being 'partners/participants' together with him in his chains and in the defence of the gospel." Fee

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

"It was not the actual pecuniary relief so much as the sympathy and companionship in his sorrow that the apostle valued." Lightfoot

Philippians 4:15

Οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππησίοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι,

οἶδα know, understand

οἶδατε και ὑμεις "You know as well as I"

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

ἐν ἀρχη του εὐαγγελιου 'in the earliest days of the Gospel'

ὅτε conj when, at which time

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

κοινωνεω share, take part, contribute

δοσις, εως f giving; gift

εἰς λογου δοσεως 'in the matter of giving'

λημψις, εως f receiving

μονος, η, ον only, alone

Cf 2 Cor 11:8,9

Philippians 4:16

ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη – i.e. "and indeed, even before I left Macedonia, while I was in Thessalonica ..." Cf. 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8,9. "The sums sent from Philippi did not fully supply the need of the apostle, for he was still obliged to work; but it argued goodwill on the part of the Philippian church, and the apostle refers with gratitude to their liberality." Eadie

ἅπαξ once, one time

δις twice

χρεία, ας f need, want

εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι some MSS read μοι rather than μοι, others omit εἰς. Some have both variants.

πεμπῶ send

Philippians 4:17

οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν.

ἐπιζητεῶ seek, desire, search for

δομα, τος n gift

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

πλεοναζῶ increase, grow

λογον here means 'account.'

"It is not the gift he covets, but the rich spiritual blessing which the gift secures to its donor." Eadie. Their gifts are evidence of their continuing faithfulness and fruitfulness (cf. 1:11), "which will find its full expression at the coming of Christ. They themselves will be Paul's eschatological 'reward' (2:16; 4:1); their gift to him has the effect of accumulating 'interest' toward *their* eschatological 'reward.'

Philippians 4:18

ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω· πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαυροδίτου τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν, ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ.

ἀπεχω receive in full, have enough

περισσευω abound, excel, have plenty

Cf. vv.11-13.

πεπλήρωμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s

πληρωω fill, make full

δεξάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s

δεχομαι receive

ὁσμη, ης f fragrance

εὐωδια, ας f sweet smell, fragrant aroma

ὁσμην εὐωδίας is a phrase used frequently in the LXX for the smell of sacrifices and offerings (Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18 etc.). Paul uses it in Eph 5:2, cf. 2 Cor 2:15,16.

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim

δεκτος, η, ον acceptable, favourable

Cf Rom 12:1

εὐαρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

The gift is a source of delight to God himself.

Philippians 4:19

ὁ δὲ θεὸς μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρεῖαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Paul cannot reciprocate by sending any gift to them but he reminds them that in giving to Paul they have given to God (note 'my God') and that God is no one's debtor.

πληρωω v.18

χρεία, ας f v.16

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

δοξα, ης f glory

Eadie interprets ἐν δόξῃ as "in a glorious way". ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "designates the sphere of God's action. In Christ Jesus he will supply their wants, or from the fulness in Him, His merit and mediation being the ground of it." Eadie.

"The Philippians' generosity toward Paul, expressed lavishly at the beginning of v.18, is exceeded beyond all imagination by the lavish 'wealth' of the eternal God, who dwells 'in glory' full of 'riches' made available to his own 'in Christ Jesus.' ... It is 'in keeping with' all of this – not 'out of' his riches, but in accordance with this norm, the infinite 'riches' of grace that belong to God's own glory – that God's full supply will come their way to meet their every need." Fee

Philippians 4:20

τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

"God is glorified in the aspect or character of Father, and "our Father," implying that those whose wants are supplied by Him are His children." Eadie

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Philippians 4:21

Ἀσπάσασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί.

ἀσπαζομαι greet

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, set apart to/by God; οἱ

ἅγιοι God's people

Lightfoot Eadie and Fee think that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is to be taken with ἀσπασασθε, cf. Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:19.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγὼ

Philippians 4:22

ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

μαλιστα especially

οἰκία, ας f house, household

It is uncertain who are being spoken of here. Some think that it was members of Caesar's own family, but it is more probable that it was servants who were part of Caesar's household. In any event it is testimony to the effect of Paul's character, conduct and words while in prison that it had such an effect on those aligned with his captors.

"They have brothers and sisters in Caesar's own household, who are on their side and now send them greetings; and therefore the Saviour whom they await (3:20) in the midst of their present struggle will gather some of Caesar's household as well as from Caesar's Philippi when he comes." Fee

Philippians 4:23

ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν.

χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

"The unauthorised postscript is variously read, both in the MSS., Versions and Fathers; the Received Text being – τοις Φιλιππησιους ἐγγραφη ἀπο Ῥωμης δι Ἐπαφροδιτου." Eadie