

...until the day of Messiah; – The primary goal for all believers is to persevere until that day when Yeshua returns. It is the return of Messiah to take all believers, from every era since the creation of the world, to be with Him for all eternity, that must strengthen our resolve to serve Him in spirit and in truth. As we have our eyes fixed on His return, we are given the courage and the strength to carry on the mission He has given each of us to do in regard to our respective communities, families, and friends.

11 – having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Yeshua Messiah, to the glory and praise of God.

The confidence (v. 6) of the Apostle in regard to the reality of the genuine faith of the believers in the Philippian community is that they had proven their faith by their lives of obedience and holiness as well as their genuine love for one another. It was this same love that they expressed to Paul by maintaining his life while in prison. In this regard, the words of Yeshua are foundational.

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (Jn 13:35)

Thus, in our verse Paul emphasizes the means by which the believer's life is changed so as to grow more and more to serve one's Savior, Yeshua, and thus to serve each other in genuine acts of love. This is the very love and commitment which seeks more and more to honor Yeshua and thereby strengthens one another within the believing community to serve Him as He intends.

...having been filled with the fruit of righteousness – That is, the inward working of the indwelling Ruach, the very gift of God to every believer, is inevitably seen in one's outward actions ("fruit") and particularly in showing godly and righteous love to fellow believers.

That Paul labels such righteous actions as the "fruit of righteousness" (καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης) clearly emphasizes that the ability of the believer to live righteously and to have their lives characterized by that which pleases God is the result (the fruit) of Yeshua's work Who alone paid the penalty of sin and by Whose redemptive work and intercession enables the believer to be indwelt and empowered by the Ruach, the very Spirit of God. As such, the "fruit of righteousness" is the very authenticity that a person is truly born again by the sovereign and omnipotent power and grace of God.

Paul emphasizes this as well in his epistle to the Ephesians:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Eph 2:8–10)

Moreover, the writer to the Hebrews makes it clear that the ability to pursue peace with all people is a genuine mark of the sanctification which is the inevitable work of the Ruach in every true believer in Yeshua.

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. (Heb 12:14)

This comes close in meaning to the words of Yeshua in the beatitudes: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). The author of Hebrews uses the expression “see the Lord” to mean eternal salvation, that is, to spend eternity in the very presence of God, without any impediment to a full and unending relationship of shalom. In short, without the kind of sanctification that God desires, eternal salvation is impossible. Therefore, we know that sanctification, becoming more and more set apart unto God and from sin, is the inevitable result of our being saved by God’s grace through faith.

----- *Excursus: Sanctification* -----

It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that Yeshua’s death (blood) is applied to the sinner via faith, thus cleansing him or her of the sin that would otherwise keep them separate from God. In fact, while in the Tanach the Spirit is often referred to as “the Spirit of God” (e.g., Gen 1:2; Num 24:2; 1Sam 10:10; 2Chron 24:20), the use of the adjective “holy” found in connection with the Spirit (e.g., Is 63:10–11; Ps 51:11[13]) may well indicate not only His own attribute of holiness, but also one of His primary works, i.e., to impart holiness to those whom God has redeemed. Thus, in the Apostolic Scriptures, πνεῦμα [τοῦ] θεοῦ “Spirit of God” does occur (12x),¹ but πνεύματος ἁγίου “Holy Spirit” is far more

1 Matt 3:16; 12:28; Rom 8:9, 14; 1Cor 2:11, 14; 3:16; 7:40; 12:3; Eph 4:30; Phil 3:3; 1John 4:2.

prominent (90x).¹ Thus the Apostolic Scriptures intend to emphasize the fact that it is the work of the Spirit to sanctify (make holy) those whom God is saving. Indeed, the fact that the Spirit of God indwells those who are being saved² brings the symbolism of the Tabernacle or Temple full circle. Even as God's *shekinah* resided over the Ark, attributing holiness to the space of the *mishkan* and *heichal*, so the abiding Spirit of God within the believer sanctifies (separates) him or her unto God. Having one's life separated to God and from that which is contrary to Him, is what is meant by "sanctification" or being "sanctified."

All too often, in the realm of Christian theology "salvation" is summed up in the doctrine of justification. Or to say it another way, practically speaking, modern Christianity has taught that the sum and substance of "being saved" is to have one's sins forgiven by God. The goal of much evangelism is to have the sinner pray the "sinner's prayer," after which the person is told "you are now saved." In one sense, this may, in fact, be true. But more often than not, the Scriptures present salvation as a "total package," not as though it were summed up in one aspect or another of God's saving work. Thus, though the one who has placed his or her faith in Yeshua may rightly claim to "be saved," this declaration should be understood to encompass a final and complete salvation which has not yet been realized. That is to say, salvation from the eternal consequences of sin (i.e., the wrath of God against sin and sinners) has been realized, but salvation from sin itself has not. Thus, while being declared righteous (justified) assures the believer that he or she will never be condemned for their sin, the struggle against sin remains, proving that "salvation from sin" has not yet been fully realized even if God has promised that it will be. Those who have confessed Yeshua to be the Savior and by faith have entrusted their eternal souls to His saving work may rightly affirm both that they are saved and are being saved. The promise of God assures the final outcome but currently they are in the process of being saved. Thus, sanctification is viewed in the Scriptures in two ways: 1) as that full and complete holiness (sinlessness) which is inevitable for all who have been effectually called to faith and justified, and 2) as that work of God's Spirit by which the believer is progressively being separated from sin (the "world") and unto God, being more and more conformed in thought, word, and deed to the image of Yeshua, God's Son. John Murray gives this description:

1 e.g. Matt 3:11; 12:32; Mark 13:11; Luke 2:25-26; Acts 1:8; 13:52; Rom 15:16; Eph 4:30; 1Pet 1:12

2 Rom 8:9, 11; 1Cor 3:16; Eph 2:22; 2Tim 1:14; James 4:5.

When we speak of sanctification we generally think of it as the process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct, and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ, until at death the disembodied spirit is made perfect in holiness, and at the resurrection his body likewise will be conformed to the likeness of the body of Christ's glory. It is biblical to apply the term "sanctification" to this process of transformation and conformation.¹

Yet while the Scriptures surely speak of sanctification as a process (i.e., as progressive) in which the believer grows in personal holiness, the biblical text also speaks of sanctification as already accomplished. Attempts at emphasizing one aspect to the exclusion of the other have resulted in theological imbalances and even error. For instance, the doctrine held by some segments of the Christian Church, that it is possible for a believer to become entirely sinless in this life (known theologically as "Perfectionism"), is a misunderstanding of those texts that emphasize definitive sanctification. For in those places where the biblical texts speak of the believer's sanctification as having already been fully accomplished, they do so on the grounds that the believer's final and complete sanctification is inevitable, just as is their glorification (Rom 8:30). Conversely, those who emphasize the progressive nature of sanctification, neglecting to emphasize those texts that speak of it as having already been accomplished, often fail to see that the fountain from which sanctification flows is, in fact, the same as that from which justification is derived, namely, the union of the believer with Yeshua in His death and resurrection. The biblical texts that speak of sanctification in definitive (rather than progressive) terms, do so in much the same way as the Scriptures present justification as definitive. From God's perspective, our sanctification is as sure as our justification since both rest upon the finished work of Yeshua. They both may therefore be spoken of as already accomplished. On the other hand, from our own perspective, we are progressively becoming what God has declared us to be, that is, righteous. The mystery of our sanctification, then, is that while on the one hand it is sure because God has determined that we

1 John Murray, *Collected Writings of the John Murray*, 4 vols (Banner of Truth, 1977), 2.277. (The four chapters in this work on Sanctification, i.e., "Definitive Sanctification," "The Agency in Definitive Sanctification," "Progressive Sanctification," and "The Pattern of Sanctification" are all well worth reading. They comprise pp. 277–317 of vol. 2 of the *Collected Writings*).

should be sanctified, it is, on the other hand, dependent upon our persevering in becoming holy. While our justification depended entirely upon God's work alone (monergistic), our sanctification comes about through our own cooperation with God (synergistic). Yet our cooperation with God in our own sanctification, as necessary as it is, never jeopardizes our inevitable final and complete holiness: persevere we must; persevere we will.

----- *End of Excursus* -----

... *to the glory and praise of God.* – Paul closes v. 11 with this most important phrase, teaching us once again that our salvation by God's grace and through the saving work of our Savior, Yeshua, is ultimately given to us in order that God will be glorified and given the praise He deserves. Surely our eternal salvation is an unspeakable gift enabling the believer to live with assurance, praise, and confidence even in this fallen world. This is because the salvation we have been given by God enables us to "glorify God and to enjoy Him forever,"¹ and in fact, this must become more and more the primary focus and goal of the believer's life. Surely in our own weaknesses we may fail at times to progress in our faith as we should, but inevitably the Lord will grant repentance as the Spirit brings conviction and the believer yields to His persistent and loving persuasion.

The primary point that Paul emphasizes in this final phrase of our verse is that ultimately our goal as those redeemed by the saving power of God is that He should receive the praise and glory. All too often the message of salvation in our modern times is presented as that which will benefit the individual, focusing on all of the ways salvation will bring lasting benefits. Surely the salvation that Yeshua has won for all who are His brings untold benefits for the believer, both in this world and in the world-to-come. But what is too often missing the presentation of the gospel is that those who are redeemed by God's grace have been given the ability to glorify God by seeking to give Him all of the praise for such a bountiful gift.

For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God
in your body (1Cor 6:20)

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to
the glory of God. (1Cor 10:31)

1 *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q. 1: "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

12–13 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Messiah has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Paul now begins a new section of his letter to the Philippian community, addressing his own situation and what may have been obvious questions that the Philippian believers had. Thus he begins by stressing his desire that they know the truth about his situation and especially that they not be disheartened or even worse. Some who were perhaps fairly new believers in Yeshua may have entertained questions as to whether Paul's message and emphasis upon the gospel of Yeshua was, in fact, true. Others may have considered Paul's imprisonment as giving strength to those who stood against Yeshua and thereby bringing upon the believing communities heightened persecution. And still others may have been losing hope that Paul would be released from prison or even found guilty of false charges against him.

I want you to know – In the Greek, the opening word of v. 12 is γινώσκειν (*ginōskein*), “to know,” and though normally an infinitive would be put later in the clause, here Paul puts it first in the sentence in order to give it emphasis. Paul was rightly concerned that his brothers and sisters in the Lord, who comprised the believing community in Philippi, not be discouraged, frightened, or dismayed at his current situation. He therefore intends to make the truth known, as well as the circumstances of which they were surely unaware.

One could imagine that there were those within the Philippian community who, because of Paul's imprisonment, were questioning the reality of Paul's message, while others may have thought that his incarceration would encourage those who opposed him and cause heightened persecution against Yeshua followers in general. Likewise, it is possible that there were those in the Philippian community who were wondering whether or not the charges brought against Paul were actually true, that he was the instigator of riots and that he had desecrated the temple.¹ Thus Paul is intent on making sure the Philippian community knew not only that he was innocent of the false charges brought against him but also that his current circumstances were surely divinely chosen in order to bring about the success of the Gospel in a way one could have never planned.

1 Cf. Acts 24:1–9.

...that my circumstances – “my circumstances” translates τὰ κατ’ ἐμὲ (*ta kat eme*), literally “the things concerning me,” and therefore includes all that follows, including his incarceration as well as his opportunity to continue to proclaim the gospel centered in Yeshua the Messiah. In describing his circumstances, he is not seeking to diminish the difficulty, pain, and physical struggle that no doubt resulted from his current imprisonment. Nor is he saying that physical suffering is good. As one writer notes:

Paul does not say that being in chains is good; he takes no masochistic delight in his suffering, but he also does not bemoan it.¹

... have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel – Rather, what is uppermost in Paul’s mind is that even in this most difficult situation, as he is given strength by God, he is able to glorify Him by proclaiming the gospel. He writes that his incarceration has “turned out” or enabled an open door for the gospel. The words “turned out” translate ἐλήλυθεν (*elēluthen* < ἔρχομαι), the verb “to come, go” here in the perfect tense. The perfect tense in *koine* Greek

...combines in itself, so to speak, the present and the aorist in that it denotes the continuance of completed action...²

The point is that Paul intends his readers to understand that his circumstances are that which God sovereignly ordained so that he would have an “open door” to proclaim the gospel where, in normal circumstances, it would seem impossible. A regular phrase he uses is “opening a door” which enabled him to proclaim the gospel where otherwise he would have been hindered to do so (cf. 1Cor 16:9, 2Cor 2:12, Col 4:3).

Surely we can be encouraged by the example of Paul, for instead of bemoaning the hardship of his imprisonment he knows that God is in control and that in trusting Him, good would come of his suffering.

In the phrase “greater progress of the gospel,” the words “greater progress” translate a single Greek word, προκοπή (*prokopē*), which in the Apostolic Scriptures is used only here, in 1:25, and in 1Tim 4:15. It is not

1 Garland, David E. *Philippians* in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 2006), 12:198.

2 §340 in F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Univ. of Chicago, 1961), p.175.

found in the canonical books of the Lxx, but only in 2Mac 8:8 and Sir 51:17. While not regularly used in the older Greek, it appears in the Hellenistic Greek as a common word “to denote progress and prosperity in the physical, economic, and social sphere.”¹ For Paul, the progress of the Gospel is accredited to God’s sovereignly opening doors that otherwise would never be opened. Surely his words here were to encourage the Philippian believers that contrary to what may appear to be a roadblock to his work, the Lord was in control and opportunities for proclaiming the good news of Yeshua had been given where one would have hardly expected such an opening to exist.

Surely this should encourage all of us to consider every opportunity in which we find ourselves in a place to share the gospel of Yeshua. In a world where so many are lost in the darkness of sin, we have the grand opportunity and mission to live out the gospel before a watching world, and to proclaim the gospel of Yeshua, recognizing that we are enabled to “plant the seed” and it is God Himself Who will bring the seed to life.

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. (1Cor 3:5–7)

...so that my imprisonment in the cause of Messiah – Here Paul makes it clear that he was not guilty of the charges leveled against him, but that his charges against him which resulted in his incarceration were false and simply manufactured by those who wanted him silenced.

Once again, Paul sees his current circumstances as having been ordained by God and that his situation was actually designed to bring the gospel to those whom God intended to hear it, that is, for the cause of Messiah. And what is the cause of the Messiah? Paul was able to demonstrate to those in prison that his imprisonment was solely based upon hatred against him by those who had rejected Yeshua. He was imprisoned because of his unwavering faith in Yeshua and because he had been called by Yeshua Himself to proclaim the truth about Yeshua. Even recognizing that openly proclaiming Yeshua as the promised Messiah and Savior of sinners would make him vulnerable to persecu-

1 G. Stählin, *TDNT* 6, 704–705.

tion did not stop him, indeed, could not stop him from fulfilling the mission Yeshua had given him. Surely Paul stands among many who present to us a strong faith and commitment to be witnesses for our risen and reigning Savior regardless of the cost.

...has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else – Here Paul makes it clear that the gospel, the cause of Yeshua, had become “well known” (φανερός, *phoneros*) throughout the whole praetorian guard. The Greek *phoneros* means “that which is made plain and clear, evident.”¹ Undoubtedly this would come about by repeated contact and conversation with those who were guarding the prisoners. There is some evidence that by the phrase “praetorian guard” Paul is referring to the building which housed the soldiers, which would mean that wherever he was moved within the structure, he was able to give witness of the gospel. However, there is sufficient evidence that by “praetorian guard” Paul means the soldiers themselves.² Likewise, Paul adds “and to everyone else,” which means the prisoners themselves gave audience to Paul’s message of the gospel. Thus, he indicates clearly that by God’s all powerful hand, Paul was able to proclaim the gospel to the vast majority of people who were connected with or incarcerated in the prison.

What lesson do we learn from this? It is obvious: nothing can stand in the way of God’s design to have the gospel known. Let us therefore never be afraid or for some other reasons remain silent when the opportunity presents itself to share the gospel, or even to plant a single seed that might lead to further inquiries about the gospel. As Paul wrote:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:16)

1 BDAG, “φανερως,” p. 1047.

2 See J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (Zondervan, 1953), pp. 99–104.