

... yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. –

Here we witness in Paul the true heart of everyone who fulfills the role of a spiritual teacher, for he longed to fulfill the very purpose given to Him by Messiah Himself. That purpose was to teach and guide those under his care to understand and commit their lives to extol the glories and grace of God in Yeshua. This requires teaching them what it means truly to serve Him in one's life and to continue to grow spiritually through regular application of the means of grace. Surely such instruction must be grounded in the inspired word of God, the Scriptures, made applicable for every facet of life by the Ruach HaKodesh.

Paul appears to state here that his work with the believers in Philippi was still very much needed, and that this might indicate the God would indeed release him from a sentence of capital punishment. While he longed to be with Yeshua and to be done with the hardships under which he suffered, he puts the needs of the believing community as a priority over his own comforts.

## **25 – Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,**

The opening phrase of v. 15, “convinced of this” (καὶ τοῦτο πεποιθώς) utilizes a perfect participle (πεποιθώς, *pepoithos*) which in this context gives the cause or grounds of the main verb, which in this case, is the verb οἶδα, (*oída*), “to know.” But what was it of that which Paul was convince? It seems very likely that, knowing the needs of the Philippian community and that Yeshua Himself had chosen him and given him a mission to proclaim the true message of the Scriptures and to disciple other believers as well as whole communities to walk in the footsteps of the Messiah, he considers that the future will hold his exoneration and he will once again be in fulfilling the work Yeshua gave Him to do.

It seem likely that when he writes “you all” (πᾶσιν ὑμῖν, *pasin humin*), he has in mind other communities as well as the believers in Philippi. Thus, when he states “I know” we should not have in mind necessarily that he had some kind of direct “word” from the Lord but rather that he recognized that his mission as an Apostle for Yeshua was not yet completed. As F. F. Bruce notes:

His knowledge that his survival would be for the benefit of his fellow Christians, and his confidence that God would do whatever was necessary for their growth in grace, combined to give him good hoe that he would

indeed be granted a further spell of life and apostolic activity....<sup>1</sup>

...*for your progress and joy in the faith* – Often in this epistle, as well in the other Pauline epistles, there is an emphasis upon spiritual growth and progress. Already in this epistle he has emphasized progressing in love for fellow believers as one also grows in knowledge of the truth (1:9), growing in faithful service the Lord and one another (1:11) and in 2:12 he will emphasize the need for believers to grow in obedience to the eternal truths of the Scriptures.

Note that as believers progress in their faith, becoming mature in the knowledge and living out the life of faith, this brings joy. This means that regardless of what trials we may face in our lives, the true and strong faith in God's all encompassing power and love enables us to have inner peace and joy know that God causes all things to work together of His glory and our good (Rom 8:28). But the fact that progress in the faith brings joy to the believer's life, the opposite is also true. Since growth in faith issues in greater obedience and thus giving more and more glory and praise to God in one's life, to fail to mature and grow in one's faith brings the opposite of joy. For those whom the Lord loves He also disciplines and though His discipline is the very expression of His love to disobedient children, it may bring hardship to the believer who has failed to progress in their faith and are lured into the things of the world. As Hendricksen notes:

Why is it important that believers progress? Because not to progress means to regress. Standing still spiritually is impossible. And regression produces depression (dejection). But progress means happiness, the joy unspeakable and full of glory. Hence, Paul very neatly unites these two concepts and writes that he expects to remain with his friends on earth for their progress and joy in the faith.<sup>2</sup>

Once again, the very means of progressing in our life of faith in Yeshua are to be daily immersed in the Scriptures, to have prayer as a significant part of our daily living, and to a functioning member of a believing community of faith. All of these are vitally important though

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1 F. F. Bruce, *Philippians* in *New International Biblical Commentary* (Hendrickson, m 1989), p.52.

2 Hendricksen, William. *Exposition of Philippians* in *New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1962), p. 79.

in our modern world where individualism is so prevalent, it is important to note that Paul will emphasize the fact that true progress in one's faith happens in the context of community.

**26 – so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Messiah Yeshua through my coming to you again.**

The opening phrase of the NASB would seem to indicate that what Paul is expressing is that the “proud confidence” of the believers in Philippi would have Paul’s steadfast love and concern for them as its focus. A parallel to this idea may be found in 2Cor 1:13-14.

For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

But the way the Greek sentence is worded may be taken differently, and to show the construction of the Greek I give it in its word-order, to show that the words “in me” could be understood differently.

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

“in order that your boasting may abound in Messiah Yeshua in [by] me through my coming again to you.”

The issues is how we are to understand the phrase “in me.” Is Paul the expected focus of their increased boasting or is Messiah Yeshua the subject of their increased boasting? As noted above, for the Philippi community to rejoice and “boast” in the deliverance of Paul from his Roman prison would surely be warranted. But interestingly, when Paul uses the verb *καυχάομαι* (*kauchaomai*, “to boast”) with the preposition *ἐν* (*en*), he consistently admonishes believers to boast in God, not man. Note the following examples:

1Cor. 1:31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.” (1Cor 31, cf. Jer 9:23-24)

1Cor. 3:21 So then let no one boast in men. (1Cor 3:21)

But he who boast is to boast is to boast in the lord. (2Cor 10:17)

Given the fact that Paul often has Jer 9:23–24 in mind when he speaks of “boasting,” it seem best to understand the same thing in our text, especially since the “in me” in our text is separated from the verb *καυχάομαι* (*kauchaomai*), “to boast.” Given these data, it seem best to interpret “in me” to mean the instrumental use of the preposition *en*, which it often conveys, and thus to render the phrase “so that your boasting may abound in Messiah Yeshua through my *labors* when I return to you.”<sup>1</sup>

The lesson we learn from Paul’s example and inspired words is this: if we are privileged to be used of the Lord to help others or to lead them in the truth of the Scriptures and thus to aid them in their spiritual growth, the praise should be directed to the Lord, for apart of Him we can accomplish nothing. This does not mean that expressing appropriate appreciation for leaders or teachers is wrong, but what it does mean is this: all praise and honor ought ultimately result in giving God the glory for all that is good.

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)

...*through my coming to you again.* – Undoubtedly the Philippian community was engage in constant prayer for Paul’s deliverance, and we should consider that Paul likewise was engage in such prayer since he states plainly that he recognized the ministry which he could fulfill within the community at Philippi. As Hendricksen has shown, there is sufficient historical evidence to show that Paul was released and that he visited Philippi again.<sup>2</sup>

Here, once again, we see that the Scriptures emphasize the wonderful reality, that God is in control of all that takes place in our world, even if it appears that the powers-that-be are intent upon erasing any and all references to the existence and all-controlling power of the Almighty. Surely Rome in the time of Paul was a major world power, but they could not hold nor silence one of the most outspoken voices proclaiming the truth that Yeshua of Nazareth was crucified, buried, arose on the third day, Who did great miracles and proved Himself to be the promised Messiah and Savior of sinners.

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1 See Moisés Silva, *Philippians* in *Baker Exegetical Commentary* (Baker Pub., 2005), p. 74.

2 See Hendricksen, *The Pastoral Epistles* in *New Testament Commentary*, pp. 23–27, 39, 40.