

final day of salvation which they will experience, but also the joy of their current willingness to live out their faith as those redeemed by Yeshua's sacrificial death, resurrection and intercession for them. Thus their response to God in faith produced the "drink offering" of Paul's own ministry which he gladly "poured out" as a "thank offering" to God for the unspeakable gift of His grace in Yeshua.

The use of this terminology reveals Paul's humility about his own importance. In the ritual, the sacrifice was primary; the drink offering was secondary. If Paul placed himself in the position of the drink offering, he saw their gift as the primary matter and his own circumstances as secondary.¹

18 You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

Having stated in the previous verse that he is rejoicing in spite of his current circumstances, Paul now urges the believers at Philippi to likewise rejoice with him. The NASB adds the words "*I urge you*" to emphasize the nature of the imperative (command) which Paul uses, for he is urging them with a loving command "to rejoice" in the Lord even as he is rejoicing. This emphasizes the sober yet wonderful promise of God to those who are His, that even in times of suffering He is in control and will cause all things to work together for the good of those who are called to love Him, who are called and redeemed according to His purpose (cf. Rom 8:28).

For even in the most dire of circumstance, all who are truly His by faith in Yeshua are enabled by the power of the Ruach to have inner peace and even to rejoice regardless of what they may face in the "ups and downs" of life. Paul has already expressed this in 1:20-21.

... according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Messiah will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Messiah and to die is gain. (1:20-21)

In this *kal-ve-chomer* ("light and heavy") example, Paul states that whether God continues to give him life ("*light*") or he succumbs to

1 Meleck, Richard. *Philippians in New American Commentary* (Broadman, 1991), p. 115.

death" ("heavy"), he will still be able to rejoice, for to live for the glory of Messiah in this life is that which gives the greatest purpose in life, and to die is to leave this fallen world and to enter into the very presence of Messiah Himself and "forever to be with the Lord" (1Thess 4:17).

Surely all who are believers in Yeshua ought to value life and to do all to maintain and strengthen it. So when Paul states that "to die is gain," he is in no way suggesting that death is to be sought. On the contrary, we are to do all in our power to maintain life and to support it and do so as that which honors God. But when Paul states that "to die is gain," he clearly means that the child of God need not fear death, for when a believer in Yeshua dies, their very soul abides with Yeshua. Thus, rather than death being a victory for the enemy of our souls, death is God's ordained gateway into His very presence.

... *rejoice in the same way* – The phrase translated "in the same way" (τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ) actually comes first in the sentence, and functions adverbially, that is, expressing that Paul desired his readers (and us) to rejoice in the same manner in which he was able to rejoice, even though incarcerated and possibly facing execution in the near future.¹ Surely the believers in Philippi to whom Paul is writing were not currently facing the same level of persecution that Paul was experiencing. Nevertheless, Paul admonishes them (and us) to face whatever troubles they encountered with a desire to rejoice in the fact that God is in control and will always enable His children to find deep and settled joy in Him, regardless of the circumstances they face.

We should also note that Paul's use of the word "rejoice" throughout this epistle is always in a verbal sense.² This emphasizes that "joy" and "rejoicing" is something a person does, not simply how one feels, as some of the English translations seem to imply by translating the verb as "be glad."³ Thus, in our epistle Paul commands those who are believers in Yeshua to "rejoice in the Lord" (3:1) and even "to rejoice in the Lord always" (4:4). This emphasis reminds one of the many times in the Psalms when the child of God is commanded to rejoice in the God's goodness, power, and promises. For example:

1 See Moule, C. F. D., *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 33-34.

2 χαίρω, the verb "to rejoice," is found 9 times in Philippians: 1:18 (2x); 2:17-18, 28; 3:1; 4:4 (2x), 10.

3 Note the NIV ("you too should be glad"), ESV ("you also should be glad")

I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul, (Ps 31:7)

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart. (Ps 32:11)

And my soul shall rejoice in the LORD; It shall exult in His salvation. (Ps 35:9)

Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified." (Ps 70:4)

Note as well the final stanza of Habakkuk's song:

Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. (Hab 3:17-18)

As Fee notes:

That is, "rejoicing in the Lord" is part and parcel of Christian life and is quite unrelated to the present lay of the land... This is not "sour grapes," nor making the best of a bad situation, nor "delight in feeling bad"; this has to do with true faith, and thus perspective, based as it is on the unshakable foundation of the work of Christ, both past and future.¹

As we rely upon the Lord, being guided and urged by His Ruach, and applying the truths of the Scriptures which are the very foundation of our faith, we are enabled both to recognize that our greatest purpose in life is to give God the glory He deserves and that even the strength to do so has been given to us by Him. This does not mean we never sorrow, but it means that even in times of sorrow, we know and confirm that God does all things well and that in the end, He will be glorified as His love, mercy, and strength is lived out by His chosen ones, even in the midst of suffering.

1 Gordan Fee, *Philippians*, in *IVP Commentary*, p. 111.

... and share your joy with me. – The Greek actually has: *συγχαίρετέ μοι* (*sungxairete moi*), “rejoice with me” where the verb carries the sense of “to experience joy in conjunction with someone, to rejoice together with someone.”¹ This is the same word Paul used in v. 17 as he intends to share with the Philippian community the inner joy he has in the Lord, regardless of what the immediate future may hold for him.

The NASB translation of this phrase, however, makes it sound as though Paul desires to share in their joy, but the context would clearly suggest that Paul wants the Philippian community to rejoice with him as he rejoices in God’s sovereign care and plan for his life. He wants them to know that God has given him the strength to rejoice even in his current situation and, as such, that they should not fret or worry about what lay ahead for him.

Here we see yet another important aspect of Paul’s teaching regarding rejoicing in the Lord, something which ought to characterize the lives of all believers. He emphasizes that our rejoicing in the Lord ought inevitably to be shared with other believers, and especially within one’s community of faith. As we give testimony of how the Lord has enabled us to rejoice, even in difficult situations, by this we encourage one another to exercise our faith and to affirm the goodness of God and the strength He promises to give us regardless of what we may experience in this world.

Thus, Paul concludes this section of the epistle (1:27–2:16), in which he exhorts the Philippian believers to live out their faith before a watching world and thereby be a strong testimony for the grace of God in redeeming His own through the redemptive work of Yeshua and the renewing work of the Ruach HaKodesh. He includes in this section an exhortation to the Philippian community to strive for unity and not to allow “grumbling or disputing” to prevail (2:14). Now, in his conclusion of this longer passage, he focuses upon the wonderful strength that comes from rejoicing in the Lord, and sharing together in all of the goodness that He has accomplished for those who are His.

Let us all take these admonitions seriously so that as we fellowship in our respective communities of faith, we too will be blessed of God as we rejoice in His goodness and promises, affirming the “so great a salvation” He has given to us in Yeshua, made applicable through His abiding Spirit in us and with us.

1 BDAG, “*συγχαίρω*,” p. 953.

19 – But I hope in the Lord Yeshua to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

Verses 19–24 form the next section of Paul’s letter which disclose his desire to send Timothy to them as well as his hope that he too would be able to follow soon after. But what also characterizes this section is the testimony Paul gives regarding Timothy and thereby setting him forward as an example of genuine service for the Lord by serving others, even when such service may require persevering through difficult situations.

I hope in the Lord Yeshua... – Paul, having expressed his rejoicing in the Lord, now makes known his desire to send Timothy to Philippi so as to be Paul’s messenger, not only to describe his own situation and condition, but also so that he might learn how the Philippian community is faring in his absence. Once again we find in Paul an excellent example for all who hold positions of leadership within a local congregation of believers. For though he doubtlessly was overburdened with his own situation and concern for what the immediate future would hold for him, he nonetheless continues to fulfill his duties as an apostle of Yeshua, seeking to help and encourage those communities of believers he has been given the privilege to serve. Hendricksen notes:

Paul, the joyful servant of Jesus Christ, the optimistic prisoner, the humble cross-bearer, is also the thoughtful administrator. Even from his prison in Rome he manages in a masterly fashion the spiritual terrain entrusted to his care, so that we marvel at his practical wisdom, gracious consideration of the needs and feelings of others, and delightful unselfishness.¹

Paul also reminds us, by stating “I hope in the Lord Yeshua,” that as believers in Yeshua, our entire life is to be lived out for Him and in accordance with His will. We are to live always with this in mind: our goal is to do what the Lord desires. Therefore, believing that God is sovereign over all things, our desires and plans must therefore be submitted to this overarching reality: “as the Lord wills,” just as James teaches us:

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in

1 William Hendricksen, *Philippians in Hendricksen-Kistemaker NT Commentary* (Baker, 1962), p. 133.

business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." (James 4:13–15)

... *to send Timothy to you shortly* – Paul has stated that he “hoped” to send Timothy,” which would seem to emphasize that his own future was still uncertain as to the outcome of the trial he would face, and whether this would result in his execution or release. Surely Timothy was fulfilling an important role for Paul himself, undoubtedly providing him with food and other necessities during his incarceration.

... *so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.* – Paul also was concerned for the Philippian community, for one could imagine that those who might be weak in their faith would question God’s goodness for allowing Paul to suffer in prison for his faith. Moreover, there may have been those who were fearful of the persecution that might come their way if they were open about their faith in Yeshua.

As an apostle of Yeshua who had carried the message of the Gospel to Philippi, Paul, as a good shepherd would do, was anxious to hear how the believing community was doing since he was no longer able to fulfill his role as a leader and teacher in their midst. But we also note Paul’s confidence that the report he will receive when Timothy returns will be a good report, for he expected to be encouraged. Here again we see Paul’s confidence is based upon the truth of God’s sovereign work in saving sinners, just as he wrote at the beginning of this epistle:

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Messiah Yeshua. (Phil 1:6)

He is sure that when Timothy returns, the report he brings will be a source of encouragement. Once again, we see the confidence that Paul has in the promises of God, and may we likewise be strengthened in our faith to know that God’s promises are sure and to live accordingly.

Timothy himself stands forth as an excellent example of one who was both a servant to Paul and others, as well as a trustworthy and dependable emissary for the Apostle himself. We are reminded that in the opening verse of this epistle Paul identifies himself together with Timothy as “bond-servants of Messiah Yeshua.” It seems clear that Timothy was the co-worker closest to Paul’s heart since he was sent also to Thessalonica (from Athens, 1Thess 3:1–5) as well as to Corinth

(from Ephesus, 1Cor 4:17; 16:10–11) as the trusted emissary of Paul. Here we see the fruit of true discipleship. For having been drawn to faith in Yeshua through the work of the Ruach and taught and trained by Paul, Timothy fulfilled a vital role, not only in being the emissary of Paul, but also in strengthening and encouraging the communities to which Paul sent him.

We read this about Timothy in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians:

For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Messiah, just as I teach everywhere in every church. (1Cor 4:17)

Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. (1Cor 16:10)