

# **“Mountain Tops”**

(Phil. 4:20-23)

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**March 29, 2009**

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. As Gibbon Viewed Rome**

As Edward Gibbon approached the end of writing *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a project that had taken nearly twenty years of his life, he returned to the city of Rome and made his way to an outcropping of the Capitoline hill from which he could look out upon the Forum, made desolate by the passing of the centuries. It was the point from which many famous men and many writers have surveyed the ruins of the Roman city and from which many persons do today. As Gibbon looked at the Forum and began to compose the final words of his history, his mind went back over all he had written and he expressed the wish that those who should read his masterpiece should come to appreciate, not so much the detail of the narrative, but the great themes of the work and its general conclusions.

I believe that something similar happens to any author as he draws near the end of his work. It has happened to me, to some extent, as I come in this chapter to the close of my exposition of the book of Philippians. And it happened to Paul as he completed his remarks to his Philippian friends.

### **B. As Paul finished his great letter**

1. What a letter!!!
2. Four monumental chapters
3. Wraps it up in three verses

## **II. Review**

### **A. The Author...Paul**

1. Under arrest
2. Chained to Roman soldiers
  - The elite “praetorian guard”

3. They were getting saved!!!

### **B. Timothy and Epaphroditus were with him**

1. Epaphroditus sent by Church of Phillippi
2. Brought money and supplies

### **C. Sent by church in Philippi**

1. Paul started the church
2. Met godly women down by the river
3. Thrown in jail
  - The earthquake
  - Jailer and family saved
4. The “church that remembered”
  - Sent support to Paul
  - Sometimes they were the only ones

### **E. Theme...Rejoice in the Lord always**

1. Despite your circumstances
  - a. Your 401k
2. Do it...and your life will be changed!!!
3. Be content always
4. Paul served as an example

## **III. Text**

### **A. The Doxology (v. 20)**

1. Definition of “doxology”—
  - a. “A hymn or form of words containing an ascription of praise to God”

2. Singing the Doxology as a child

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise him all creatures here below  
Praise him above ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost*

- a. Written by Thomas Ken in 1674 as last verse of “*Awake my soul, and with the sun*”
- b. Yet it has been sung in some form by followers of Jesus for the past 2,000 years
- c. Part of our heritage

3. The Doxology of Philippians 4:20

***(20) To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

4. Note:

a. ***“to our God and Father”***

1. “our”....Personal relationship
2. “God”....awesome power
3. “Father”....intimate love and care

b. ***“be glory”***

1. How do we give God glory?
2. “Praise”

a. Our life’s goal

b. In word and in deed

c. ***“forever and ever”***

1. In the here and now
2. In the hereafter

## B. The Greeting (v. 21-22)

*(21) Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings.*

1. The “saints” defined by a child
  - a. Thinking about images on stained-glass windows
  - a. “They cover the windows of the church and keep the light out”
  - b. Halos and stained-glass windows
2. WRONG...only saints and ‘ain’ts”
  - a. ALL Christians are considered saints!!!
  - b. Even the believers in the church of Corinth
    1. The most carnal church?
      - a. Have been called those “cruddy Corinthians”
    2. Yet even they are called saints
  - c. *“greet all the saints in Christ Jesus”*
    1. The key to being a saint
    2. Salvation
3. *“The brothers who are with me send greetings”*
  - a. Who was with Paul?
    1. Timothy
    2. Epaphroditus
    3. Other Christians in Rome
  - b. Philippians 1:14

*(14) Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.*

- c. Many are listed by name in Romans 16

#### 4. Caesar's household

**(22) *All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.***

##### a. Those of "Caesar's Household"

The letter comes to the end with greetings. In this final section there is one intensely interesting phrase. Paul sends special greetings from the Christian brothers who are of *Caesar's household*. It is important to understand this phrase rightly. It does not mean those who are of Caesar's kith and kin. Caesar's household was the regular phrase for what we would call the Imperial Civil Service; it had members all over the world. The palace officials, the secretaries, the people who had charge of the imperial revenues, those who were responsible for the day-to-day administration of the empire, all these were Caesar's household. ***It is of the greatest interest to note that even as early as this, Christianity had penetrated into the very center of the Roman government. There is hardly any sentence which shows more how Christianity had infiltrated even into the highest positions in the empire.*** It was to be another three hundred years before Christianity became the religion of the empire, but already the first signs of the ultimate triumph of Christ were to be seen. The crucified Galilean carpenter had already begun to rule those who ruled the greatest empire in the world.

##### b. As well as the Praetorian Guard

##### 1. Soldiers chained to Paul

#### 5. God works through the circumstances of our lives

##### a. The people you encounter

### **C. The Benediction (v. 23)**

#### 1. What is a "benediction"?

##### a. A closing prayer or blessing

##### b. Parting words of care and encouragement

**(23) *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.***

#### 2. "Grace"... "unmerited favor"

##### a. Our granddaughter "Hannah Grace"

- b. Hannah is Hebrew for Grace
  - c. My 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher “Miss Shirley Shirley”
- 3. Again...the key is Jesus Christ
  - a. The source of grace
  - b. Our undeserved salvation
- 4. The theme of the book of Philippians

#### **D. Looking back at the book**

- 1. Twelve of the greatest passages in the Bible
  - a. The “mountain peaks” of Philippians
  - b. Will give you the tools for a successful Christian life
- 2. If this is all you remember....
- 3. My challenge to you
  - a. Memorize these twelve
- 4. Handout after the service

### **IV. The “Mountain Peaks” of Philippians**

#### **1. You can be confident of your salvation**

*“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6*

- a. Examine your salvation
  - 1. Is it real and growing?
    - a. Has he begun a good work in you?
  - 2. Is it based on Christ or something else?
    - a. Parents

b. Church attendance

c. Baptism

3. Are you confident of your salvation?

b. The security of the believer

1. You won't lose your salvation

2. Christ started it and he will secure it

## **2. God can turn your messes into a masterpiece**

*“Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.” Philippians 1:12*

a. God can use any circumstance

1. Joseph sold by brothers

2. Daniel in Babylon

3. You in Jenison

4. Paul in Rome

b. The furtherance of the Gospel

1. Be a missionary...right where you are!!

2. *“This is the place....now is the time”*

c. God uses broken people

1. When God needs to accomplish an impossible task, He finds an impossible person and crushes him

2. “You can trust him, he's already been broken”

## **3. You are on a mission greater than yourself**

*“for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” Philippians 1:21*

a. The theme of *“The purpose driven life”*

1. A purpose for living—Christ!
- b. A purpose greater than yourself
  1. Or accumulating money
  2. Give me a great cause!
  3. A cause worth dying for!!

#### **4. You don't need to fear death or dying**

*“I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” Philippians 1:23-24*

- a. Immanuel Kant
  1. The two great questions
    - a. Is there a God?
    - b. Is there life after death?
  2. The same top two questions today
- b. Conquering the fear of death
  1. First step toward fearless living
  2. God gave Paul a peek at the other side
- c. Death leads to a grand reunion
  1. With Christ
  2. ...and your family and friends
- d. Testimony of those getting closer
- e. The need to be ready to die at any moment

#### **5. Serving Christ should be your number one priority**

*“What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8*

- a. Why it should be your number one priority in life
  - 1. Who else has suffered and died for you?
  - 2. The only one without any sin
- b. Paul listed all that man counted as valuable
  - 1. Then declared it rubbish compared to serving Jesus.
  - 2. YOUR priorities in life
- c. The new wave of volunteerism
  - 1. The grateful giving back
- d. Giving back to Christ
  - 1. Getting involved in service right here
  - 2. Now is the time....this is the place
- e. I'm asking for sacrificial service
  - 1. Leaving some skin on the floor
  - 2. All in
- f. I am tired of people asking for easy service
  - 1. The cause of Christ deserves and needs the committed
  - 2. Even if you stand alone

## **6. Don't quit running until the race is over**

*“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14*

- a. The race isn't over yet!
- b. To “press” toward the finish
- c. The closer you get, the harder you push

## **7. Don't allow circumstances to discourage you**

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4*

- a. Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond
- b. Your attitude despite circumstances
- c. Rejoice in the Lord
- d. Nobody can take that away from you

## **8. There is a proven cure for both worry and anxiety**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

- a. The destruction of worry and anxiety
- b. A peace that transcends understanding

## **9. Get your mind focused on the right stuff**

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.: Philippians 4:8*

- a. Meditate on these things

## **10. You have the power to achieve your greatest dreams**

*“I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13*

- a. His power is limitless
- b. So is yours
- c. You have been uniquely prepared by God
  1. You are a one-of-a-kind
  2. Out of billions people
- d. How God empowers you

1. Holy Spirit
2. Spiritual Gifts
3. Talents
4. Circumstances

## **11. God is able to provide beyond your imagination**

*“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 4:19*

- a. God is your heavenly father
  1. And he is really rich
- b. We can't even imagine what he has in store for us
- c. Last...but certainly not the least,

## **12. The penalty for all your sins has been paid in full**

- a. What is a “church confession?”
  1. Something the followers of Jesus confess to believe
  2. They sum up the most important parts of our faith
- b. Philippians contains one of the core confessions of faith
  1. It explains the mystery God becoming a man
  2. It explains what Jesus did on the Cross
  3. It proclaims the time when all creation will bow the knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

*“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

***Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”  
Philippians 2:5-11***

- c. What a passage!!!
- d. *That's* who our Savior is!
- e. A summation of God's plan of salvation