Salutation

1:1 From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.

1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Prayer for the Church

1:3 I thank my God every time I remember you. I always pray with joy in my every prayer for all of you because of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

1:6 For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

1:7 For it is right for me to think this about all of you, because I have you in my heart.

1:8 For God is my witness that I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

1:9 And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Ministry as a Prisoner

1:10 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that my situation has actually turned out to advance the gospel.

1:11 The whole imperial guard and everyone else knows that the gospel is involved, with the place (the praetorium) put for those (soldiers or government officials) who were connected with it or stationed in it.

1:12 The gospel is advanced by me.

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that I am in prison⁴ for the sake of Christ, 1:14 and most of the brothers and sisters,² having confidence in the Lord³ because of my imprisonment, now more than ever⁴ dare to speak the word⁶ fearlessly.

1:15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 1:16 The latter do so from love because they know that I am placed here for the defense of the gospel. 1:17 The former proclaim Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, because they think they can cause trouble for me in my imprisonment.⁶

1:18 What is the result? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes,⁳ and I will continue to rejoice, 1:19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance⁸ through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 1:20 My confident hope⁹ is that I will in no way be ashamed⁴⁰ but that with complete boldness, even now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether I live or die.¹¹

1:21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 1:22 Now if I am to go on living in the body,¹² this will mean productive work¹³ for me, yet I don’t know which I prefer.¹⁴ 1:23 I feel torn between the two,¹⁵ because I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far, 1:24 but it is more vital for your sake that I remain²⁶ in the body.⁷¹ 1:25 And since I am sure of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for the sake of your progress¹⁸ and joy in the faith.¹⁹ 1:26 so that what you can be proud of may increase²⁰ because of me in Christ Jesus, when I come back to you.²¹

1:27 Only conduct yourselves²² in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ so that – whether I come and see you or whether I remain absent – I should hear that²⁹ you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, by contending side by side for the faith of the gospel,²⁴ 1:28 and by not being intimidated in any way by your opponents.

¹³ tn Grk “fruit of work”; the genitive ἐργοῦ (ergou) is taken as an attributed genitive in which the head noun, καρπὸς (karpos), functions attributively (cf. ExSyn 89-91).

¹⁴ tn “what I shall prefer.” The Greek verb ἀπεράτος (aparetos) could also mean “choose,” but in this context such a translation is problematic for it suggests that Paul could perhaps choose suicide (cf. L&N 30.86).

¹⁵ tn I don’t know what I prefer. Paul is here struggling with what would be most beneficial for both him and the church. He resolves this issue in vv. 24-25.


¹⁷ tn Grk “But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.”

¹⁸ tn Grk “the flesh.”

¹⁹ tn “Paul’s confidence in his release from prison (I know that I will remain and continue with all of you) implies that this Roman imprisonment did not end in his death. Hence, there is the likelihood that he experienced a second Roman imprisonment later on (since the belief of the early church was that Paul died under Nero in Rome). If so, then the pastoral letters (1-2 Tim, Titus) could well fit into a life of Paul that goes beyond any descriptions in the book of Acts (which ends with Paul’s first Roman imprisonment). Some have argued that the pastoral letters cannot be genuine because they cannot fit into the history of Acts. But this view presupposes that Paul’s first Roman imprisonment was also his last.

²⁰ tn Grk “your boasting may overflow in Christ Jesus because of me,” or possibly, “your boasting in me may overflow in Christ Jesus.” BDAG 536 s.v. καύχημα translates the phrase τὸ καύχημα ἡμῶν (to kauchema humon) in Phil 1:26 as “what you can be proud of.”

²¹ tn “through my coming again to you.”

²² tn “live as citizens.” The verb πολιτεύεσθε (politeue) connotes the life of a freeman in a free Roman colony. sn Conduct yourselves (Grk “live your lives as citizens”). The Philippians lived in a free Roman city, and thus understood from their own experience what it meant to live as citizens. Paul is here picking up on that motif and elevating it to the citizenship of heaven. Cf. 3:20 (our citizenship is in heaven).

²³ tn “the things concerning you, [namely], that.” The ὑπὸ (hypo) clause is appositional to τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν (ta peri humon) and therefore “the things concerning you” was not translated.

²⁴ tn The phrase “the faith of the gospel” could mean one of three things: “the faith that is the gospel” (genitive of apposition), “the faith that originates from the gospel” (genitive of source), or “faith in the gospel” (objective genitive).
This is a sign of their destruction, but of your salvation—a sign which is from God. 1:29 For it has been granted to you not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him, 1:30 since you are encountering the same conflict that you saw me face and now hear that I am facing.  

Christian Unity and Christ’s Humility  

2:1 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort provided by love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any affection or mercy, 2:2 complete my joy and be of the same mind, 2:3 rather than thinking about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well. 2:5 You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, 2:6 who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, 2:7 but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, 2:8 by looking like other men, 2:9 and by sharing in human nature.
2:8 He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross!
2:9 As a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,
2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow— in heaven and on earth and under the earth—
2:11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Lights in the World

2:12 So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, continue working out your salvation with awe and reverence,5 2:13 for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort— for the sake of his good pleasure — is God.
2:14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 2:15 so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without blemish though you live in a crooked and perverse society, in which you shine as lights in the world2 2:16 by holding on to3 the word of life so that on the day of Christ I will have a reason to boast that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain. 2:17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice together with all of you. 2:18 And in the same way you also should be glad and rejoice together with me.

Models for Ministry

2:19 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be encouraged by hearing news about you. 2:20 For there is no one here like him who will readily demonstrate his deep concern for you.4 2:21 Others are busy with their own concerns, not those of Jesus Christ. 2:22 But you know his qualifications, that like a son working with his father, he served with me in advancing the gospel. 2:23 So I hope to send him as soon as I know more about my situation, 2:24 though I am confident in the Lord that I too will be coming to see you6 soon.

2:25 But for now,6 I have considered it necessary to send Epaphroditus to you. For he is my brother,7 coworker and fellow soldier, and your messenger8 and minister9 to me in my need.10
2:26 Indeed, he greatly missed all of you and was distressed because you heard that he had been ill. 2:27 In fact he became so ill that he nearly died. 2:28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him,12 so that when you see him again you can rejoice13 and I can be free from anxiety. 2:29 So welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 2:30 since it was because of the work of Christ that he almost died. He risked his life so that he could make up for your inability to serve me.14

True and False Righteousness

3:1 Finally, my brothers and sisters,15 rejoice in the Lord! To write this again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.
3:2 Beware of the dogs,16 beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!17 3:3 For we are the circumcision,18 implied, and are supplied in the translation for clarity.

4 tn Grk “fear and trembling.” The Greek words φόβος and τρόμος both imply fear in a negative sense (L&N 25.251 and 16.6 respectively) while the former can also refer to respect and awe for deity (L&N 53.59). Paul’s use of the terms in other contexts refers to “awe and reverence in the presence of God” (P. T. O’Brien, Philippians [NIGTC], 284; see discussion on 282-84). The translation “awe and reverence” was chosen to portray the attitude the believer should have toward God as they consider their behavior in light of God working through Jesus Christ (2:6-11) and in the believer’s life (2:13) to accomplish their salvation.
5 tn Or “as stars in the universe.”
6 tn Or “holding out, holding forth.”
7 tn Grk “apostle.”
8 tn Grk “minister.”
9 tn The Greek word translated “minister” here is λειτουργός (leitourgos).
10 tn Grk “servant of my need.”
11 tn Grk “For he became ill to the point of death.”
12 tn Grk “I have sent him to you with earnestness.” But the epistolary aorist needs to be translated as a present tense with this adverb due to English stylistic considerations.
13 tn Or “when you see him you can rejoice again.”
14 tn Grk “make up for your lack of service to me.”
16 sn Dogs is a figurative reference to false teachers whom Paul regards as just as filthy as dogs.
17 tn Grk “beware of the mutilation.”
18 sn There is a significant wordplay here in the Greek text. In v. 2 a rare, strong word is used to describe those who were pro-circumcision (κατα τομήν, katabom, “mutilation”; see BDAG 528 s.v.), while in v. 3 the normal word for circumcision is used (περι τομήν, peritomē; see BDAG 807 s.v.). Both have τομή (the feminine form of the adjective τομικός [tomikos], meaning “cutting, sharp”) as their root; the direction of the action of the former is down or off (from kataba, kataba), hence the implication of mutilation or emasculation, while the direction of the action of the latter is around (from peri, peri). The similarity in sound yet wide divergence of meaning between the two words highlights in no uncertain terms the differences between Paul and his opponents.
the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, 2 which is almost never an objective genitive (cf. Matt 9:2, 22, 29; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Luke 5:20; 7:50; 8:25, 48; 17:19; 18:42; 22:32; Rom 1:8; 12; 3:3; 4:3, 12, 16; 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2; 5, 10; 2 Thess 1:3; Titus 1:1; Phlm 6; 1 Pet 1:9, 21; 2 Pet 3:5). On the other hand, the objective genitive view has its adherents: A. Hultgren, "The Pistis Christou Formulations in Paul," NovT 22 (1980): 248-63; J. D. G. Dunn, "Once More, ΠΙΣΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," SBL Seminar Papers, 1991, 730-44. More commentaries on Romans and Galatians usually side with the objective view.

sn ExSyn 116, which notes that the grammar is not decisive, nevertheless suggests that "the faith/faithfulness of Christ is not a denial of faith in Christ as a Pauline concept (for the idea is expressed in many of the same contexts, only with the verb πιστεύω rather than the noun), but implies that the object of a worthy object, for he himself is faithful." Though Paul elsewhere teaches justification by faith, this presupposes that the object of our faith is reliable and worthy of such faith.

The words "in fact" are supplied because of English style, picking up the force of the Greek article with ΠΙΣΤΗΣ (pistis). See also the following note on the word "Christ's.

1 tn Grk "have no confidence in the flesh." 2 tn Grk "though I have reason for confidence even in the flesh also laid hold of me. 3 Or "on the other hand," the object of faith is a worthy object, for he himself is faithful." Though Paul elsewhere teaches justification by faith, this presupposes that the object of our faith is reliable and worthy of such faith.

8 tn The words "in fact" are supplied because of English style, picking up the force of the Greek article with ΠΙΣΤΗΣ (pistis). See also the following note on the word "Christ’s.

9 tn Grk "based on the faithfulness." The article before ΠΙΣΤΗΣ (pistis) is taken as anaphoric, looking back to δυναμική ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ (dia pistéis Christou); hence, "Christ’s" is implied.

10 Or "based on faith."

11 tn The articular infinitive τοῦ γνώναι (του gnōnai, "to know") here expresses purpose. The words "My aim is" have been supplied in the translation to emphasize this nuance and to begin a new sentence (shorter sentences are more appropriate for English style).

12 tn Grk "to know him, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

13 On εἰ πῶς (ei pws) as "so, somehow" see BDAG 279, s.v. εἰ 6.n.

14 tn Grk "that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. The passive has been translated as active in keeping with contemporary English style.

15 tn Grk "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:12.

16 Grk "But this one thing I do."

17 Grk "according to the goal."

18 Grk "prize, namely, the heavenly calling of God."
of view. If you think otherwise, God will reveal to you the error of your ways. 3:16 Nevertheless, let us live up to the standard that we have already attained.

3:17 Be imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and watch carefully those who are living this way, just as you have us as an example. 3:18 For many live, about whom I have often told you, and now, with tears, I tell you that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. 3:19 Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, they exult in their shame, and they think about earthly things.

Christian Practices

4:1 So then, my brothers and sisters, dear friends whom I long to see, my joy and crown, stand in the Lord in this way, my dear friends!

4:2 I appeal to Euodia and to Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

Applause for Support

4:10 I have great joy in the Lord because now at last you have again expressed your concern for me. (Now I know you were concerned before but had no opportunity to do anything.) 4:11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in any circumstance. 4:12 I have experienced times of need and times of abundance. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment, whether I go satisfied or hungry, have plenty or nothing. 4:13 I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me. 4:14 Nevertheless, you did well to share with me in my trouble.

1 tn Grk “those of us who are ‘perfect’ should think this,” or possibly “those of us who are mature should think this.”
2 tn The adjective perfect comes from the same root as the verb perfected in v. 12; Paul may well be employing a word-play to draw in his opponents. Thus, perfect would then be in quotation marks and Paul would then argue that no one – neither they nor he – is in fact perfect. The thrust of vv. 1-16 is that human credentials can produce nothing that is pleasing to God (vv. 1-8). Instead of relying on such, Paul urges his readers to trust God for their righteousness (v. 9) rather than their own efforts, and at the same time to press on for the prize that awaits them (vv. 12-14). He argues further that perfection is unattainable in this life (v. 15), yet the level of maturity that one has reached should not for this reason be abandoned (v. 16).
3 tn Grk “reveal this to you.” The referent of the pronoun “thee” is the fact that the person is thinking differently than Paul does. This has been specified in the translation with the phrase “the error of your ways”; Paul is stating that God will make it known to these believers when they are not in agreement with Paul.
4 tn Although κανόνι (kanoni, “standard, rule”) is found in most witnesses, though in various locations in this verse, D-Ψ 075 33, it is almost surely a motivated reading, for it clarifies the cryptic τὸ αὐτὸ (to autō, “the same”). Both the fact that the word floats, and that there are other variants which accomplish greater clarity by other means, strongly suggests the secondary nature of any of the longer readings here. Further, the shortest text has excellent and early support in א B P 66 33 1739 co, rendering it decidedly the preferred text. Nevertheless, the shortest text has excellent and early support in א B P 66 33 1739 co, as can be seen from the evidence of Codex Sinaiticus (א) and Codex Vaticanus (B) 2
5 tn Although ἑλπίζω (helpizo, “to hope”) is found in most witnesses, though in various locations in this verse, D-Ψ 075 33, it is almost surely a motivated reading, for it clarifies the cryptic τὸ αὐτὸ (to autō, “the same”). Both the fact that the word floats, and that there are other variants which accomplish greater clarity by other means, strongly suggests the secondary nature of any of the longer readings here. Further, the shortest text has excellent and early support in א B P 66 33 1739 co, rendering it decidedly the preferred reading. The translation adds “standard” because of English requirements, not because of textual basis.
6 tn Or “become fellow imitators with me [of Christ].”
7 tn Grk “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:12.
8 tn Grk “indulge in the things of this world.”
9 tn Grk “transform the body of our humility.”
10 tn Or “faithful fellow worker.” This is more likely a descriptive noun, although some scholars interpret the word συζυγός (suzugos) here as a proper name (“Syzges”), L&N 42.45.
11 tn Grk “in the gospel,” a metonymy in which the gospel itself is substituted for the ministry of making the gospel known.
12 tn Grk “let your gentleness be seen by all.” The passive voice construction has been converted to active voice in the translation for stylistic reasons.
13 tn Grk “will guard the hearts of you and the minds of you.” To improve the English style, the second occurrence of ἑλπίζω (helpín, “of you”) has not been translated, since it is somewhat redundant in English.
14 tn Grk “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:12.
15 tn Grk “for you were even concerned, but you lacked opportunity.”
16 tn The words of contentment are not in the Greek text, but are implied by Paul’s remarks at the end of v. 11.
17 tn The Greek word translated “all things” is in emphatic position at the beginning of the Greek sentence.
18 tn Although some excellent witnesses lack explicit reference to the one strengthening Paul (so א B D* 1 33 1739 lex Co), the majority of witnesses (א B D [F G] 075 1881 33 33 sy) add Χριστός (Christos) here (thus, “through Christ who strengthens me”). But this kind of reading is patently secondary, and is a predictable variant. Further, the shorter reading is much harder, for it leaves the agent unspecified.
4:15 And as you Philippians know, at the beginning of my gospel ministry, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in this matter of giving and receiving except you alone. 4:16 For even in Thessalonica on more than one occasion you sent something for my need. 4:17 I do not say this because I am seeking a gift. Rather, I seek the credit that abounds to your account. 4:18 For I have received everything, and I have plenty. I have all I need because I received from Epaphroditus what you sent—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, very pleasing to God. 4:19 And my God will supply your every need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. 4:20 May glory be given to God our Father forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

4:21 Give greetings to all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers with me here send greetings. 4:22 All the saints greet you, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household. 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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1 map For location see JP1-C1; JP2-C1; JP3-C1; JP4-C1.
2 tn Or “several times”; Grk, “both once and twice.” The literal expression “once and twice” is frequently used as a Greek idiom referring to an indefinite low number, but more than once (“several times”); see L&N 60.70.
3 tn Grk “Not that I am seeking the gift.” The phrase “I do not say this…” has been supplied in the translation to complete the thought for the modern reader.
4 tn Or “according to the riches of his glory.” The phrase “of his glory” is treated as an attributive genitive in the translation.

5 tn Or perhaps, “The brothers and sisters” (so TEV, TNIV; cf. NRSV “The friends”; CEV “The Lord’s followers”). If “brothers” refers to Paul’s traveling companions, it is probably that only men are in view (cf. NAB, NLT). Since v. 22 mentions “all the saints,” which presumably includes everyone, it is more probable here that only Paul’s traveling companions are in view.
6 tc Most witnesses, including several important ones (D* Ψ 33 075 6 1739* 1881 sa) lack the valedictory particle. Such a conclusion is routinely added by scribes to NT books because a few of these books originally had such an ending (cf. Rom 16:27; Gal 6:18; Jude 25). A majority of Greek witnesses have the concluding ἀμήν (amēn, “amen”) at the end of this letter, while an impressive combination of Alexandrian and Western mss (B F G 075 6 1739* 1881 sa) lack the valedictory particle. Such a conclusion is routinely added by scribes to NT books because a few of these books originally had such an ending (cf. Rom 16:27; Gal 6:18; Jude 25).