***Paul Ready for Martyrdom - PH57-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:17-18***

Please open your Bibles to Philippians 2:17-18. The subject is the apostle Paul and his personal preparation for martyrdom. We'll have just a brief review now to bring us up to date in the immediate context. In Philippians 2:12-16, the apostle Paul has been calling upon the Philippian Christians for growth in spiritual maturity, whether Paul is with them or not. Verse 12, therefore, calls upon them to pursue this as the goal of their salvation. Paul points out in verse 13 that this maturity is God's will for the believers, and therefore, he leads Christians through many day-by-day experiences, all of which are designed to advance their spiritual maturity. Verse 14 has pointed out that there is, therefore, to be no resentment or mental doubts toward God in whatever He brings into our lives. What He brings into our lives, the pleasant and the unpleasant, is to be viewed as a contribution and as a preparation for our personal spiritual development.

Verse 15 says that Christians are to develop a character which is free from justifiable censure; free of guilt; and, free of moral blemish in order that they may be divine viewpoint lighthouses in a world of darkness and in a society which is dishonest and corrupt. We spent quite a few sessions in examining the moral code of the Word of God via the Ten Moral Principles of the Mosaic Law. Then in verse 16, we found that to achieve this goal of being a lighthouse in a world of darkness, the Christian has to focus his mind on Bible doctrine, and that Paul, therefore, would have cause to rejoice in them when he comes personally to facing the Judgment Seat of Christ and an evaluation of what he did with his life and his ministry.

The rest of this chapter, Philippians 2:17-30, is going to introduce to us three examples of mature believers who were functioning in the Lord's work, and which are to be emulated by us. He begins with himself; he then goes to Timothy; and, then he goes to Epaphroditus.

**Philippians 2:17**

So we begin in verse 17 with the first example, which is the apostle Paul himself. He says, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."

The word "Yea" is the Greek word "alla." It's a conjunction in the Greek, and it introduces an additional idea to what was expressed in verse 16. Verse 16 said, "Focus upon the Word of Life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ (at the rapture), that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain," that my work amounted to something. Now he adds an additional thought to that, and he introduces it by this little word "alla." We could translate it by the word "but."

Then we have the word "if:" "and if." You know that in the Greek language there are four kinds of if statements, and they all mean something. This is simply the little word "ei," and this is a first class condition. A first class condition is one that indicates to us that this is a real situation. This is something that actually is existing, or the writer assumes that it exists. In this case, the apostle Paul is assuming an actual reality condition. This condition that he is actually going to assume is if he should experience martyrdom, which indeed a few years later (to the time of his writing this), he did exactly that. His head was cut off by Nero. He was executed and he did experience martyrdom.

**Martyrdom**

So here he's setting up the condition, "if this should happen," and he is assuming something from the frame of reference of a reality–first class condition. He's going to express a conclusion which is true of himself, therefore, upon this condition. So the thing we're interested in is, "What is the conclusion that Paul is going to give us if he should see such a thing–his life taken as a believer–dying for being a Christian?" That was a very real possibility, as you understand, in the New Testament times under the administration of the Roman Empire. So a person who was a Christian really faced the reality of being a martyr.

So the apostle Paul is dealing with something that's a little hard for us to enter into, but which was a situation that he lived with every day. While he was writing this letter, he was chained to a Roman soldier. While he knew, from the Lord's leading, that he was going to be released, until the Lord indicated that to him, he didn't know but what this may be one of the last things he would ever write to believers–one of the last contacts he would have.

So Paul was picturing a situation from a realistic point of view of his becoming a martyr, and having to give his life up in behalf of the gospel. That's what he means when he says, "If I be offered." The word "offered" is the Greek word "spendo." What "spendo" actually means in the Greek is to be poured out as a drink offering, or what is called a "libation." Some offerings were of grain matter. It was meal. Sometimes the Jews had an offering and it was meat, or animal flesh. Sometimes their offerings were wine or oil which was poured out as a libation, or as what was called a drink offering.

This custom of having drink offerings was a practice which was common even among the heathens. It is referred to in Deuteronomy 32:38 where Moses says, "Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices (that is, of the heathen sacrifices), and drank the wine of their drink offerings. Let them rise up and help you, and be your protection." That is fat meat sacrificed to idol gods, and drink offerings sacrificed to idol gods.

However, this was also a legitimate expression among the Jews. Certain of the offerings were to be accompanied by a libation–a drink offering which was simply poured out alongside the offering, or on the ground beside the altar. We have this referred to in Exodus 29:40-41: "And with the one lamb, a tenth part of flour mixed with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil, and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering." A hin amounted to 3 pints. So a fourth of this measure was used as a drink offering. Verse 41: "And the other lamb you shall offer at evening, and shall do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord." This is dealing with the continual burnt offering that the Jews were required to have.

So the word "spendo" describes a pouring out of a certain amount of wine along with the offering. This is an expression of honor to deity, whether it was done by the Jews to the true God, or by the heathen to their false gods. The libation was actually used among the heathen as a sort of saying grace before meals. Before the heathen would eat, he would pour out a certain amount of wine. After the meal was over, he would pour out another certain amount of wine. That would be an expression of an offering to the gods.

However, with the apostle Paul, he is looking upon himself as a drink offering. What he is referring to here is that he's taking this custom, which these people understood both from their Jewish background and their acquaintances with gentiles of the heathen world. They understood a drink offering. He is presenting himself in the context of becoming a drink offering, which is to be poured out in their behalf, in terms of being a sacrifice. As a matter of fact, this is a crowning symbol of Paul's life. After all of his sacrifice and after all of his service, the crowning part of an offering was to pour out this certain amount of wine as a drink offering.

Paul uses this same word in describing himself in 2 Timothy 4:6. During his second Roman imprisonment, during which 2 Timothy was written, when he knew from the Lord that this time he would not be released–that this time Nero had passed a new law under which Paul would be condemned. Nero had passed the law that if anybody was a Christian, you are a member of an illicit (an illegal) religion. You could not be a member of a religion in the Roman Empire unless it was a legal religion. It had to be one of the authorized religions. So Nero finally got to the Christians (who were not lawbreakers) by simply passing the law. Anybody who was a Christian was a member of an illegal religion, and automatically was subject to the death penalty. That's how he finally was able to execute Paul.

The Lord came to Paul and said, "Paul, this time, this is it. Your life is finished. You've run your course. You've served your purpose. You've done the job. This time you will not be released. This time you will die." So Paul wrote to his young associate, Timothy. This was his writing; his last letter; and, his final comments. Timothy would have to take over. Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:6, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." The word "offered" there is exactly this same word "spendo" that we're looking at here. Paul says, "I'm now ready to become the drink offering that I spoke of to my believers in the city of Philippi."

Indeed, this is what happened to Paul. Nero poured out his blood in death, and thus fulfilled this picture of the wine being poured out. This is because decapitation has that effect. When a person is crucified, blood simply comes out in trickling amounts, and it takes a long time for a person to die under crucifixion. It would sometimes take even days. This is why Pilate was so amazed when six hours after they had nailed Jesus to the cross, they came to him and said, "He's dead." Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. How could he die that quickly? That's not usual, because as soon as the flesh is pierced in any way in the nailing process, the blood coagulates. So the person does not bleed to death, but he dies from the sheer starvation; dehydration; and, the trauma of being nailed to the cross or hung upon the cross with all the strain upon the body. But in the case of decapitation, a person's head is cut off, and the blood just gushes out immediately in a flood tide.

So the apostle Paul was really speaking of himself in saying, "I'm going to be a drink offering." He was really picturing his very execution in the way they were going to execute him, as his blood would gush out, as comparable to the wine being poured out, as the crowning testimony in honor of the living God. So Paul says, "When they cut my head off, and you see my blood gush out, it's going to be my crowning honor to the God I love."

This sacrifice to which Paul refers to here of himself in Philippians 2:17 is a sacrifice which is associated with his Christian service. So he says, "Yea, if I be poured out as a libation upon the sacrifice (his life as a sacrifice) and his service toward the Philippians." Paul's service, of course, was teaching these people God's viewpoint by delivering doctrinal principles to them. But what Paul was teaching in the form of doctrine was hated by both the political and the religious forces of the New Testament world. Thus, Paul, at the time that he was writing this letter, was in prison because of the very things that he was teaching, and for which he was despised.

This word "spendo" is in the present tense. It was constantly possible for him to be poured out like this. It is passive voice which means that he's not going to kill himself, but that his life would be taken by another force. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact. This is to be a pouring out upon a sacrifice. The word "sacrifice" here is "thusia." "Thusia" refers to Paul's life which he lived in order that he might deliver doctrine. It connotes what Paul gave up voluntarily in order that some people could come to know what God thinks.

This is a very significant principle. Remember that we're going to look at three men here whom we are to emulate. That is, each of these demonstrate one particular feature about the Christian life that you and I are to make a guideline for ourselves. In the case of Paul, the feature is giving up life itself, voluntarily sacrificing to the extent of your very physical life in order that people might come to know God.

This involved not only the potential sacrifice of Paul's life, but of other things he enjoyed. Paul had a right to have a wife to help him in his ministry like anyone else. But he sacrificed that. He followed the law of supreme sacrifice, and followed the path of celibacy. He had the right to have children and to enjoy rearing a family. But he gave up that right in order to be able to teach doctrine. He had the right to find a bank account accumulating as he went through the years as he got older. He had the right, like anyone else, to be able to look and see some security stored away for his old age. Yet, this was a thing he sacrificed. He had the right to live his life without coming into conflict with the authorities. This whole missionary tour was one series of getting out of town just before the tar-and-feather party caught up to him.

If he had just laid off some of the things that he was saying, his life would have been a lot more pleasant. He would have had a much wider hearing. There would've been a lot more people who would have attended his services. The average Christian was quite happy to be free of these conflicts with the authorities. Paul had the right to a social life, and to pursuit of recreational interests–something we indulge in as Americans considerably. There were probably as many church members out on recreational activities last Sunday morning in the United States as there were in church services–a whole lot more, as a matter of fact. The apostle Paul had that same right. Yet, he restricted his social life and he restricted his recreational activities so he could preach doctrine.

There were the interests of a career that he could have followed. Try to tell some college student, who has spent years in college, that he doesn't have a right to choose his own career and to pursue what he wants to do in life, without first having gone to the Lord and said, "Lord, is this OK? Have you cleared this? Am I authorized to pursue this profession? Am I authorized to pursue this career which I am so interested in?"

So the apostle Paul, when he speaks about sacrifice, isn't only talking about dying. He's talking about everything else that he gave up so that a bunch of dumb sheep in the family of God could get some smarts in doctrine, and start shaping up their lives so that they were not acting like animals and tearing themselves to shreds day-by-day. He had to operate under the law of supreme sacrifice of celibacy in order to do this.

All of these sacrifices are not required of every Christian. I'm not trying to tell you that you should become more sacrificial people. But I'm trying to bring out a principle to you here which is a mental attitude that Paul possessed. It was a mental attitude which he had, and which every believer must possess. That mental attitude required a willingness to sacrifice to the extent of your life itself for doctrine–for the mind of Christ, and for teaching God's word.

Paul had a right to marriage, but God said, "Your right woman, Paul, is going to be doctrine." So he made the change. Paul devoted himself to teaching in such a way, therefore, that he became an outstanding person in human history. Human history has been changed by his thought. Paul had his old sin nature weaknesses, but he gave up a lot in life so that he would be able to preach doctrine in spite of the weaknesses and the temptations to do otherwise. Paul was not abnormal in doing all of this. He was not abnormal in making such personal sacrifices. Behind all of this was a mind that was in tune with God. And a mind that is in tune with God is a mind which will find its work.

**A Man's Work**

Here's a little information to you ladies. Some have made a lot of fun of the apostle Paul. As a matter of fact, if Paul had been married, Paul's wife could have really harassed him because of the exclusiveness of his thinking and of his time to letting people know doctrine. If she had done that, she would have made a very serious mistake. God, in the Garden of Eden, subsequent to sin, lay down a principle that a man's life is his work. A lot of women are never smart enough to learn this. They think that a man's life is themselves. They think that a man's life is their children. They think that a man's life is something other than his work.

God said that a man, henceforth, would zero his life in on one thing, first of all–his work, whatever that is that God has called him to. And a woman who attacks her husband and belittles her husband for devoting himself to his work is a woman who does not understand the principles of the Word of God, and is inviting considerable conflicts into her life.

I want to read you a quotation from the Institutes of Biblical Law by R.J. Rushdoony on pages 345 and 346:

"Marriage has reference, first of all, to God's ordination, and then to man and to woman in their respective callings. Because man is to be understood in terms of his calling under God, all of man's life is to be interpreted in terms of this calling also. Dislocation in a man's calling is a dislocation in his total life. When work is futile, men cannot rest from their labors because their satisfaction therein is gone. Men then very often seek to make work purposeful by working harder. Frustration in terms of his calling means poor health for man, in terms of his physical and mental health; his sexual energy; and, his ability to rest. Whereas success in work means vigor and vitality to a man. Every attempt to understand marriage only in terms of sex will aggravate man's basic problem. If marriage cannot be reduced to sex, neither can it be reduced to love. The Scriptures give no ground whatever to the idea that a marriage can be terminated when love ends. While love is important to a marriage, it cannot replace God's law as the essential bond of marriage. Moreover, a woman can make no greater mistake than to assume that she can take priority in her husband's life over his work. He will love her with a personal warmth and tenderness as no other person. But a man's life is his work, not his wife. The failure of women to understand this can do serious harm to a marriage.

"The tragedy of an apostate age is that women see clearly the futility or emptiness of much of man's work, but they fail to see that a godly man's answer to a sick world is more work. Because work is man's calling, men often make the serious mistake of trying to solve all problems by working harder, whereas in the same situation, the woman is all the more convinced of the futility of work. But to tell a man that work is futile is to tell him that he is futile. A basic and unrecognized cause of tensions in marriage is the growing futility of work in an age where apostate and status trends rob work of its constructive goals. The area of man's dominion becomes the area of man's frustration. There are those who can recall when men, not too many years ago, worked ten hours or more daily, six or seven days a week, often under ugly and unsafe circumstances. In the face of this, they could rest and also enjoy life with a robust appetite. The basic optimism of that era and the certainty of progress; the stability of a hard money economy; and, the sense of mastery in these assurances gave men a satisfaction in their labors which made rest possible. An age which negates the meaning and satisfaction of work also negates man at the same time. Not all the more desirable conditions and hours of work can replace the purpose of work.

"Thus, Chayefsky pointed out that men could be broken in Siberia, not by hard labor, but by meaningless labor, such as moving a pile of boulders back and forth endlessly. Such work, however slowly or lazily done, destroys a man, whereas meaningful work strengthens and even exalts him. Because of the centrality of work to a man, one of the chronic problems of men is their tendency to make work a substitute religion. Instead of deriving the meaning of life from God in His law order, men often derive their private world of meaning from their work. The consequence is a disorientation of life, family, and order. Whether tired or actively working, a man's thinking is still in terms of the world of work, and he continues to assess reality in the same terms. Man, having been called to exercise dominion through work, is tied to work in thought and action alike. But there is no true dominion for man in and through work apart from God and His law order."

So the apostle Paul is telling us that he found happiness because he abode by the scriptural principle of finding the work that God had for him to do. Now, in his case, it was a work that involved a great deal of sacrifice and a lot of suffering. "But this," he said, "is the thing to which I've been called, and this is the only way I can be happy." So whatever your work is (whatever God has called you to be) is the place that's going to be the place of happiness for you.

So the apostle says, "Yea, and if (in reality) I be poured out upon the sacrifice (that is, the putting forth of myself aside in order to do that which others need to get doctrine) and the service." "The service" is a significant word in the Greek. It's "leitourgia." "Leitourgia" mean "service in a public office at your own expense." This is what sometimes a politician in the Greek world would do. He would serve without pay. He would perform an act of "leitourgia." But the word is also used of religious service to God as a priest. Here Paul is stressing the fact that he is communicating the Word of God as God's priest, and he is doing it at personal expense. He does this by the fact he's willing to forgo what other Christians are free to enjoy in life. His work, or his service has to be accompanied, in the nature of the case, by a certain sacrifice. Those who Paul taught actually could never possibly repay him, because what he gave them were things of eternal value. But the things that they were giving him were of short-range temporal value. The Philippians could indeed make his work easier, and they did, by supplying funds and helpers. But they could never repay him.

**Faith**

This work and this sacrifice is connected with faith. The Greek word is "pistis." The word "faith" here has the definite article. It is *the* faith in Greek. Therefore, it does not refer to that abstract quality of believing, but it refers to the concrete system of doctrine. It is the system of truth. It is what we refer to as the conglomeration of Bible doctrine principles. Paul is saying that his sacrifice and his service are associated with the Philippians taking doctrine into their souls through the grace system of perception.

**Sacrifices**

So what is this man illustrating? He is illustrating for us the life and sacrifice of service, in his case, as connected with a pastor-teacher. Anybody who is a pastor-teacher is faced with certain sacrifices. We may have men in our midst who are destined to be pastor-teachers. That function (I can tell them right off the bat) involves certain sacrifices.

**Money**

It involves the sacrifice, needless to say, of money. Some material sacrifice is going to be necessary if you're going to be a pastor-teacher. This does not mean that all pastor-teachers must take a vow of poverty. I like to look at the pastor-teacher as the last of the big time spenders. It has always been my personal motto never to do something for $5 dollars if I could do it for $10. I think that is the spirit that is appropriate to a pastor-teacher. He doesn't have to take a vow of poverty.

However, he is going to be confronted with the sacrifice of not making money. Some pastor-teachers, if they were free to do so, could really be fantastic money tycoons. They could really move into situations where they could make a great deal of wealth for themselves. But that takes time. However, this is no justification for the common practice among fundamental churches of robbing their preachers. They usually rob the pastor-teacher in order to maintain the church property, or to finance the church program. It is the general pattern in fundamental churches to say, "What shall we pay our pastor-teacher for his services?" The carnal-minded always come up with this concept: "Well, how much offerings do we have? Well, we get 20 bucks a week. So then we pay him $10 a week."

You might say, "That's ridiculous." Sure it is. But that's how it works. He's not paid commensurate to what his value is. He's not paid by people praying, "Now, God, you have to give us this money. We've got to produce this money to pay what he deserves and what he needs–not what we are willing to come up with."

Well, the apostle Paul was not a professional beggar, so many times he had to bear the burden of raising funds for the ministry himself. However, it is not wise for a church to burden its pastor-teacher with the job of raising funds. If he has to raise money, you may be sure that you have drained capacity from your spiritual well-being. There is no more demanding effort than the study, the preparation, and the teaching of the Word of God. It's not just learning the material. It's not just presenting it. It's trying to understand the temperament and the situation of the people in the times in which they live. That is a consuming, monumental job.

**Time**

It also involves a sacrifice of time to be a pastor-teacher. Communicators of doctrine have to let personal matters slide because they need time for doctrine. So sometimes the parsonage needs painting, but he can't take time to do it. These things have to be set aside because doctrine has to come first. That has to be the first thing in life for a pastor-teacher. A congregation, especially in a multiple-front ministry, can save the pastor-teacher's time greatly by recognizing that it involves the sacrifice of his time, and therefore he doesn't even have time for much chitchat.

**Personal Life**

It does mean his sacrifice of involvement in social things he'd like to do. It restricts his involvement with family activities he might like to do. It gives him little time for hobbies or other recreational interests. It's hard for him simply to get away from the job for a change of pace.

This is not to be viewed as a call for some kind of carnal cornball suffering-for-Jesus type of thing that the "spiritual people" like to put out. These are normal sacrifices which a communicator of the Word is required to make in money, time, and personal life.

Here's how you can make it heavier. All a communicator has to do to make his job a real misery is to find himself with the wrong wife; with the wrong family; with the wrong church; with the wrong board members; with the wrong associates on his staff; and, with the wrong friends, and so on. Just have the wrong people around you (the human viewpoint crowd), and they encourage one another. If you abuse and belittle a functioning pastor-teacher, instead of helping him to make doctrine available in usable form to people, then you are responding to Satan's direction. It is Satan's influence that is functioning on the minds of people like that.

I made a decision years ago that people had to understand the Word of God on the authority of what God said. They had to believe things on the authority of the Word of God. When I opened my mouth upon some subject, I was going to make it very hard for them to say, "Well, that's what John Danish thinks," and to dismiss it. When I got through, I decided, it had to be out of the language of the Bible so that the authority resided in the Bible. So I went on an expository ministry from the language itself. So the authority was in the Word of God, and people could not pass it off. In other words, it just became a much more Bible doctrine oriented church. I saw some people that said, "Great." They embraced it. Others loathed it. What did they do? They found themselves some church where they could sit and listen to the same kind of spiritual disorientation that they had; where nothing controversial and disturbing was going to be said; and, where everything was sweetness and light.

The apostle Paul had a spiritual maturity structure in his soul which enabled him to demonstrate an indomitable mental attitude so that he could not be crushed when he was abandoned by people; when he was abused by people; or, when people were antagonistic. He made teaching doctrine his life. He had a lot of misery for it, but he did not get discouraged. He did not get worn out. He did not lose his perspective of what was of eternal value. He didn't try to capture the crowds by what the crowds wanted to hear. What these people did was indeed make his job a little harder.

So what I'm saying is that no congregation can go on to spiritual maturity and personal happiness until the members of that congregation recognize what is involved in the job of a pastor-teacher. They themselves, then, must take over much of what he does. That's what makes an organization function. Until members take over the functioning of the local church jobs, they will never go far spiritually. This has to be done as unto the Lord when you do it so that you're not looking for recognition, for praise, or for thanks. It has to be done responsibly so that you will do it regularly–no erratics. In other words, you keep going until the day that you suddenly find yourself going up in the rapture.

There is no end to the service that you volunteer for until Jesus returns. Every service and every job you perform in the local church ministry, under the coordination of the pastor-teacher, is just one segment of the whole. So don't get pushy and don't get testy, but rather try to be helpful to the other segments. A right mental attitude is what Paul had through doctrine. When you have the same, then we, as a congregation, can achieve fantastic things, though we be few in number. You may have a pastor-teacher who can analyze and who's a good organizer of what needs to be done, but that's of little value if that's as far as it goes. If he has to do the doing, that congregation is going to do the losing.

So the apostle Paul says, "I am a communicator of the Word of God. I've been called, if necessary, to offer my life as a sacrifice (as a libation) poured out in a crowning expression of honor to the Savior whom I serve. That sacrifice is a sacrifice connected with my service to you as believers–to establish your body of faith in the context and the content of Bible doctrine. This is my life. This is what I devote myself to." Paul says, "Many have made this easier for me and many have dealt me misery," as we've already looked at some of those people who are giving him misery while he was in prison in Rome.

What is his attitude toward that? What kind of a mental attitude in response did Paul have in knowing that he was not always appreciated; he was not always accepted; and, sometimes he was downright rejected? That mental attitude expression is what should characterize us in order to get doctrine out to people in usable form. This mental attitude is signaled by a very clear cut, easily recognizable, distinctive quality.

Here it is. At the end of verse 17, Paul says, "I joy." This is the Greek word "chairo." This describes Paul's mental attitude as he performs sacrificial service for the spiritual development of the Philippian Christians. The reason Paul can say, "I joy, and I rejoice" is because in his soul there is the quality of inner happiness. Because his soul has inner happiness, he can speak of rejoicing in the midst of service and sacrifice. That means that he has developed in the spiritual maturity structure of his soul the quality of inner happiness that nothing can overcome. Paul's very sacrifice, as a matter of fact; the very things that he is doing under sacrifice; and, the very service that he is performing is the source to him of inner happiness. Paul did not pity himself. Paul was not bemoaning his lot. He was a willing worker. The very things that he sacrificed and that he performed in service were the things that brought him joy.

People who grudgingly serve the Lord in sacrifice and service are people who are not happy. They are not doing is as unto the Lord. Therefore, they are the complainers–grousing, grousing, grousing. They are the unhappy people, and they do not please God the Father. They are not happy themselves, and they are not really happy with God. That kind of a person will not likely be able to perform sacrifices on the long haul, because every sacrifice he performs, he complains about it. He can't perform service as unto the Lord. He complains about it. But a lot of the complainer, however, is predestined. The complainer in God's service always does one thing. Whatever else he may do, at the end of the line, he does one thing. He moves on to another church.

The malcontent complainer who is unhappy in his sacrifices, that person always moves on to another church situation. What he does is he wants to find people of his own kind because he is more comfortable with fellow complainers. So he looks around and he finds some spiritual basket cases like himself, and those are the people he finds camaraderie with. There are two things to serving the Lord. It is not only what you do outwardly, but it is also an inward attitude. There are a lot of Christians who grit their teeth and go ahead and they do things outwardly (grudgingly): "Well, alright. I'll do it. They don't realize that what they have done is cut themselves off from any eternal reward.

Paul is presenting to us a happy Christian life, and others indeed wondered what was wrong with him that he was willing to be satisfied under the disadvantages that he had to labor. This word "chairo" is in the present tense, expressing the fact that he was constantly happy in what he was doing. It is active. This was his personal mental attitude. It is indicative. That was reality. Furthermore, he says, "I am happy, and I rejoice with you." This is the word "sugchairo." "Sugchairo" is a word that means "I share a mutual happiness." In other words, Paul says, "I am happy in the service that I'm performing for Jesus Christ, and in the sacrifices that are imposed upon me because of it."

He also said, "I am also happy when I'm with you. In other words, when Paul got together with the believers, he was a fun guy. Paul says, "I'm happy within my soul. When you're with me, I'm happy also." Paul was the life of the party, though he had pressures on him greater than any of them. But Paul credited his mental attitude to the right place. He didn't have it because he decided to have it. You and I aren't going to have it because we walk out of here and say, "Okay, I'm going to stop complaining." You're not going to stop complaining. You're just going to put it underground. You're going to walk around smiling at all of us, but down in your soul, you're going to still keep grousing; complaining; and, bemoaning your lot in life.

But Paul said, "I know how to weed that devil out of me. I know how to remove that demon from my soul." He told us about that in 1 Corinthians 15:10. Paul says, "By the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain. But I labored more abundantly than they all. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Paul said, "It is the grace of God which is ministered through me through doctrine that enables me to be a happy person while I'm bearing sacrificial service for the Lord. The grace of God was not wasted on me." Paul is saying, "There are a lot of Christians that the grace of God was wasted on." But he said, "When that grace hit me, I became a better worker than all the rest of them." Paul said, "I have a happiness in my soul from doctrine so that my sacrifices bring me happiness. My service brings me happiness when I'm with you. I'm happier than ever before. I am a fun guy to be with."

The conclusion of all this is in verse 18. Paul says, "For the same cause," which may be translated "in the same way," or "likewise." This is referring to Paul's inner happiness in the midst of sacrifice and service. Paul says, "In the same way, you do also–enjoy." And he uses again the very same word that he just used, "chairo." He says, "You be happy in the same way in the Lord's work." It is present tense–your constant mental attitude. It is active–your choice of a mental attitude. It is indicative–the reality. "Whatever it costs you to serve the Lord, happiness is the condition and the climate in which you're to do it."

Then he says, "Rejoice with me. For the same cause, in like manner, you also be happy, and you be happy mutually with me." Then he uses the same word again, "sugchairo," that he used before about himself. Paul wants the Philippians to join him in happiness in their service for the Lord. That's the point of emulating Paul–service with happiness. The pastor-teacher and the congregation both share a mutual happiness in the sacrifice and the service which they perform. It may mean being poured out as a drink offering in honor of the Lord; that is, your very life. But that's the mental attitude that we are to emulate.

Paul sums it up in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 when he says, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Serving the Lord for a pastor-teacher is sacrifice. Serving the Lord for you is sacrifice in a different way. But for both of us, it is in the context of happiness.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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