

Philippians 4 – Bible Reading Outline (Kamloops Conference 2016)

In Philippians, a number of delightful themes in the epistle include:

- the Person of Christ
- the gospel of Christ
- joy, unity and fellowship of believers

A Ministry of Christ in Philippians

Ch1 - living for Christ, He is the **principle of a devoted life**, He is the sole object and purpose of our lives (v21 *“For to me to live is Christ”*) - **captivity to Christ**.

Ch2 - learning of Christ, He is the **pattern of a selfless life**, His selfless mind is to be our example (v5 *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”*) - **condescension of Christ**.

Ch3 - looking to Christ, He is the **pursuit of a sanctified life**, to know more of Him (v10 *“That I might know Him ...”*), He is the One alone we are to be occupied with and seeking after (v20 *“we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”*) - **conformity to Christ**.

Ch4 - leaning on Christ, He is the **power of a victorious life**, He is the One who sustains and strengthens in every circumstance (v11 *“I have learned ... to be content”*, v13 *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”*) - **contentment in Christ**.

Philippians 4: Paul is a servant personally in the good of his own ministry

The apostle is often speaking personally about himself (“I” 16x), and of all that he had personally learned in the school of God, e.g. v11 *“I have learned ...”*, v12 *“I know ... I am instructed”*.

Paul shows himself to be superior to his immediate personal circumstances as a prisoner of Rome, and gives expression to his **personal joy** (v4,10), **fellowship with the Lord** (v5), **enjoyment of peace** (v6-9), **learning of contentment** (v11), **strengthening from Christ** (v13) and **fulfilment of all need** (v18).

v1-4: Acknowledging the Lordship of Christ

v1: “stand fast in the Lord”, the Lordship of Christ effects **steadfastness**, continuance in faithfulness to our Lord, based upon our dependence upon Him, appreciation of His greatness, His power and all He is able to do for us.

v2-3: “be of the same mind in the Lord”, the Lordship of Christ demands **like-mindedness**, unity and where required reconciliation among believers, based upon united loyalty only to our Lord, with no thought of any self-glory, but with His glory as our only incentive in service, and as we are all subject only to His authority and teaching.

v4: “Rejoice in the Lord alway”, the Lordship of Christ promotes **rejoicing**, finding our joy and delight only in our Lord, enabling us to look above and beyond our own present circumstances, as we are occupied with the One in whom there is no failure, no change and no disappointment.

v5-9: Enjoying the Presence of Divine Persons

v5: *"The Lord is at hand"*, the thought of His **nearness**, appreciation of the close presence of our Lord with us, governing our relationships with one another, our attitudes and behaviour at all times.

v6-7: The pathway to knowing the reality of the peace of God

v6: Personal communion with God in prayer, *"in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"*.

v7: Knowing the peace of God, i.e. a personal, perfect, powerful and protective peace, *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"*.

v8-9: The pathway to knowing the presence of the God of peace

v8: Sanctified thinking; minds set apart to the things of God, thoughts that are in character compatible with God, *"whatsoever things are ... think on these things"*.

v9: Sanctified behaviour; *"Those things ... do, and the God of peace shall be with you"* i.e. a collective peace, effecting collective unity.

v10-13: Paul's Learning of Contentment

v10: His joy for their care towards him, *"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly"*.

v11: His contentment whatever his state, *"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am ... to be content"*.

v12: His independence of immediate circumstances, *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound ... I am instructed ... both to abound and to suffer need"*.

v13: His strength in Christ, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"*.

v14-20: Paul's Appreciation of Their Gift

v14-16: What their gift to Paul meant to him; an expression of their consistent care and fellowship, v14 *"ye did communicate with my affliction"*, v16 *"ye sent once and again unto my necessity"*.

v17: What their gift to Paul meant to the assembly at Philippi; fruit to their heavenly account, *"I desire fruit that may abound to your account"*.

v18: What their gift to Paul meant to God; an act of their worship, *"an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God"*.

v19: His confidence in the bounty of divine provision for the Philippians, *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"*.

v20: A note of praise to the God who meets the needs of His own, *"Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen"*.

v21-23: Paul's Closing Salutation

v21-22: Salutations for all; v21 *"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus"*, v22 *"All the saints salute you"*.

Paul is thrilled to mention in v22 *"chiefly they that are of Caesar's household"*; an evidence of the *"furtherance of the gospel"* (ch1v12) as a direct result of Paul's own imprisonment.

v23: Grace for all; *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all"*.