

## **A Benediction to the Beloved**

Philippians 4: 20-23

As you study Paul's epistle to the Philippian church, it quickly becomes evident that they are very dear to his heart. They were his crown of rejoicing, and he longed to come to them once again if the Lord allowed. Having shared much with them, in an effort to increase their joy, and further equip them in the faith, Paul offered some gracious parting words. While he had done all he could while serving among them, he desired the church to remain vibrant and strong, even in his absence.

Our text today offers nothing the believers had not heard before. Paul does not offer a deep, theological discussion, but he does offer words that were beneficial to the church in Philippi, and they remain relevant for us today. We have all heard the phrase – "it is easy to miss the forest for the trees." While we must focus on those deep, theological truths at times, the simple truths offer profound hope and courage as well. We must not allow the familiar to become so routine that we lose the wonder of it all.

As we conclude our study in Philippians, I want to consider these [parting words](#) as we discuss: [A Benediction to the Beloved](#).

**I. The Honor Expressed** (20) – [Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.](#) Paul had just spoken of the gracious provision of the Lord on our behalf, and he urged the church to give the Lord the honor and praise He deserved. Consider:

**A. The Deity** – Paul had spoken much about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He will have more to say about Him in the concluding thought, but he didn't want the church to forget or overlook God the Father. Paul was well aware of the gracious provision of the Father as well. He too loved humanity and the church. He was willing to send His only begotten Son as the sacrifice for our sin. Paul knew every blessing they enjoyed had come from the good hand of God.

- I stand amazed at the grace and provision of God. He is the Sovereign of the Ages, Creator of the universe, and yet He is mindful of you and me. His love for us is without question. He continually provides for our needs, and was willing to give His Son for our salvation. Surely He is worthy of our recognition, adoration, and praise!

**B. The Devotion** – [Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.](#) I am certain Paul realized that God's glory and deity were not dependent upon man's recognition or praise. His very

nature reveals His glory. He is glorious because He is God. His glory is so radiant and overwhelming that is impossible for mankind to gaze upon it and live. Do you remember the encounter Moses had with God in the cleft of the rock? God only allowed Moses to see the backside of His glory, and yet the face of Moses shone so after the encounter that he had to wear a veil as he spoke to the people. God is radiant in His glory.

- However, it is clear that Paul encouraged the church to offer the Father praise and worship. While we cannot add to His glory, we can offer the praise He is due. Within the context of this verse, it speaks of honor, praise, and worship.

**C. The Duration** (20) – *Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Paul encouraged the church to offer praise unto God the Father. He was worthy of their praise for His mighty works among them. They had received much to prompt their praise.

- Paul also knew this generation was not the first to receive God's blessing, and they would not be the last. He is God, and He never changes. He was worthy of praise from former generations, and He remains worthy of praise today. He will be worthy of praise forever, throughout eternity. Has God not blessed us more than we deserve? Is He not worthy of our praise and worship? *Psalm 72:19 – And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.*

**II. The Hospitality Extended** (21-22) – As Paul concludes his letter to the Philippians, he sends words of greeting and encouraged their hospitality to others. Notice:

**A. The Admonition** (21a) – *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* Paul encouraged continued fellowship and graciousness among the church. All were to be received and welcomed. All were to be counted as family, being part of the body of Christ. They shared a common faith, and needed the love and support of one another.

- This simple truth needs to be emphasized and practiced in our day as well. If there has ever been a time in our nation's history that we need the support and love of fellow believers, it is today. We are in this journey together. We share the same concerns and burdens. We serve the same Lord. We are all within the body of Christ, headed toward the same eternal destination. May we continue to love and support each other in the faith!

**B. The Communication** (21b) – *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.* Those with Paul also sent their greetings and well wishes to the church. Paul wanted Philippi to know they were not alone in the journey. Believers in Rome loved them and were praying for their well-being as well.

- This reminded me of the importance of a kind word. It isn't difficult to offer a warm greeting and a smile. We never know what others are facing. Often a word of greeting, offered in sincerity, can brighten someone's day, and even lighten their load. It reminds them that they are not alone. There are others with like faith, who genuinely care, and are concerned for them.

**C. The Association** (22) – *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* This served as a reminder of the expansion of the church. It would have been easy to have felt overwhelmed at times when they considered the struggles in Philippi. Paul reminded them that there were others who shared their faith in Rome as well. The church was strong, and she was growing. He wanted them to know that even among the household of Caesar, people had come to saving faith in Christ and sent their greetings.

- I understand we have been placed here for a purpose. We are expected to labor in our corner of the vineyard, reaching those within our realm of influence. However, it is encouraging to know that the church does not rise and fall based solely on our efforts. We will have seasons of planting, watering, and reaping. There will be seasons of abundance and seasons of drought. In the lean times around Fellowship, it is good to know others are praying for us and continuing for the Lord.

**III. The Grace Expected** (23) – *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* As Paul usually did, he concluded this letter with an expectation of grace. Consider:

**A. The Support** – As the church in Philippi labored for the Lord, they stood in need of continued grace. Paul prayed the Lord would continue to provide the grace they needed to press on in the work. He had experienced grace and knew the benefit of it. He longed for the church to experience exceeding grace in the Lord.

- I am thankful for the grace we have received and the abundant supply available to us. Our Lord knows where we are, the struggles we face, and the grace we need to endure. We were not saved and left to fend for ourselves. He daily meets our needs and provides ample grace!

**B. The Source** – [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.](#) Again Paul reminded them of their relationship with the Lord, and encouraged them to look to Him for needed grace. The favor and approval of men may have been nice, but it was limited and subject to change. The grace of the Lord was stable and it would endure. They could confidently look to the Lord to meet their needs.

- I am glad the Lord is mindful of my needs. I rejoice for the relationship I have with Him through His abundant grace. I would yet be condemned in sin had He not loved me enough to provide for my salvation and extend His saving grace. I rest in His continued grace today. Whatever need I have, He is able and willing to supply. I face nothing that His grace isn't sufficient to handle.

**C. The Sufficiency** – Paul didn't seek grace for the pastor and deacons alone. He didn't just pray for those who were strong in the faith, and prosperous for the Lord. He desired grace for every believer in Philippi. He knew they each needed grace, and that grace was freely available to them all. The Lord was not stingy or partial in His offering of grace.

- The grace of our Lord is sufficient for every need, and it is available to all. I don't have a monopoly on grace. You have the same access to the Lord's provision as I do. He removed the wall of separation, providing equal access for every believer to the Father, and grace abundant for every need.

**Conclusion:** Paul concluded with simple instructions for everyday Christian life, but these are essential for us to live abundantly in Christ. We must be focused and committed to offering praise and worship to the Lord. We need the fellowship and support of one another, and we rest in the grace and provision of Christ. If we continue to engage in these three efforts, our lives will be much richer and fulfilled in the Lord.

If there are needs in your life, especially regarding salvation, I urge you to seek the Lord and respond to His offer of grace. He has the solution for whatever need you have!