

The letter that Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi (The book in the Holy Bible called Philippians) About this letter

Paul wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago, about 30 years after Jesus went back to heaven, and it is now in the Holy Bible.

God sent Paul to lots of towns to tell people about Jesus, and one of them was Philippi (see Acts 16:11-40). It was in the country that we now call Greece, but at that time they called it Macedonia. About 1,400 years ago an earthquake broke Philippi down, and today there are just stones and rubbish at that place in Greece.

At the time when Paul wrote this letter, the people called the Romans were the bosses over lots of nations. The Roman bosses didn't like Paul telling people about Jesus, so they grabbed him and put him in jail. Paul wrote this letter while he was in that jail, in Rome. His friend Timothy helped him write it.

In this letter, Paul said some very important things to help those Christians get really close to God. And we can learn a lot today from what Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi, a long time ago.

¹ I am Paul, and this letter is from me, and it is from Timothy too, because he is helping me write

it. We work all the time for Jesus Christ. We are sending this letter to all God's special people at Philippi, you people that belong to Jesus Christ. We are writing to you Christian leaders, and to you church helpers, and to all you Christians.*

² We are asking God our father, and Jesus Christ our leader, to be good to you, and to make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.

The Christians at Philippi helped Paul tell people about Jesus

³ Every time I think about you mob, I thank God for you. ⁴ And every time I pray for you, I'm really happy. ⁵ You believed the message about Jesus right from the first day that you heard it, and you helped me tell it to other people. Yes, you helped me with my work. And you are still doing it. ⁶ I know that God is working inside you. He has already started doing a good thing in you, and he will keep on working in you until he has properly finished it. That will be when Jesus Christ comes back again. I'm really sure that God will finish doing this good thing inside you. ⁷ You see, I love you mob very much, so it is all right for me to think about you like that. You are my friends and God is good to you, just like he is good to me. So you help me every time God lets me tell people the good news about Jesus. Right now I'm tied up in jail, and sometimes they take me to court, and I tell them the message about Jesus, and I show them that it is true. And you help me do that. ⁸ Yes, I love you, just like Jesus

* **1:1** Acts 16:12

Christ loves you, and I want to be with you again. God himself knows that is true.

Paul asked God to help the Christians at Philippi

⁹ So I pray like this for you. I ask God to help you to love each other more and more, and to know God better. I ask God to help you to understand spiritual things better. ¹⁰⁻¹¹ Then you will know the right way to live, and you will do a lot of good things. And I ask Jesus Christ to help you so that you will always do good things, and never do bad things. Jesus is going to come back again, and I want you to be living in that good way. You will show people that God is good, and they will say that he is really great.

Paul was in jail, but he told more people about Jesus

¹² My Christian friends, I want to tell you about myself. You know that bad things happened to me, and now I'm in jail. But don't worry, it is good that I am in jail. Now I can tell more people about Jesus. ¹³ So now everybody here knows that I belong to Jesus Christ, and that is the reason why I'm in jail. All the guards, and soldiers, and everyone else that works in the big boss's house here, they all know that is the reason why I'm in jail.* ¹⁴ And the Christians here heard that I'm in jail. Then most of them trusted in our leader Jesus more strongly and got brave, and they are not frightened to tell other people God's message.

* **1:13** Acts 28:30

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ There are Christians here that think in a good way and they want to help me, so they tell people about Jesus. They love me, and they know that God let people put me in jail so that I can tell a lot more people the message about Jesus and show them that this message is true.

But there are other Christians that are a bit jealous of me, and they think they can give me trouble while I'm in jail. They want other Christians to think that they are more important than me. So they tell people about Jesus Christ, and they hope they will get a lot of people to say they are great. They are thinking the wrong way. They only think about themselves.

¹⁸ But it doesn't matter. Both mobs are telling people about Jesus Christ. That is the most important thing. Maybe some of them are thinking the wrong way. But the others are thinking the right way. And all of them are telling people about Jesus Christ, so I'm very happy about it.

Which is better, to be with Jesus or to stay alive in this world?

Yes, and I will stay very happy. ¹⁹ You mob are praying for me and the spirit of Jesus Christ is helping me, so I'm sure that God will get me out of this jail. ²⁰ I want to be brave and stay strong for Jesus Christ, just like I always am. Then I will not feel shame. Maybe they will kill me, or maybe they will let me stay alive. It doesn't matter. I want to stay strong for Jesus Christ and show everyone how great he is, no matter what.

²¹ You see, while I'm alive, I want to let people know that Jesus Christ is really great. That is what I live for. But if they kill me, that is even better for me. ²² Maybe they will not kill me, and I will keep on living in this body. Then I will keep on working for Jesus, and I will help more people know him properly. I don't really know what will be best, for me to live, or for me to die. ²³ I want to do both. I want to leave this body and go to be with Jesus Christ. That will be a lot better for me. ²⁴ But at the same time, you mob need me, so I want to keep on living in this body so I can help you. ²⁵ When I think about it, I'm sure that God will let me stay alive here, so I can keep on helping all of you. Then you will trust God more, and you will be more happy. ²⁶ Yes, I reckon I will come and visit you again and you will be happy to see me. You will tell everyone, "This is awesome. Jesus Christ is really good and really powerful. He got Paul out of jail and brought him here to help us." You will talk like that to everyone.

Stay strong for Jesus

²⁷ Listen, you heard the good news about Jesus Christ, and you trusted him, so keep on living the way he wants you to live, no matter what happens. Maybe I will come and visit you again, but maybe not. Maybe I will only hear what people tell me about you. Anyway, I want to find out that you are staying strong for Jesus, and that God's spirit is joining you all together, so that you are all agreeing with each other and working

together to tell people about Jesus. ²⁸ Some people will try to stop you living for Jesus. Don't be frightened of those people. Stay strong for Jesus. Then you will show those people that, in the end, God will finish them, but he will save you. Yes, God will make that happen. ²⁹ You see, God lets you believe in Jesus Christ. But not only that, sometimes people make trouble for you because you believe in Jesus. God lets that happen too. ³⁰ Those bad people are making trouble for you, just like they made trouble for me when I was there in your town. And bad people are still making trouble for me.*

2

Work together with each other

¹ Listen. You know that you belong to Jesus Christ, and he helps you to be strong and brave. You know that he loves you, so you are happy. You know that God's spirit is in you, and you share your lives with him. You know how to feel sorry for each other, and how to help each other. You know all that, right? ² So now make me properly happy. I want you all to love each other properly, and I want you all to agree with each other, and work together, and think the same way about what is right. ³⁻⁴ Each of you has to think about what is good for the others. Don't only think about what is good for yourself. Don't think that you are better than other people, but think that they are better than you. And don't

* **1:30** Acts 16:19-40

do things only to get people to say you are good.
And don't try to be a boss over other people.

Be like Jesus, and think like he did

⁵ You have to think the same way that Jesus Christ thought.

⁶ He was the same as God.
He was just as important as God.

But he didn't reckon that he had to keep on being important, like God is.

⁷ Instead, he left all that, and he made himself like a nobody.

He was born into this world and looked like other human beings.

He was a man living here.

And he worked hard to help people.

⁸ And then he made himself even less important.
He did everything that God wanted him to do, he even died.

He let people nail him to a cross and kill him.

⁹ So then God made him alive again and lifted him up to the most important place in heaven.

And God made him more powerful than everyone else.

¹⁰ One day, everyone will hear the name of Jesus, and they will get down on their knees and show him respect.

All the people and spirits will show respect to Jesus. Everything in heaven, and everything on the earth, and everything under the earth, they will all show respect to Jesus.

¹¹ And every one of them will say out loud, "Jesus Christ is the boss."

That will happen to show that God our father is very great and good.*

God gives you the power to do good things

¹² So, my good friends, you always have to do what God wants. I know that you did that when I was with you, and I reckon you still do it now that I'm not with you any more. So you have to work hard and keep on trying to do what God wants. You see, God saved you, so give him proper respect and try to live his way. You have to be too frightened to do any bad thing that will make him angry. ¹³ God is the one that is working inside you. He helps you think the right way, so that you want to do the good things that make him happy, and he gives you the power to do those good things.

¹⁴ And while you do those things, don't get angry or argue about them. ¹⁵ Then you will be properly good, so that nobody can blame you for anything. You are God's kids living among really bad people that always go wrong. So you have to live in a way that is properly good. Then everyone will see that you are properly good. You will be like bright stars in a dark sky.* ¹⁶ And you have to keep on believing the message about Jesus that gives us real life. Then when Jesus Christ comes back, I will be very happy, and I will know that I didn't waste my time when I worked among you.

* **2:11** Isaiah 45:23 * **2:15** Deuteronomy 32:5

¹⁷ Yes, I'm happy about you. And even if they kill me, I will still be happy. I know that you believe in Jesus and you work for him, and when you do that, you are giving yourselves to God. And if they are going to kill me, I will be giving my body to God too. So we can all be happy about it together. ¹⁸ Yes, you can be happy too. Even if they are going to kill me, you can be happy with me.

Paul wanted Timothy to find out about the mob at Philippi

¹⁹ Now I will tell you what I want to do. Timothy is here with me, and I want to send him to you soon. So if that is what our leader Jesus wants, I will send him to you. After that, he will come back and tell me all about you, and that will make me happy. ²⁰ Timothy is different from the other people here. He really cares about you and about how you are going. ²¹ The others think about the things they want, not the things that Jesus Christ wants. ²² But you know Timothy. Everyone can see that he is a good man. He works with me just like a son works with his father. Together we tell people the good news about Jesus. ²³ So I will send him to you. But first I will wait and see what they are going to do to me, then I will send him to you, ²⁴ even though I'm sure that God will let me visit you soon too.

Epafroditus wanted to go back to Philippi

²⁵ Right now I'm sending Epafroditus back to you. You sent him to me a while ago when I needed help. He came here and looked after me.

He has been a good Christian friend to me here. We work together. We are both like soldiers fighting for God. But now I reckon I have to send him back to you. ²⁶ He really wants to see you all again. And you know, after he came here, he got sick, and then somebody told you about it. So now he worries about you. He doesn't want you to be sad and feel sorry for him. So he really wants to go back and see you all again. ²⁷ Yes, he was very sick a while ago, and he nearly died. But God felt sorry for him, and for me too. God was good to him and made him better. And when God did that, he was good to me too. You know, I am already sad about some things, and if Epafroditus died, that would make me really sad. But he didn't die. ²⁸ So now I really want to send him to you, and when you see him again you will be happy, and I will not worry about you any more. ²⁹⁻³⁰ Epafroditus belongs to our leader, Jesus, just like you do. You couldn't come and help me a while ago, so he came instead of you. And then he nearly died. But he didn't worry. He knew he was working for Jesus Christ while he was helping me, and he was ready to die for Jesus. You have to really respect people like Epafroditus. So when he comes back to you, be happy and say, "Good to see you again. You are our good Christian friend."

3

Some people teach things that are not true

¹ And now, my Christian friends, before I finish this letter, I want to tell you this. Be happy all the time. Remember that you belong to our leader Jesus. Yes, I told you all these things before, and I am telling you again. I don't get tired of telling you, and this message will stop you from going the wrong way.

²⁻³ Look out. There are some men that want to teach you the wrong things and get you to go the wrong way. They are like dogs. They go the wrong way. They only want to cut men's bodies. They say that you don't belong to God unless you do what the Jewish law says and have a young man operation. They are wrong. We have God's spirit in us, and he helps us respect God the right way. We know what Jesus Christ did for us, and we trust him. We know that ceremonies that people do will not save us, so we don't trust them. So really, we are the ones that belong to God. Those people that only follow that Jewish law don't belong to him.

Know Jesus properly, this is most important

⁴ Look at me. I'm more Jewish than they are, and I trusted that Jewish law more than them, but it didn't save me. ⁵ I was born into the Israel nation, and I belong to the Benjamin tribe. They did that young man operation on me when I was 8 days old, just like the Jewish law says. When I grew up, I joined the Pharisee mob, that are really strong for the Jewish law. I'm properly Jewish.* ⁶ I really wanted to make God happy,

* **3:5** Acts 23:6; 26:5; Romans 11:1

but I followed the Jewish way, and I made a lot of trouble for Christians. And I was strong for the Jewish laws. Nobody could say that I broke any of them.* ⁷ I used to think that if I lived like that, God will like me. But then I found out the true message about Jesus, and I knew that I was wrong. Those things didn't help at all. Now that I know Jesus Christ properly, I reckon all those things are useless. ⁸ Yes, they are useless. But I know Jesus Christ. That is the only important thing. He is my leader, and he is really special to me now. I have left every other way, and I only follow him now. I reckon all those other things are rubbish, and I have chucked them away, so that I can join up with Jesus Christ, ⁹ and belong to him properly. I have stopped trying to follow that Jewish law to get God to say that I'm all right. Instead of that, I trust in Jesus Christ, and that is the reason why God will say that I'm all right. God makes us right because we believe in Jesus. ¹⁰ And I really want to know Jesus Christ properly. And I want God's power to be in my life, the same power he used to make Jesus alive again. And I even want to share the pain that Jesus got. I will even let his enemies kill me, like they killed him. ¹¹ Then later, God will make me alive again, one way or another.

Try hard to be like Jesus

¹² I'm not saying that I have already done all that. I'm not saying that I'm properly good now. But, you see, Jesus Christ picked me to be one

* **3:6** Acts 8:3; 22:4; 26:9-11

of his people, so I'm trying hard to be the sort of person that he wants me to be. ¹³ Friends, I don't reckon I'm all that good yet, but I keep on looking ahead. I'm like a man running in a race. I forget what I did in the past, and I think about what God wants me to do later. ¹⁴ I keep trying to be like Jesus, so that God will take me up to properly join up with Jesus. That will be my prize.

¹⁵ And all of us have to think like that. That will show that we are spiritually strong now and live properly for Jesus. But if you think differently about anything, God will help you, and he will show you the right way. ¹⁶ We started to learn about the way God wants us to live, so we have to keep on living his way and keep on doing the things he taught us to do. That is the most important thing for all of us to do.

Live the right way, like Paul did

¹⁷ My Christian friends, you know how I live, so you all have to try to live the same way. And look around at each other, and see the way you all live. Look at those people that live the same way as I live, and you do the same.* ¹⁸ You see, there are a lot of people that don't live the right way. I have often told you this before, and now I'm telling you the same thing again. When I think about it, I get so sad that I cry. There are people that reckon they are Christians, but they are really enemies of Jesus Christ. They live in a way that shows they are against the good things that Jesus died for on the cross. ¹⁹ They don't

* **3:17** 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1

listen to God. They listen to their own bodies, and they do bad things so that their bodies feel good. They do those bad things, but they don't feel shame. Instead, they think they are smart. They only think about the things that belong to this world. And in the end God will finish them up for ever.

²⁰ But we belong to heaven. That is our real home. And we are waiting for our leader, Jesus Christ, to come back from heaven. He is the one that saves us, and we really want him to come back. ²¹ He will change these weak bodies that we have now, and he will make them into new bodies. They will be like the wonderful body that he has now. Jesus can do that because he is really powerful. He is so powerful that he can be the boss over everything.

4

¹ So think about all that, my Christian friends, and keep on following our leader Jesus. And keep on trusting him properly. I love you very much, and I really want to see you again. You make me very happy, and it is like you are the prize that I get for winning a race.

Don't argue with each other

² Now I just want to talk to Yuwodia and Sintiki. I ask you 2 women very strongly to stop arguing with each other, and to try to think the same way as each other. Remember, you both belong to our leader Jesus. ³ And now I'm talking to my other good friend there. Listen, my friend, you worked hard with me, and you always tried to follow

Jesus properly. Now I want you to help those 2 women to be friends with each other. They both worked hard to tell people the good news about Jesus. They worked with me and Clement and some other Christians. God wrote the names of all those Christians in his special book called *the book of life*, where he writes the name of every person that will live with him for ever.

Jesus can make you happy and quiet inside

⁴ Now I'm talking to all of you Christians. You belong to our leader, Jesus, so always be happy. This is important, so I'm saying it again, "Be happy." ⁵ Always be easy with people, and be nice to them, so that everyone will see how good you are. Remember that our leader, Jesus, will come back soon. ⁶ Don't worry about anything, but pray to God and ask him for everything you need. And always thank God for what he has already done. ⁷ Then God will get you to feel happy and quiet inside yourselves. You belong to Jesus Christ, and he will do that to look after your minds, so that you will think properly. Nobody knows how God does it, but he can do it.

Think about good things

⁸ And one more thing, my Christian friends. Keep thinking about the things that are true, and the things that people should respect. Keep thinking about the things that are right, and good, and lovely. Think about things that everyone reckons are really good. Think about the things that we can thank God for. ⁹ And remember, when I was with you, I taught you

the right things to do. You agreed with me about those things. And you know the things that I said, and the things that I did when I was with you. Well, keep on doing all those things. Then God will be with you, and he will get you to feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.

The Christians at Philippi wanted to help Paul, and that made him happy

¹⁰ Now I will tell you how things are going with me here. I'm really happy, thanks to our leader Jesus. I know that you were worried about me here in jail, and you wanted to send something to help me, but at first you couldn't do it. Then later, you found a way to send me something, and that made me happy. It shows that you are still thinking about me.

¹¹ I'm not saying this because I need anything. I have learned to be happy, no matter what happens to me. ¹² I know what it is like to need things, and I know what it is like to have a lot of things. I have learned this secret, to be happy all the time no matter what happens. Sometimes I can eat plenty of food, and sometimes I go hungry. But it doesn't matter, I can be happy anyway. Sometimes I have everything I need, and sometimes I haven't got anything. But it doesn't matter, I can be happy anyway. ¹³ You see, Jesus Christ makes me strong, so I can do all these things. ¹⁴ And you have been very good to me. I have been getting trouble, but you remembered me, and you helped me a lot.

The Christians at Philippi do good things, so God is happy with them

¹⁵ Remember the time when I first came to tell you the good news about Jesus. Then I left your country, called Macedonia, and I went to tell other people this story. You know, you were the only Christian church that gave me something to help me do that.* ¹⁶ And when I was in the town called Thessalonica, I needed money, you mob kept on sending me money and things, to help me.*

¹⁷ I'm not telling you this to get you to send me more things. But I want you to keep on doing good things like that, so that God will be happy about you. He will add those good things to the list of all the good things you have done, and one day, he will pay you for it all.

Give to God, and he will give you everything you need

¹⁸ But right now I have everything I need, and even more than I need. You are so good to me. You gave lots of money and things to Epafroditus to bring to me. But you didn't only give them to me. You gave them to God. They are the right sort of gift, a really nice one, so he is very happy.*

¹⁹ You know, God looks after me, and he will look after you too. You belong to Jesus Christ, and God will give you everything you need. He is really rich and powerful. So he can give you everything you need.

* **4:15** 2 Corinthians 11:9 * **4:16** Acts 17:1 * **4:18** Exodus 29:18

²⁰ He is our God and our father. Everybody has to always say that he is very great, for ever and ever. That's right.

The end of Paul's letter

²¹ Say *hello* to all God's people there that belong to Jesus Christ. The Christians that are with me here say *hello* to you. ²² All of God's people say *hello* to you. There are some Christians here that live in the house that belongs to the really big government boss, and they say a special *hello* to you.

²³ I pray that our leader, Jesus Christ, will keep on being really good to all of you.

From Paul

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who speak English as a second language

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