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NT 637/737—Philippians: Spring 2023

Professor Shawn Craigmiles

Written Assignment #1

Date: 2/21/23

Please answer the following questions, and remember to cite properly any sources that you use.

A. Trace out (summarize) the logic of Paul's argument in the Thanksgiving Period (1:2-26).

What are his main propositions, section by section, and what is the relationship between propositions that went before and those that follow? English students need to pay attention to conceptual subordination of ideas, while Greek students will also consider the use of coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. *This is the most difficult part of the assignment and requires careful observations. You are not expected to duplicate Schreiner's method perfectly, but you should be familiar enough with it that you can attempt to unpack Paul's message.* (approximately 1 page)

In Philippians 1:2-26 although Paul cannot be with the Philippian church in person he prays and encourages them for their fellowship in the gospel. Because he is imprisoned for preaching the gospel, he does not want them to confuse this as something bad; rather, it has resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. Some have used his imprisonment against him, but others are much bolder to preach Christ. Because his life is about the gospel it will allow him to continue with them which will result in their fruitfulness and boasting in Christ.

In 1:2-26, Paul thanks God for them in his prayers always and that they will have joy (1:2-4), *because of* (ἐπί-inference) their partnership in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ (1:5-6). He feels this way in his heart about them, *since* (τέ-grounds) they share in God's grace with him and he longs to see them again whether imprisoned or defending the gospel *and* (καί-series) his prayer is that their love would abound more and more in knowledge and judgment. Paul is making his argument about the defense of the gospel and what can happen when Christ is preached. He then uses (1:10-11) *so that* (εἰς-action) as they take this gospel message forward, they may understand what is absolutely essential when it comes to life in Jesus Christ.

Hellerman states: "the readers are to be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, that is, the day of Christ in view as their ultimate goal."¹ In 1:12 Paul transitions his thoughts about the gospel and his imprisonment by using the word now (δὲ-series). The theme of these scriptures is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The *now* reflects back to vs. 7 when it comes to being in chains when defending the gospel. *As a result* (ὥστε-action) he wants these believers to know that being in prison has furthered the gospel *and* (καί-series) because of his imprisonment it has given confidence to other believers to preach about Jesus Christ without fear. Paul then explains in verses 16-17 *It is true* (μὲν-explanation). In other words, his argument discusses how others are motivated to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some preach Christ out of goodwill or while others do it to stir up trouble while he is in chains. His response in vs 18 is central to his argument. *But* what (ἀλλά-alternative) does it matter? In this instance, Paul is building his argument to a climax. Paul's whole life is declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ. This verse points back to the preceding verses of preaching Christ whether in prison or defending or confirming the gospel. *Because* (ὅτι-ground) of Christ being preached whether by good or false motives Paul

¹ Joseph H. Hellerman , *Phillipians, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville:B & H Publishing, 2015) p 34

is going to rejoice. Then he makes his argument why his deliverance from imprisonment will happen. For (γὰρ-ground) it is because of their prayers and God's provision through Jesus Christ. He also talks about not being *ashamed* (αἰσχύνω. This does not mean dishonor or disgrace but rather a shame of not completing the task that God has given (I Jh. 2:28). For (γὰρ explanation) the Apostle Paul his whole life was about declaring the gospel of Christ and it didn't matter how it was accomplished whether it was through life or death. "Clearly Paul's passion for himself and all Christians in all times, judicial or otherwise, is that they stand boldly for Christ and that he is glorified through their lives."² Paul then argues the reason why he will continue with them (*if- εἰ-conditional, yet- δὲ-concessive, but- δὲ-positive-negative*). It's more fruitful for them yet his torn between being with Christ (death) and being with the Philippians (life). In verses 25-26 his convinced of *this* (τοῦτο-purpose) that he will remain with the believers in Philippi *so that* (ἵνα-action) him being with them will cause their boasting in Christ to abound.

² Mark J. Keown Source: Colloquium, 48 no 2 Nov 2016, p 203

B. Choose a keyword from this section to study within the context of Paul's writings. Key Tools: An analytical concordance, Greek-based lexicon such as Louw & Nida, journal articles, etc. (approximately 1/2 page)

In Philippians 1:5 the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) is one of the themes of the letter. One of the reasons he has written this letter is to inform his ministry partners on being jailed for preaching the gospel. In the first twenty-five verses of chapter one the word gospel is mentioned five times. "The word gospel means 'good tidings' and later the story concerning God. As now used, the word describes the message of Christianity and the books in which the story of Christ's life and teaching is found."³ The tone of this book is remarkable considering it was written from prison. But the gospel in particular to the Gentiles is the call that God has placed on his life. In Ephesians he sees his calling "according to the gift of the grace of God" that he might "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" which was a mystery hidden in God. (Eph. 3:7-21). Paul's life is summed up in 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. This explains Paul's joy in writing this letter to the Philippians. Nothing was more important in his life than living for Christ. He sums it up by saying, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phl.3:14).

C. Articulate 5 strategic questions raised from the biblical passage that you consider worth investigating further, and give your reasons why you chose these 5 (e.g. the theological implications of the answer will affect the kind of disposition one has toward suffering). (approximately 1/2 page)

1. Why is Paul passionate about praying for the Philippians?

A. In order for God's people to stand for the gospel it is vitally important that we pray for one another. Jesus told Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat but then he says "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:31-32). If Jesus is praying for us

³ Zondervan's Compact Bible Dictionary, (Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI 1993).

the we ought to pray for one another.

2. Why would someone preach Christ out of envy and strife?

A. This particular question has puzzled me. One of the possible answers would be that two individuals disagree about a particular theological position. For instance, circumcision and uncircumcision for Gentiles. As a result, Jesus Christ will come up in that conversation.

3. Why is it that Christians today don't have the confidence to say like Paul, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain"?

A. Is it because we really haven't taken sides? Is it because we don't see a difference in our society because the Barna polls tell us that we're a predominantly Christian nation? Is it because we live in a diverse society where we're not persecuted as Christians? Could it even be that we're living in the Laodicean church period? Whatever the reason God always has a remnant. A small group of people who are dedicated and faithful to the call and understand like Paul that life is all about Jesus' period!

4. What makes an individual like Paul caught in a dilemma where he desires to depart this life or stay here?

A. It has to do with one's focus. If we're honest (self-included) we have become a little bit attached to the things of this world (family, friends, possessions). The question we must ask ourselves is; what's most important? Paul was consumed with Christ. He tells us that his press was "the high calling of God which is Christ Jesus." (Phl.3:14)

5. How can a Christian have the same kind of confidence that Paul had concerning being with the Philippians again?

A. He had this kind of confidence because he learned to be content in every situation (Phl. 4:11)

C. Draw out the significance for today of one of Paul's theological positions.

1. What are the practical or ethical implications of Paul's position for your particular faith communities? (approximately 1/2-3/4 page)

One of the practical implications of preaching the gospel for my faith community is how one can be Jesus-centric in the face of multiple religions and not offend anyone. Jesus has made it clear that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one can come to the Father except through Him. So, how can I not offend someone? The answer is we will offend everyone who doesn't believe Jesus Christ is the only way to God. We see Jesus as meek and humble, but Matthew 23 says his not coming to send peace on the earth but a sword. We have to understand that the Holy Spirit has come to reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jh.16:8-10). So, we will offend people. I just believe we can do it truthfully and respectfully.

2. What steps would you take to help your faith community become spiritually formed in this area?

I believe the first step in helping my faith community in this area would be to become an example of someone who will share their faith uncompromisingly. Paul was an example in this area. He informed the Philippian church that being in prison didn't stop the gospel but furthered

it. As a result, other believers have become confident and are willing to share the gospel without fear. As leaders, we should never expect the faith community to do what we aren't willing to do.

The other step I would take would be to train the faith community through Bible teaching and seminars.