

*I press on  
toward the goal to  
win the prize for  
which God has  
called me  
heavenward  
in Christ  
Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14

Following the upward call through Philippians ...

## The Secret of Trusting

The congregation at Philippi was one of the great congregations of the first century. Begun by Paul and his team on the second missionary journey, the congregation consisted almost entirely of converts from the Gentiles from the first. When Paul, Silas, and other members of the team moved on, the physician Luke stayed for about four years in Philippi to solidify and forward the work. It is a credit to the work Luke did that the assembly in Philippi was such a solid and generous congregation. The Holy Spirit, beginning with the vision that Paul received calling the preachers

to Macedonia, clearly orchestrated the timing and placement of the congregation, and then used the Philippian brethren in a major way in assisting Paul in the continuing thrust of the gospel.

- **Revived concern** — Time and time again, while Paul was laboring for the Lord on his second missionary journey, the congregation sent him financial assistance. At one point the apostle worked as a tentmaker six days a week in Corinth, and could only do some serious work in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia (where Philippi was located), they brought finances so that Paul could now go back to preaching full time. In jail now, some fifteen years later, Paul is again in need, and the Philippians come through. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly," exclaims Paul, "that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity" (Philippians 4:10). The congregation was always willing to help; the apostle simply hadn't had need until his recent imprisonment.

- **The lesson of contentment** — From his conversion onward, Paul was obviously a committed individual. Over the years, he learned more — not only the doctrines of Christ by revelation, but also things necessary for his personal growth as an imitator of Christ. Appreciating the generosity and concern of the Philippian brethren, he then comments, "Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" (Philippians 4:11). What a lesson for all the saints to learn! If the brethren in Christ could learn to be content in their circumstances, then the days would be full of rejoicing and productivity. What is needed is more trust in the Lord, to be able to trust that He knows what He is doing.

- **Know how** — Whether he had little or whether he had much, Paul was satisfied with what the Lord had provided for him at that point in his life. "I know how to get along with humble means," he comments, "and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need" (Philippians 4:12). The apostle had learned, through all the facets of educational opportunity the Lord provided, to focus on things above rather than on the earth. His earlier comment in this epistle was the key: "Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13,14). With that as his focus, he had the "know how" to handle prosperity and poverty.

The most important factor in handling any situation, whether it be adversity or conviviality, is trust in the Lord. This trust cannot be artificial; it must be honest, and it must be based on what is stated in the word of God. Paul avers, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). For this to work, the individual must have been immersed into Christ. For this to work, he must have received the indwelling Spirit in obedience to the gospel, the Spirit who does the strengthening. For this to work, the follower of Christ must be truly working for the Lord rather than for any selfish purpose. But if those things are in place, and the saint is really trusting in the Lord, this will work! This will work!!

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JAY WILSON