

AN ANOINTED ASSEMBLY (outline)
Philippians 1:1-11 (November 13, 2005)

INTRODUCTION: Though you may not believe it by the message today, we are examining the Church of Philippi. God's Word is still the standard for the Church today. All that we need is going to be found in the Word. My original outline of these verses was: The Setting, The Salute, The Supplication, The Substance with a whole bunch of sub-points. I think we may, though I am not sure have time for The Setting. Let's try.

THE SETTING: 1. The City - The city of Philippi was named for Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. The city was on a major highway that connected eastern provinces of Rome to the Roman empire and therefor Philippi became the leading city of Macedonia. It was granted the highest status, that of a Roman colony, and enjoyed special privileges, like no poll or land taxes. They could buy, sell, and transfer land, and even file lawsuits in Roman courts. This eventually elevated the city to one of wealth. Eventually these great privileges led it to arrogance and pride. Not unlike perhaps our own beloved America.

2. The Circumstances - Paul is writing this letter to thank the people of Philippi with abundant joy for what God was doing in and through them. This letter is a witness to the fact that Paul had learned through sufferings of many kinds, to be content in all situations (4:11). Though differences of opinion exist, most students of Scripture believe this letter was written from Rome about AD 62. All know it was written from prison, and that Paul's attitude was that everything that had happened to him was for the furtherance of the Gospel. Not all things seem good, but God can be glorified and use all things (1:12-13, Acts 28:16, 23-31).

3. The Church

(a). *The Creation.* The origin of the church of Philippi was phenomenal! It was a vision of God. Literally, a vision (Acts 16:6-12). Now I have a lot of thoughts and feelings that come up here. God may not always work through visions but I can tell you we need to pay attention and not discount when an anointed person of God is impressed upon by the Spirit with a message that rings true with the Word of God. The outcome of Paul's work in Philippi is a testimony to the correctness of the authenticity of his vision. Strong's defines this word as "*something gazed at, or a spectacle.*" This is not the ordinary sit down and try to come up with a plan for church planting. This is not a "what do we do next thing." This is not man *making a spectacle* of himself, this is God *doing the spectacular* in the middle of man's plans. Notice Acts 16:6-7 how God had literally prevented them from doing their own thing, and stuck His Thing right in the middle of Paul's sleep. *God can do His work best at times when we are in a real state of rest.* God had to put man to sleep to create woman. Otherwise the man would have probably tried to control it. Look at what Abraham did to mess with God's promise. The word says regarding Adam, God took a rib, (though some believe part of the brain was involved, it is not true!). Remember this though, *when you have a couple, between them they have all of their parts.* What a thought!! I need to say more here about "a vision." *As I was studying this setting of the church at Philippi God suddenly stopped me cold and moved my spirit to twenty three (23) years ago.* This is in no way to credit me, for I have wondered for years about all the things that seemed to dim or put out that vision. You see, this is about the Sovereign God and my awareness of a proper response He has been waiting on me for. Never the less, here it is:

I was asleep at a parsonage in Marengo, Iowa when a dream came to me of people crying out "come and help us, we need you in Sandstone." Joy and I were prepared to head for

*Colorado to a church that had called us there. Wow, I loved Colorado, and it was Sandstone or Colorado? What shall we do? This is like Jerusalem or Nazareth to many. Yet God's speaking through that dream could not be fought. I went back home and immediately told Joy what had happened, and together we set out not much later for Minnesota. Many things along the way may have delayed God's plan for my life. His sovereignty, my responses, sin; whatever it was, I have a dream today that God is moving to prepare a people for the fulfillment of all things that He has set forth for this work, the Body of Christ and the North land of Minnesota. The North land has been a Nazareth itself, and Pine County has been a Nazareth within a Nazareth, and this area of Pine County has been a Nazareth within a Nazareth, within a Nazareth, BUT Praise God there is a JESUS OF NAZARETH who HAS been, IS, and is ABOUT TO burst on the scene in a way that can only be explained and accomplished by the **revealed vision** of God almighty.*

God stopped Paul in the middle of his plans and put him in the middle of His preparation. How about you? Now, let me clarify something at this point. I in NO way put one with visions above another one who reveals Christ through any other means. The smile of a child, the quiet single tear of a saint, the gift of encouragement. What I am saying is that God is not interested in STATUS, He is interested in sincerity of any ministry by the Spirit. We give status to specific ministries and gifts, not God. Your prayers might be the thing that keeps the gifts of the Spirit flowing in this body. You must not look to what kind of manifestation God makes through you, look to Him. It is the Author of all gifts that demands that FRUIT must be the evidence of a gift, not emotional display, though the fruit of the Spirit will touch the emotions as will the gifts. I will have a lot more to say about **status** in the church as opposed to **service** in the church in the future.

(b). *The Congregation:* Let's look at the makeup of this church at Philippi. First, Paul had offered the Gospel to the Jews as was his custom. There were few Jews in the city it is believed, because there was no synagogue. Under Jewish custom it only took 10 Jewish men to form a synagogue, so the consensus is that the Jewish population was limited. Those who did worship reportedly went outside the city to worship on the banks of the Gangites River. It is fascinating to look at the beginnings of this church.

(b1). *The Converts:* There was a real mixture. In a segregated society, that looked down on different races or cultures, Jesus broke through in Philippi. There was a well off business woman, Lydia, a seller of royal colors of cloth, a damsel or servant who was possessed with an evil spirit, and a jailer. Lydia was reportedly Asian, the damsel a Greek, and of course the jailer a Roman. We read their story in [Acts 16: 14-15, 16-18, 25-30](#). Think about it. What brought you here? Look at our stories. If I were to share our stories and where we have been, and how God has brought us here in HIS *time, place and purpose* we would be amazed and praising and glorifying God in all of His splendor. *What is God building in this Nazareth?* Perhaps our seeking together to worship outside the traditions of men, at the river banks if you will leads us to our greatest common denominator, the All Supreme Christ. Our desire to know Him in intimacy, our desire to bring into being that next great "John the Baptist" that announces to the world, not just "Jesus is coming", but rather look NOW... at the **Triumphant Church**.

Realize all peoples and lands, realize all government systems, realize all secular destroyers of righteousness; and realize you who are self sufficient, lost in play and materialism; realize all religious spirits, ungodly spirits, lukewarm spirits, self serving spirits; AND ESPECIALLY realize all you battered, broken, ruined, helpless, and hopeless, hungry and thirsty spirits, *Jesus is not JUST coming someday*, He is coming NOW through the body of

a renewed, revived, rejuvenated, rejoicing and redemptive fulfillment of His vision- THE PRAYING CHURCH!!!

Here is one anonymous man's view of the Church:

Backward Christian Soldiers - Anonymous

V1. Backward Christian soldiers, Fleeing from the fight, With the cross of Jesus, Nearly out of sight.
Christ our rightful master Stands against the foe, Onward into battle, we seem afraid to go.

Chorus: Backward Christian soldiers, Fleeing from the fight, With the cross of Jesus, Nearly out of sight.

V2. Like a might tortoise Moves the church of God. Brothers we are treading, Where we've often trod.
We are much divided, Many bodies we, Having different doctrines, but Not much charity.

V3. Crowns and thrones may perish, Kingdoms rise and wane, But the cross of Jesus Hidden does remain.
Gates of hell should never 'gainst the Church prevail, We have Christ's own promise, but we think it might fail.

V4. Sit here then ye people, Join our sleeping throng. Blend with ours, your voices in a feeble song.
Blessings, ease and comfort Ask from Christ the King, But with our modern thinking, We won't do a thing.

That is not what the Church is going to look like in this area very soon, and even now! Prayer is changing the whole scene at this time of God's.

Allow me to close with this quote from E.M. Bounds book, "The Weapon of Prayer."

We have heretofore spoken of prayer affecting God, angels and men. Christ wrote nothing while living. Memoranda, notes, sermon writing, sermon making, were alien to Him. Autobiography was not to His taste. The Revelation of John was His last utterance. In that book we have pictured the great importance, the priceless value, and the high position which prayer obtains in the movements, history, and unfolding progress of God's Church in this world. We have this picture in Rev. 8:3, disclosing the interest the angels in heaven have in the prayers of the saints and in accomplishing the answers to those prayers:

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunders and lightnings and an earthquake."

Translated into the prose of everyday life, these words show how the capital stock by which heaven carries on the business of salvation under Christ, is made up of the prayers of God's saints on earth, and discloses how these prayers in flaming power come back to earth and produce its mighty commotions, influences and revolutions.

God, cause us to be a Praying, Triumphant Church.