

# Philippians

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish

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Philippians 4:8-9

Intro:

- Proving again that Paul must have been Baptist, for a second time he says “Finally, my brethren...”, but this time he really is bringing his message to close. And as we said last week, he wants to close on a positive note. To set the tone for his conclusion, he jams a lot of good stuff into these 2 verses.

Vs. 8

- “...whatever is true,”: Truth? It’s so hard for people to know what is true. Recall, that was the conversation in John 18:37-38 between Jesus and Pilate. Jesus had said, “For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” And Pilate asked, “What is truth?” The answer lies with Paul’s point that the Christian life is lived “in Christ” or “in the Lord.” If you are such a Christian you are one “who is of the truth.” So through the power of discernment by the Holy Spirit living within you, as you are “in Christ” (John 17:22-26), you are able to know the truth when you hear it and see it.
- “whatever is honorable...”: This is a tough Greek word to translate - Honorable, honest, venerable, reverend, worthy are all possibilities, but most translators agree on Honorable. The Greek word is **semnos**. It was word used to speak of the gods and their temples in common Greek. It would be used to describe someone who lived as if the whole world was God’s temple. Thus the word bestows dignity and holiness. Perhaps you have experienced what can only be called a Holy moment, or you enter a place where the whole atmosphere breaths Holiness. This is what Paul is getting at here.
- “whatever is right...”: Another translation might be “just”. The word here carries a sense of duty with it. As Barclay puts it, “duty faced and duty done”.

The Old Testament prophet Amos comes to mind. In his time a “prophet” was a professional prophet who lived in the Temple and palace complex. They were schooled and certified. So when Amos came preaching, the authorities were put off, telling him to go away and prophesy elsewhere, but not in Israel. But Amos told them “I am not a prophet, not the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. But the Lord took me from following the flock and the Lord said to me, ‘Go prophesy to my people Israel’” (Amos 7:14-15). He was given a duty and he did his duty. He was right and just.

- “whatever is pure...”: we saw this word, *hagnos*, in Revelation. It means undefiled, unpolluted. When referring to a person it means morally pure. When referring to religious ceremony it means cleansed, made Holy so it may be used by God. So “whatever is pure” refers here to whatever or whoever God is using for His purpose and His glory.
- “whatever is lovely...”: This word can be translated – attractive, winsome, or lovely. It literally means “that which calls forth love.” So the Christian mind is to focus on kindness, patience, gentleness, grace, and mercy. The idea is that when one looks at a Christian all they see Love.
- “whatever is of good repute...”: Good repute can be translated – good report, gracious, one with a good name. In common Greek it refers to the silence of the temple. Here it seems to say, “whatever is fit for God to hear.” When a Christian speaks it should not only be words fit for God to hear, but also the words someone may expect to hear from God. We are the hands, feet, and lips of God to the world.
- “if there is any excellence...”: The Greek word is *arete*. It was word frequently used in common Greek, but this is the only time Paul uses it. It is as if the common definition of “excellence” was insufficient for Paul when speaking of the things of God. The word would be used to qualify most anything: a field, a crop, a piece of art, the strength of an athlete, or the courage of a soldier. It is as if Paul is saying, “think of the very best things you have ever seen in God’s creation, the very best you have ever seen, and this will point you to God.” It is not unlike things Paul said in Romans about God’s law being self-evident in creation. Creation is corrupted by sin, but God’s fingerprints are still visible.

- “if anything worthy of praise...”: No true disciple works for the praise of other people, but only for the praise of God – “Well done, good and faithful slave...Enter into the joy of your Master” (Matthew 25:21). But Paul is a great teacher and disciple maker. He knows very well that students and apprentice disciples respond best to praise, not criticism. Think on the things you or those around you can hang a hat on. Focus on the strengths, the positives, and make them stronger.

#### Verse 9

- Paul wraps all of vs. 8 up in this single sentence.
- “Take what I have taught you about Jesus and what it means to be His disciple.” He has given them the tradition handed down to him from the original Apostles. He has given them his years of experience of sorting out the details of what it means to be Christian. And these are the things that the mother church in Jerusalem has agreed to, that Peter and John and the other Apostles have agreed to. Here is the pure Gospel.
- So in all the Philippians have learned, received, heard, and saw in Paul, “practice these things.” It is as if he didn’t what more there was to say. It’s like a sergeant whose been training a combat unit for a year, just minutes before they go into combat for the first time. “Remember your training. Remember what I’ve taught you. You’ll be fine.”
- Align yourself with God and He will be with you (Hebrews 4:16).
- “...the God of peace...”: This is Paul favorite title for God. He uses it throughout his New Testament epistles. For Paul, peace was always an active thing, that which actively sought a person’s greatest good, sought their most secure well-being. This is the peace of right relationships. When you are with your dearest friend or family member, the one you enjoy the most, this is the peace Paul speaks of here. Therefore, if Jesus is our dearest friend, if we are His good and faithful slaves, then we always have peace when we are with Him.