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Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus

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Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:12-18

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.

Philippians 2:5-11

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 3:1

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

We thank God that we can gather together to await and seek after the Lord. Brothers and sisters, we all know that the theme of this conference is how we can live out God's purpose. We thank the Lord that we know we live for God's purpose. But what is God's purpose? How can we live out God's purpose? It is God who allows us to have such a heart desire to wait before Him. According to the brethren's arrangement, I was given this burden: Through sharing on the Book of Philippians, we will find out how we can live out the purpose of God.

We thank and praise our Lord, even though I am full of shortcomings and weaknesses, one thing I find very satisfying is that every time when I serve the Lord, I seem to forget that my days are short on this earth. This kind of thoughts does not bother me. I thought in my heart, "Am I strong enough to do this?" Brothers and sisters also asked me, "Are you strong enough to do this?" Thank the Lord. I said, "I am not strong enough. But even until today, I find that whenever the Lord puts me in a position to serve, I have strength that I don't know where it comes from. I just have this feeling in my heart: It is the sustaining power of the Lord's life. It is the provision of grace that draws me. When our hearts are focused on the Lord, we will not look at our own weaknesses and foolishness, and we will not consider our own shortcomings and the fact that we are nobody. The Lord will manifest Himself and we will know how to follow the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, when you come to the conference, you might wonder if there is any new topic and material you can learn this time. I dare say you may not be able to find anything new. But brothers and sisters do not look lightly upon them. Even though the words are repetitive and we have heard them before, that does not mean we have already learnt them before the Lord.

When the Lord gave me the burden to look at the topic in the Book of Philippians, He has first given me the answer. When we study the Book of Philippians, what is the impression we gain from this book? Joy. You need to be someone who rejoices. It is because as we read the Book of Philippians, you will find Paul repeatedly told the brethren to rejoice. Even at the end, Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" Therefore, the Book of Philippians reminds us to rejoice in the Lord always. Brothers and sisters, I wondered if you have thought about when Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to write this book, does this book truly teaches us to always rejoice while we live on this earth? Are we not joyous enough? Do we need to rejoice more? Are these words superfluous? But if we read the Book of Philippians a few more times and consider it more, naturally we can see the intention of this book is not to tell us to rejoice. We ought to rejoice because we are in Christ. But the Book of Philippians is not to tell us to rejoice, it tells us what the basis of our joy is.

Why did Paul tell the brethren to rejoice and to rejoice again? This had to do with a very serious matter. I would like to start from the beginning of the establishment of the church in Philippi and then to look at why Paul wrote such a letter at this particular time. Rejoice, and again I will say, rejoice! Brothers and sisters, when Paul wrote this letter, did Paul himself rejoice? I believe

brothers and sister know where Paul was when he wrote the Book of Philippians. He was in a prison. While he was in prison, he wrote several letters around the same period of time and had them sent to the brethren. In general we call them the Prison Letters.

Even though Paul was in prison, what he wrote was heavenly. Then we must ask, “Paul, you remind the brothers and sisters at Philippi to rejoice always, are you rejoicing in prison?” I will not answer for Paul as his words already gave us an answer. Paul said that God was his witness that he was filled with joy every time he thought of the brothers and sisters. Others may ask, “Paul, can you still rejoice now that you are in prison? You don’t seem to have any assurance concerning your future, can you still rejoice?” Paul did not say anything else but just plainly told them that he rejoiced. He gave us one of the reasons: He was filled with joy in the remembrance of brothers and sisters.

How was the church in Philippi built up? When Paul was preaching the gospel in Philippi, where did he find God’s children? Brothers and sisters, we know full well that there was not even one brother or sister in Philippi at that time. Paul carried with him the gospel to Philippi and he did some investigation and found some brothers and sisters, mostly sisters, seeking after God by the river. So Paul went there, and the gospel was spread. By the request of those who accepted the Lord, Paul stayed at Philippi to continue to preach the word of the Lord. His preaching brought about the opposition of the enemy. As a result, Paul was put into prison. We thank the Lord, while Paul was in prison, he was not affected by the circumstance because of the Lord’s presence. Through their praises and worship in prison, even though there were just two of them, we thank the Lord that the prison was shaken and something happened. The jailer believed in the Lord that night and brought Paul to his home. The jailer’s whole household also believed in the Lord. We thank and praise our God. For this event of the jailer believing in the Lord, the Bible uses these words as a testimony: “Rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.” Brothers and sisters take note, the church in Philippi was established under great joy.

But shortly after this church was established, there was persecution upon the church in a matter of days. Paul was led away from Philippi. After a long period of time, when Paul was once again in jail in Rome, he wrote these Prison Letters. The letter he wrote to the church in Philippi was very meaningful. Why do I say it was meaningful? If we look at the beginning of the letter, to whom was it addressed? I have received many letters and it is always my name at the top of the letter, and there will be names of other brothers and sisters if they are included in the letter. Or, it will be some greetings at the end of the letter. And the greetings will include me and the brothers and sisters who are with me. But if you look at the Book of Philippians, this is the only book that has salutation written in this way. In the beginning, it does not address the bishops or the deacons, but to the brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters, there is a very weighty theme here. It is not only for the elders and the bishops to pay attention, nor for the deacons to pay attention, but it is for all the brothers and sisters, as long as you are in Christ, to pay attention.

What are they to pay attention to? To live in peace. You need to seek what is better. It is to seek God's satisfaction. We thank God, even in the very beginning of the Book of Philippi, there is something very precious hidden. That made me wonder why Paul began the book this way. The church of Philippi was in joy from the beginning. Even though the church encountered hardship, the hardship did not cause them to lose her joy.

The word of the Lord testified for the church in Philippi, "in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now." As Paul continued on in the letter, he mentioned again about their work in the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel brought joy to them, and they spread the gospel because of their joy. So it would lead us to think the church in Philippi should be a church full of joy. A brother once shared, "When Paul was serving among the gentiles, he cried every time he thought of the church in Corinth but he smiled every time he thought of the church in Philippi." I thought it was interesting when I heard that. Gradually as I read more of God's word, I found that either way is not complete. It is not that Paul did not have those emotions when he thought of the two churches, but it was not that he cried every time he thought of the church in Corinth but he smiled every time he thought of the church in Philippi. I think Paul carried with him a heavy heart in order for the church in Corinth to return to her joy. For the church in Philippi, Paul told them that they were living in joy, but when Paul saw their conditions, it seemed that the joy is only on the surface but not on the inside. That was the reason Paul repeatedly told them to rejoice in the book. You ought to maintain your joy because you have already entered into joy in the very beginning. Why is that now you have let something get inside of you and cause you to lose your joy? This causes us to pay careful attention to the reason Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians. Of course the feelings within Paul was not made up by Paul, it was under the examination and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the Lord that Paul was given these thoughts. As a result, through the letter to the Philippians, Paul shared his feelings with the brothers and sisters.

So what did the Lord want Paul to say? On the surface of the letters, we see: Rejoice! In reality, Paul told them very clearly, "Brothers and sisters, you are not quite touching the heart of God. You are doing many right things on the outside but you are heavy-laden on the inside." I once heard a brother describing a sister like this: The way she smiled was sadder than the way she cried. How could this happen? It is because if the heavy burden within you is not removed, if the disturbance within has not stopped, even if there are outward matters that cause you to rejoice for a while, the heavy burden remains the same. We may be able to smile, but we still look like we are crying when we smile, and may look even worse than when we cry.

Brothers and sisters, if we understand this, we then can understand why Paul repeatedly told the brothers and sister to rejoice throughout the letter. Paul began with things that happened in the past, and then he spoke about the Lord himself. After finish speaking about the Lord, he spoke about all the grace the Lord had bestowed upon the brothers and sisters, and he brought out the purpose of the letter at the end. Rejoice. Again, I say, rejoice! Then we understand the brothers

and sisters in Philippi only had joy outwardly but in reality had to force themselves to appear to be joyous. What was the reason? It seemed Paul did not reveal it openly but he pointed out their conditions for them to understand.

In chapter 2, Paul shared with the brothers and sisters the path the Lord has walked on. He said, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." What does it mean by having the same attitude as Christ Jesus? It is to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. For us who follow the Lord, we cannot only see these things externally if we are to continue to express the mercy, grace, and abundance which are given by God. If we only have outward encounter, we can only touch on outward things. That is why we see this often: when brothers and sisters are without problems, we may feel rather joyous; but when we encounter hardships, we may not say it out loud, but there is a thought within us: God, why me? God, why do you let me encounter this hardship?

Brothers and sisters, this is the experience we all had. We can only live in God's blessing and peace, but we cannot live in the hardships that are permitted by God. When we encounter them, we murmur. Why me, God? Why me? We may say to the Lord, "Why don't You let him encounter this? Why me?" Paul may not have been so straight forward in pointing out our inner condition but he brought God's children back to God's presence. Look at how our Lord spent His days on earth. If we truly are someone who follows the Lord, we truly need the Lord's mercy to live out the life that we ought to live. Paul said: Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. What is that attitude? When the Lord encountered these things, what did He think? How did the Lord take care of these problems?

We thank the Lord. These words are very simple, yet they are very substantial. They are so substantial that we cannot bear it. If we are to let the Lord's mind to fill us, we cannot bear it. Do we understand what the mind of the Lord is? What are the thoughts of our Lord? How does the Lord make a decision before He acts? After He finishes something, how does He feel? Brothers and sisters, these are not the things we usually think about. But Paul brings the mind of God's children back to the Lord's presence: Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. What is the difference between living in true peace and joy and living in an imperfect peace or joy?

Let us look at our Lord Himself. Paul told us that the Lord had a very clear proclamation while He was living on earth. Firstly, He did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. In our Lord's heart, regardless what He faced, whether it was flattery, trampling, praises or hurtful words. He did not react to them. His first reaction was, "God, this is your arrangement and I will take it from your hands. If man wants to trample on me, I will let them trample on me. You desire for me to go to the earth and become a man, a very ordinary man, the most ordinary man of all men. There is not even a clean place for my birth but a manger." Did the Lord say, "Father, did You forget that I was the only begotten Son in Your bosom?" Did the Lord question

the Father? We thank the Lord, our Lord did not resist. Our Lord said, "Lord, if you want me to go, I will go."

God not only let the Lord see that He would be a helpless baby lying in the manger, but He also told the Lord no one would respect Him when grew up. When the Lord spoke for God, man would oppose Him to His face. They would oppose Him to a point that they would crucify Him on the cross. Did the Lord say to the Father, "How can it be? I am the only begotten Son in Your bosom. I am the Lord of life. All things on earth were created in My hands. I allow them to live, I give them life, and the origin of life is in Me. Now You are telling me to be crucified on the cross? What is this? It is death taking over life. How can this be? This can happen to others but how can this happen to me? Father, do you really want me to accept this?"

Brothers and sisters, did the Lord say anything? No. When our Lord was crucified on the cross, one of His prayers was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is the mind of our Lord. We thank our Lord. He always focuses on whatever the Father's will is, His will is also the same. One thing that is very important: What do you gain by doing all these? There is no satisfaction to you in all these things. It is all the Lord's giving. Whatever the Lord had, He gave. God said, "It is right for you to give." And the Lord said, "Yes. It is right for me to give." This is so precious, so precious to a point that the Lord has given up Himself completely. This is the mind of our Lord. Regardless of what He encountered, whether good or bad or whether I am exalted or humbled, the Lord never thought about the price He had to pay. Only one thought in Him: If the Father desires so, I will accept it. The Lord gave up Himself entirely without any reservation. We truly thank our God.

About 100 years ago, the Lord gave the brothers and sisters in the United States a great revival. During that revival, there was this phrase prevailing among the brothers and sisters: What would Jesus do? When the children of God are awakened within, whatever circumstance they encounter, whether good or bad, the first thought they have is: what would Jesus do? We thank God. Why would they be like this? It is because the Lord's mind has become theirs. This thought caused them not to think about their gains, but how they could express God Himself more and more. If it pleases God, I would follow. If it displeases God, I would stop. We truly thank God. Have this mindset in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. That is the mind of Christ.

There is hardly any time that we do not think about ourselves first. It is only when we are at our wits end then we will think of the Lord. This is our condition. But Paul said we ought to learn to have the same mind as our Lord. Are we then not going to lose ourselves completely if we do this? If we can be brought to a point to lose ourselves completely, this is most wonderful. But we have to admit, we have reservation in losing ourselves completely. We thank the Lord that His thoughts did not stop here. His thoughts continued on until the purpose was fulfilled, that is, all the glory be to the Father. These few simple words bring us to the glory that draws us. How

could Paul write these letters that were so high, full of grace, and so rich was he was in prison? If we are to compare Paul's situation at that time with the messages of the few letters, we will find one hidden matter that is in the Book of Philippians which Paul did not spell out. That is a very important matter we often overlook.

What does the mind of Christ focus on? It is that I must fulfill God's will. I must complete God's will. When we say that we are also willing to follow the Lord's will, what do we truly esteem highly in our hearts? What is God's eternal will? What does God desire to fulfill among men? What does God want to manifest in this universe? We must be clear on these before we can follow well. Brothers and sisters, these are indeed great topics and also the theme at this conference. These are not set by us but they are the burdens and prompting from the Lord. Each brother is just sharing a little piece of this theme and our elderly brother will give us a comprehensive understanding.

Then, what is the eternal will of God? If we do not know about God's eternal will, what is the purpose of us receiving the gospel today? It seems that it is only for us not to go to hell but be able to go to heaven. This is a common thinking among the early Christians. Among the Christians nowadays, this thinking may not be as prevalent but many are still influenced by this kind of thinking. We thank our Lord. When the Lord saved us, He has placed us in His eternal will. We must then pay attention to what God's eternal will is. This is a grand topic. The entire Bible talks about this topic.

When we speak about the eternal will of God, brothers and sisters must have had this experience: Shortly after you believed in the Lord, you were drawn by God to a certain degree; but when it came to choosing God's will completely, you could only pay lip service. We have all gone through this stage. Some can quickly depart from this stage and enter into a higher ground; for others, it may take a longer time. Regardless, we cannot remain at that stage. This is unavoidable for all of us. After we believe in the Lord, we have this desire to follow God's will. The desire is right but the goal may not necessarily be right and the content of this desire may not be right. Or, maybe the goal and the content are both right but they are still imperfect.

Let me give you an example. Long time ago when I was in Hong Kong, a brother whom I had not seen for a long time, came to visit me from China. We had much to talk about. He came to visit me at noon time and we spoke for a long time until dinner time. I said to my brother, "Brother, since we have not finishing talking to each other, please stay for dinner and we can continue to fellowship." My brother said, "I cannot give you an answer right now. I will give you an answer later." That was about 6 o'clock in the afternoon. We continued on for a little longer and he went to the bathroom. After he came out of the bathroom, he told me he could stay for dinner. He said, "The Lord has agreed for me to stay for dinner tonight." I then realized earlier he was seeking an answer from the Lord whether he should stay for dinner. We cannot say his intention was wrong. It was a good intention but he did not touch the will of God. It is

because very often when we talk about the will of God, we place God's will in the people, events, and matters that we are facing now. But the Lord does not want us to remain at this stage to learn to follow God's will. God wants us to learn what He is doing in this universe.

We praise and thank our God. What God desires to do is for all things summed up in Christ one day. This is not something we thought about when we first believed in the Lord. All we thought about was how we could be blessed by the Lord. For those who are more mature, they would think about how they could live a life that is pleasing to God. Both have to do with our everyday lives. But if we are brought by God to see matters of the Lord, then we would understand that God is working in the universe in order to bring all things before Him. All creations are rebelling against God presently.

Even though our origin is in God, we do not want God. Using all means, we try to shut God out. But from the Old to the New Testament, God continues to do one thing, which is to bring all things that are lost, including man, back to Himself. Just like Paul said, after all things are done, all the glory will be God's. Through much arrangement and work, God brought part of the people back to Himself, but He did not stop here. God does not only want a few people but He desires for the whole universe. It is all things. We confess that we do not have such capacity but the Lord is bringing us to such capacity. That is why we need to have the same mind as Christ.

God has done much work throughout history. The first half of the Bible is called the Old Testament. God has done much in the Old Testament. Now we are in the New Testament time. Regardless of the Old or the New Testament, the way God works may not be the same, the emphasis of His work may not be the same, but the focal point does not change. In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites to focus their sight on the kingdom of priests. What is the kingdom of priests for? It is to let God bring all the land back to Himself. In Exodus 19, we can see this very clearly through the words spoken to the Israelites by Moses. Even though God was facing the Israelites, His heart was toward all the land.

In the New Testament, it seems that God has replaced the guidance of the Law with the grace of redemption. It seems that God has changed the way He works. But has the purpose of God's work changed? Has the content changed? No. When we take note of the Lord's teaching in the New Testament, especially in the Book of Ephesians, we can see clearly what God desires to do in the universe. It is true that through the grace of redemption God brings back some who desire to seek after Him but God is not satisfied in this. Through this small number of people, God wishes to expand His work. When we pay attention to the New Testament, we can see that God does not satisfy in the salvation of individuals. God rejoices when someone is saved because someone has returned to Him. God's heart does not stop here. His desire is for the whole universe. Gradually we will see that even though God saves us one by one, He does not want us to live as individuals.

After we are saved, maybe we have received help and support from some brothers and sisters, but more importantly we do have a desire to grow. We cannot remain as children forever. We need to grow and mature. Very naturally we want to pursue. Is the Lord satisfied when there is a group of brothers and sisters looking to the Him and pursuing after Him together? Is the will of the Lord accomplished? We all know the answer but we may not dare to say it out loud. He is not satisfied. It is because God's will is not just for a few to return to Him. What did He declared?

“I will build my church upon this rock. The gates of Hades will not overpower it.” Brothers and sisters, we can see the Lord is to do one thing on earth, and the result of this is that He will build His church upon this rock. What is this rock? It is the Christ who resurrected from death. What is the function of the church that is built upon this rock? Clearly it is to put an end to the power of death. We thank God. This is the first step of where God wants to lead us through God's work in the New Testament by the grace of His redemption. We who had no relationship with God, who were awaiting death, because of the grace of God's redemption, can return to God. Not only do we return by ourselves, it is the many children of God returning to God. Surely God's heart will be satisfied? Brothers and sisters, this is what we thought. But when the word of God was opened up, we will see God's heart is still not satisfied. You may say, “Is God's heart too big that He cannot be satisfied?” It is not because God's heart is too big but God Himself is big. We should ask why our hearts are so small. We are satisfied when we see what is before us. But when we read the Book of Ephesians, we will see right away that through God's redemptive grace in the New Testament, He is to bring man back before Him in order to become a corporate man. This corporate man is called the body of Christ. Once we are connected with Christ, we become the body of Christ. Perhaps this will satisfy God?

But when we read the Book of Ephesians, we see that this glorious church is still not God's greatest satisfaction. God will first gain the church and then brings in something even greater. Without first finishing His work in the church, God cannot bring which that is greater, more glorious, and to fully display which is the weightiest in His heart. Strictly speaking, from the time of the Pentecost when Peter and the brothers started the church in Jerusalem until the time before our Lord returns, when all people are together they become the glorious church which God wants to gain. What position does this glorious church occupy in God's heart? This multitude of people which we cannot number, together with the heavenly hosts we cannot number, still cannot be counted as *all* people. We can only say that we are still a small group among all the people throughout time and space. What does God call this small group? This group of people who have appeared in history was called “who are the first to hope in Christ”. This is very precious. We thank the Lord. We cannot leave out the word “hope” in this verse because God is to have all that are in Him to gain glory and riches and this group of people are the one who are first to receive the glory and riches.

We thank God that we are placed in this position. We are the one who are the first to hope in Christ. What is the purpose of putting us in this position? The text before this verse tells us: in the fullness of the times, God will sum up of all things in Christ. All that is created by God's hands will return to God. All will submit before God and will confess that God is worthy of all the glory, honor, and riches. God is the only one who is worthy to be worshipped. We can then see this church is the focal point of God's work during this age. We are placed in this focal point, and God is to build us up to the point that not only do we have the position, we also have the reality. The reality is that we are the ones who are the first to hope in Christ. The purpose of this is to bring all things back to God.

This glorious will of God is to build up the church and to build the church up to become the ones who are to first hope in Christ. And this will allow God's eternal purpose to step forward, and the kingdom of the Lord will descend. The descent of the Lord's kingdom is not yet the end. After the kingdom ends, God will usher in a new heaven and a new earth. God will manifest the New Jerusalem. All the earth and the universe will bow before God's glory and authority and give Him praise. Brothers and sisters, this is the eternal will of God. Today, we are placed by God in this position that we are the ones who are to first hope in Christ.

In the recent years, we have been directing brothers and sisters' attention at how the church must be built into completion in God's arrangement. Why is that? It is because if there is any disruption and damage during this stage when we are to be built up to become the ones who are to first hope in Christ, even though it will not hinder God's will from going forward, it will evidently delay the completion of God's eternal will.

So if we are able to have some understanding of God's eternal will, we will see why Paul's words in the Book of Philippians tell us we need to have the same mind as Christ and the reason why we need to rejoice and rejoice again. They tell us we ought to depart from all the hidden burden and hindrances, and to be brought by the Lord into the reality of being in Christ. Not merely is our position in Christ, our reality ought to be in Christ also. But our conditions are so far off from God's will, how can this be accomplished? We thank the Lord, when we read the Prison Letters, we read in Ephesians that the church is the body of Christ, and in Colossians we read that Christ is the head of the church, and this is the relationship between Christ and the church. In Philippians, there seems to have nothing left to say. Christ is the head and the church is the body. Both are covered. What is left? The Books of Ephesians and Colossians show us our position and identity, and the Book of Philippians tells us to live out the reality of our position and identity. Brothers and sisters, if we have the understanding of Ephesians and Colossians, we are correct in our knowledge. But without Philippians, this is only head knowledge, and we have not lived out the relationship between the head and the body. We thank the Lord for placing the Book of Philippians in between and therefore fill the gap. Paul told us that we need to have the same mind as Christ. He stated very clearly that the brethren were

already starting to learn the lesson as they knew it was God who was in them for His good pleasure.

The Book of Colossians shows us Christ is the head and Ephesians shows us the church is the body. How is the union between the head and the body manifested? Remember this, brothers and sisters, did the Lord wash the disciples' feet at the last supper with them? The Lord pointed this out: Love one another and others will know that you are my disciples. Brothers and sisters, this is what the Book of Philippians requires of us. The head is right, the body is clear, but we cannot have the members of the body not working coordinately and are not connected with one another and not jointly fitted together.

Can the body be manifested? The Book of Philippians is to deal with this problem. Even though the church in Philippi had not departed from the Lord's work since the beginning, what was reason she still could not fully enjoy the rest and peace given by the Lord? What was the problem? The problem was that the children of God did not live in an accurate relationship with one another. They were all in the body but they could not manifest the functions of the members of the body. The members did not work coordinately and this caused a heavy burden in their hearts. Having a heavy burden internally and therefore they could not express their joy externally. So Paul said, "Rejoice and I say rejoice!" How can they rejoice? Bring all the problems among the children of God before God, let each member stand in his position and manifests his function so that the body can grow.

God shows us the building up of the church is a very important spiritual matter. If the building of the church is accomplished, the kingdom can come. But if the kingdom does not come, a new heaven and a new earth will be far away. We thank our Lord; He shows us before the coming of the kingdom, He will first build up the church. Once the church is built, the kingdom will come. If the church is not built, the coming of the kingdom will be delayed. Brothers and sisters, may the Lord truly show us our role in God's eternal will. When God works in us in such a way, Satan will not rejoice with us. On the contrary, He will try to take away our joy by creating all kinds of problems among the members of the body. When there is problem with one member, it is not the problem of just one member; it is the problem of the whole body. In the past I often used this analogy: We have all experienced a tooth ache. What is the big matter of having a tooth ache? Only a small tooth. But you will understand if you have experienced it. Even though it is a small tooth, it causes your whole being to suffer. We cannot eat comfortably, we cannot rest comfortably, and we cannot even work comfortably. It is very easy to understand. As soon as a member has problems, the body will definitely be affected. For the body to be built up, the members of the body must live correctly. This is the problem the church in Philippi must take care of. My time is up today and I must stop here.

Next time, we will look at how Satan deals with the church, how the children of God live in the body according to God's arrangement, how we can live out the coordination of the members of

the body so that the position of the head can be completely manifested. We thank God, no matter what schemes Satan uses to hinder God's work on earth, we can see clearly that the Lord has already opened up the way for us and we only need to follow Him and go forward, until the heart of the Lord is satisfied. Just as Paul who said that he forgot what was behind and only pressed on forward toward the goal, and he could rejoice when the will of God was completely accomplished in him. Not only did Paul rejoice, he also rejoiced with God and the brothers and sisters. Today, we also face the same problem. When the Lord shows us His will, may we hold fast to Him as our head and we follow Him. How do we follow? Not that you go your way and I go mine. There is only one way: working coordinately in the body and to manifest our functions in order to bring forth the completion of God's glorious will.

Prayer: Lord, may You bring us into the light of your words. Under the enlightenment of your words, we confess how we have hindered Your work because of our foolishness and ignorance. But we thank you, Lord, even though we are foolish, You deliver us from all hindrances and lead us forward according to the Father's will. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, may our Lord bring us into the light of your words, so that we can follow Your life's government and guidance and can go forward boldly. We do not ask for anything else but that Your will be accomplished upon us, not as individuals, but as the body of Christ. May the Lord have mercy upon us and lead us into the body and live out the practicality of the body. All the glory, worship, thanksgiving, adoration and praises to our Lord and our God Father. We look unto You and pray this in our Lord Jesus Christ's name. Amen.