

Exhort 8 April 2007 - Paul's letter to the Philippian Ecclesia

2007年4月8日劝勉词——腓立比书

Dear bre. & sis., let us ask ourselves the question, what is our first reaction when we read the statement of the apostle Paul, “*Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved*”(Phil. 4:1)? Or again, what are our impressions when we read, “*For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ*” (ch. 1:8)? Surely we are immediately impressed with the apostle Paul's love for this ecclesia. But are we also aware that these are but two of many such expressions? This epistle has been aptly termed an “epistle of brotherly love” for it abounds in thoughts of love, thanksgiving and encouragement. The apostle stresses his affection for them, e.g. the **verses 3 to 8 of ch. 1** emphasise time and time again his profound feelings for them, such is the magnitude of his love. But these are not just words or platitudes. **Ch. 1:8** says, “*For God is my record*”. This is a genuine love. And they loved him. So great was their wholehearted support for the imprisoned apostle that he writes this profound letter of gratitude.

亲爱的弟兄姐妹，让我们自己问一个问题，当我们在读保罗书信的时候第一反应是什么？“我所亲爱所想念的弟兄们，你们就是我的喜乐，我的冠冕。我亲爱的弟兄，你们应当靠主站立得稳。”（腓立比书：4：1）再有，当我们读到这样的章节的时候又有什么感觉？“我体会基督耶稣的心肠，切切地想念你们众人。这是神可以给我作见证的。”（腓立比书：1：8）很自然我们能感觉到保罗对整个教会深深地爱。腓立比书也因为字里行间包含了许多的爱、感恩和鼓励而被称作“爱之书信”。书信中保罗强烈表达了这种对信徒们的爱，在一章的 3-8 节反复强调了这样的情感，这是一种巨大的爱意。但这并不仅仅只是说说而已。1：8 节说道：“我体会基督耶稣的心肠，切切地想念你们众人。这是神可以给我作见证的。”这里指的是一种对信徒的博爱，因为他们全心的支持着在监狱中的保罗所以保罗心怀感激的写下了这封意义深远的书信。

We naturally ask ourselves the next question, why is this so? And the answer is a real exhortation for us – for by assessing the qualities of those Philippian bre and sisters, as revealed by the Word we can examine ourselves, and if there are any deficiencies within us, we can resolve to do what we can, to build up ourselves and our ecclesia towards the example set by the Philippian bre. & sis.

下面我们自然会问自己这样的问题，为什么会这样呢？答案正好是对我们的劝勉——因着神的话语对腓立比信徒们的评价，我们也可以因着神的话语来省察自我，如果有什么欠缺，我们就可以按着自己的能力下定决心再多做一点，使我们自己和自己的教会朝着腓立比的信徒所立的榜样前进。

Firstly, let us consider their status in Christ. The city of Philippi had strong affinity with Rome as a Roman colony granted many privileges and of high reputation in the empire (see **Acts 16:12**). The citizens were proud of the privileges of their citizenship (see **v. 21**). Yet Paul appeals to the bre. & sis. living in that city to lift their minds to the citizenship in heaven “*from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*” (**Phil. 3:20**). What does Paul mean? Let's note the contrast between v.19 and v.20. Paul is contrasting two attitudes of life.

首先，我们来看一下他们属基督的情况。腓立比城和罗马有强烈的联系，因为罗马的殖民使得这个城市在整个罗马帝国有很高的声望（使徒行传 16：12）。当地的人为他们在哪里取得这种市民的特权而骄傲（21 节）。于是保罗就呼吁居住在那里的弟兄姐妹要把的意识升高到看自己是属天的国民“*我们却是天上的国民。并且等候救主，就是主耶稣基督，从天上降临。*”（腓立比书 3：20）那保罗的意思是什么呢？大家注意来对比一下 19、20 节，保罗就两种人生态度做了对比。

The bre. & sis. knew that their Roman society was but carnal and temporal. By way of contrast to their city, these bre. & sis. were encouraged to lift their minds above, to that of God's commonwealth, God's laws, and His plan and calling. They were encouraged to look beyond

their own environment. In **ch.1:27** Paul exhorts them that their conversation (Grk. Politeuma - "manner of life") "*be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ...that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel*". Clearly he wants them (and us!) to act as citizens worthy of the Gospel, to be aware at all times of their privileged relationships and status in Christ's ecclesia. ,

那里的弟兄姐妹知道整个罗马是非常世俗的，与此相反的是信徒们被鼓励提高自己的思想意识，思考的是属神的事物，神的律法，神的计划和呼召。他们所关注的超越了他们所处的环境。在一章 27 节保罗教导了他们正确的生活态度，“*只要你们行事为人与基督的福音相称。叫我或来见你们，或不在你们那里，可以听见你们的景况，知道你们同有一个心志，站立得稳，为所信的福音齐心努力。*”很显然他希望腓立比的信徒（或者今天的我们）所言所行能与福音的样式相称，时刻都能意识到他们在基督的教会中这种特别的领受恩惠的关系和地位。

This means that we don't get caught up in any show of patriotic pride in our own country, but rather to Christ's coming Kingdom and our position as future citizens of that kingdom. So, bre. & sis. let's lift our minds above earthly things, as Paul reminds us in **Col. 3:1-4**. What a glorious prospect! Here is a wonderful future greater than anything the world could offer. With sincere thankfulness we realize that our "citizenship" in Christ is promised by God, and related to our solemn vow at baptism (**Rom. 6:3-6,10-13,18**). Let us be worthy citizens belonging to Christ and to each other. We must realize at all times that we are in this world but "*not of it*"; that we "*render unto Caesar*" what obligations we have as law-abiding citizens but our greater loyalty is to Christ, our risen Lord and therefore we ought, at all times, for conscience sake to "*obey God rather than men*" (**Acts 5:29**). Our allegiance is to Him and it is from His right hand that we await our King. We look ahead for the establishment of his kingdom, soon to be built on the ruins of man's society.

这就意味着我们不能在自己国家特别的追求这种民族自豪感，而要努力关注基督的复临和我们作为天国的子民的身份。所以亲爱的弟兄姐妹，我们需要提高自己的意识，不要顾念这地上的事，就像保罗在哥罗西 3: 1-4 中提醒我们什么才是真正荣耀的全景！那是一个美好的未来，比这世界现在能给与的任何东西都要好。怀着感激我们意识到这种属基督的国民的身份是神允许的，这与我们在受洗的时候所做出的庄严的宣告紧密相连（罗马书：6: 3-6, 10-13, 18）。让我们成为一个属基督的有价值的公民。大家需要记住我们一直都居住在这个世界上但都“不属于这个世界”，“当还给凯撒”这句话意味着我们要遵守这个世界的律法，但我们更高的忠诚是献给基督我们复活的主，所以我们总要问心无愧的服从神，而非人（使徒行传 5: 29）。我们的忠心总因该归给他，并且等待着坐在他的右手边的王的到来。也总是期待着神国的建立，就是在属人的社会的废墟中重建。

We need not feel isolated or at a disadvantage with such an attitude. We have no cause to be ashamed because of our worldly critics. If we but imagined it we could open our ears and hear the cheering on from the bre. & sis. of the past. If we but looked around us we could see by the eye of faith the angels of Yahweh protecting us. We can then call to mind many examples of faithful brethren & sisters who have all renounced their earthly status and sought after an everlasting citizenship in God's Kingdom.

我们不应该感到孤立或是被动，也不要因为周围的批评、偏见而感到羞愧。让我们假想一下可以听到以前的信徒们的欢呼，也可以看到周围的天使一直都在看顾我们，于是我们就能想到许多忠信的弟兄姐妹的例子，他们都能从世俗中区别开来而追求永恒的神国。

One such example is the father of the faithful – Abraham (**Heb.11:10,13-16**). Let's resolve brethren & sisters, like Abraham, to seek an inheritance in that "city". Very soon our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ shall return from heaven bringing with him an amazing change to our lives and our bodies changed to be like his glorious body (**Phil. 3:21**). Let us then be ever conscious of our responsibility to be citizens worthy of the precious Gospel, like Abraham, looking above the

temporal to the coming of an eternal inheritance. Let us show our allegiance to that kingdom by *“standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel”*.

其中一个例子就是被称作是信心之父的亚伯拉罕（希伯来 11: 10, 13-16）。让我们决心像亚伯拉罕一样，追求未来的神国。我们的救主很快就要从天降临到这世界，那时我们的生命和我们的身体也将要改变，像主一样带有荣耀（腓立比书 3: 21）。就让我们时刻的记住我们的责任，行事要与福音相称，就像亚伯拉罕，轻看世俗的东西，一心追求永恒的神国。让我们在这样的盼望中表现出忠诚。 *“知道你们同有一个心志，站立得稳，为所信的福音齐心努力。”*（腓立比书：1: 27）

Let us now consider the high example set by the members of this Philippian ecclesia, an example that we would all do well to emulate. As we do so we will be impressed by their spiritual progress in the Truth, by their maturity and by their generosity. We shall find ourselves wondering how we compare with them. Let's look to them as an example, encouraging us to lift ourselves to their standard, to bind ourselves together as a united ecclesia. By doing so Paul can, this morning, speak to us all as he does to them. Yes, Paul does write to them ALL. He emphasizes the word “all” 9 times when writing to this ecclesia and 6 of those are in chapter 1. He doesn't single out brethren & sisters like Lydia or the jailor but rather all of them. In **ch. 1:1** he does mention the bishops and deacons – quite possibly this group got together and arranged a fund raising appeal for the gift conveyed by one of their members, Epaphroditus, to Paul imprisoned in Rome. ,

让我们思考一下腓立比教会为我们所竖立的榜样，这些都是值得我们效仿的。渐渐的我们能感受到他们在真理中灵性的长进，他们的成熟和慷慨。在与他们比较的时候我们当自我省察，然后以他们为榜样，从中得到鼓励达到他们的标准，紧密地联系在一起成为一个团结的教会。保罗在书信中对他们这样的劝勉今天也成为对我们的劝勉。而这是保罗对他们所有人写的，“所有”这个词在这封书信中用过 9 次，而又 6 次都出现在了第一章。他并不是特指的哪一个弟兄姐妹，比如说吕底亚和狱卒，而是所有的人。在一章一节他提到了长老和执事，很可能就是他们在一起筹集资金购买了礼物让其中一人以巴弗提送给了在罗马监狱中的保罗。

These were very committed, selfless brethren & sisters. Consider Lydia, a woman of substance, generous and hospitable. The jailor who would never forget those amazing events when Paul and Silas who had been singing praises when beaten in the jail, brought salvation to him and to his household. Think of Luke assisting the ecclesia to grow spiritually after the departure of Paul and Silas. This was “good soil” in which the Gospel seed would grow and flourish. Yet it was God who was working in them (**Phil. 1:6, 2:13**). Paul doesn't claim any personal credit. Brethren & sisters do we acknowledge that it is God who grants the increase to our labours, that we are co-labourers with God? What a privilege to cooperate with the will of Almighty God!!

这些都是非常忠心的，无私的弟兄姐妹。就像吕底亚，慷慨而热情。而那里的狱卒永远也忘不了保罗和西拉在监狱中受苦待时还高声用诗歌称赞神的奇妙经历，接着他们和家人也从保罗和西拉那里得到了救赎的福音。在保罗和西拉离开之后路加一直在那里帮助教会的成长。于是这里就成为了非常好的土壤，福音的种子在那里生根发芽并兴旺，这是因为神与他们同工的原故。（腓立比书 1: 6, 2: 13）这里保罗并没有强调任何个人的功劳。弟兄姐妹们，我们是否意识到了是神让我们长进，并给予了我们做工的能力，也就是说我们一直都与神同工。能够符合全能者的意愿是多么大的福分啊！！

Even though there was a dispute between two sisters that worried Paul (**ch. 4:2**) he appeals for reconciliation and ecclesial peace. He was deeply concerned for unity (**ch. 1:27, 2:2-4**) but there cannot be an enduring peace in ecclesial life unless there is the mind of Christ governing our lives, our thoughts, our speech and our actions (**ch. 2:5**). And in the context of the supreme example of the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul mentions the wonderful, selfless spirit of his son-in-the-faith, Timothy (**ch. 2:20,21**). Totally selfless!! He was prepared to serve the brethren &

sisters with the lowly spirit of a bond slave, not caring for his own state but serving them as he would Christ. That's the mind of Christ in action (**ch. 2:5-11**).

尽管这样仍然有两个姐妹之间的争执困扰着保罗。（4：2）所以保罗试图要重新恢复教会的团结。他非常的看重整个教会的团结（1：27，2：2-4），教会生活要有一种持续的平安，就需要在基督里有一致的心志，思想和言行（2：5），在下文中就集中的阐述了基督为我们所竖立的榜样，接下来保罗又提到了一个例子，就是优秀、无私的提摩太，他是保罗信心上的儿子（2：20，21）。他用一种极其谦卑的奴仆的样式来服侍着其他的弟兄姐妹，他并没有专雇自己的事，而是一心像基督一样侍奉着别人。这就是以基督的心为心的表现（2：5-11）。

Let's take a closer look at one of the brethren who came from this ecclesia and who was taking Paul's thanks back to them – Epaphroditus (**ch. 2:25-30**). This dedicated servant of Christ was not content to simply convey their greetings and their gift to Paul. Whilst with Paul he was prepared to serve Paul almost at the expense of his own life (**v. 30**). So working on behalf of his beloved ecclesia, the work of Christ, seen in the labours of Epaphroditus was progressing - with total disregard for his own comfort and wellbeing. He was so much like his home ecclesia and Paul warmly commended his dedicated spirit. He was almost fulfilling the words of Christ, "*whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it*" and he was prepared to do that, if necessary. Obviously he was valuable to Paul, but Paul was prepared to let him return to Philippi so that he might continue in that dedicated spirit for their benefit back home. But it is truly wonderful that the example of Epaphroditus was typical of this ecclesia as a whole. There was a similar devotion. They gave support to Paul on more than one occasion (**2 Cor. 8:1-5**). But the amazing thing about this ecclesia was that it was not rich! It wasn't easy to give and to give again, and again. The real exhortation is that they not only gave from their meager resources but they gave themselves in willing service (**2 Cor. 8:5**). The apostle Paul was deeply moved by this generous, loving and totally unselfish spirit seeing it as a sweet fragrance, well pleasing to God (**Phil. 4:18**).

下面我们仔细的来留意一下以巴弗提，他被腓立比教会叫去探望保罗，也把保罗的感谢和问候带回腓立比（2：25-30）。这种专心的侍奉并非只是简单对保罗的问候和馈赠，而是全力的侍奉保罗以致于不惜献出自己的生命（30节）。这种代表教会的工作，也是对基督奉献，在以巴弗提所做的工当中展现出来，也不段的在长进，就是在这样的时刻他也没有顾及自身的安危。对此保罗做出了高度的评价，他几乎实现了基督的教导“*谁为我的缘故丧掉生命的必得到生命*”，以巴弗提已经预备好自己这样去做，如果必要的话，显然这对保罗来说是非常有价值的，但后来保罗也让他先回到腓立比，把这种益处带回家，并继续这种属灵的奉献。以巴弗提所树立的榜样也体现了整个教会的团结。他们不只一次的馈赠保罗也表达了同样的爱（哥林多后书 8：1-5），特别要注意的是这个教会并不富足！所以一次次的馈赠保罗对于他们来说并不容易，这其中对于我们的劝勉就是他们献出的并不是丰厚的物质财富，而是一种侍奉的意愿（哥林多后书 8：5）。使徒保罗深深地被他们的慷慨、爱心，无私的精神所感动，就像甜美的馨香一样，献给了神。（腓立比书 4：18）

It is for these and several other reasons that this ecclesia is a cause for joy to Paul (**ch. 4:1**). He remembers them constantly in his prayers (**ch. 1:3,4**). He does have the care of all the ecclesias on his mind daily (**2 Cor. 11:28**) and this one brought him special joy and thanksgiving.

整个腓立比教会有很多的原因让保罗感到非常的喜乐（4：1），他时常的在祷告中惦念着他们（1：3、4），几乎每天都想念过腓立比教会（哥林多后书 11：28），这就带给了保罗巨大的喜乐和感谢。

Here was an ecclesia of different backgrounds and problems, of different temperaments, interests and tastes - and we are no different!! Paul's exhortation applies to us as much as it does to them. Let us blend our capabilities into a oneness in Christ, with Christ and Paul as examples of service to their brethren and sisters.

This letter of brotherly love is an intimate and familiar letter in which the apostle Paul pours out with delight the fullness of his heart for this ecclesia. We read of Paul's confidence in them. Could the same be applied to us? Can we develop the individual and collective ecclesial characteristics shown by the Philippian brethren & sisters? Can we conduct ourselves as citizens worthy of the Gospel? Can we stand fast in one spirit?

这个教会中的成员有着不同的背景和各种问题，经历着不同的试探和诱惑，我们其实也是一样的！所以保罗对他们的劝勉对于我们来说也非常的适用，就让我们在基督里齐心协力，向保罗一样一心的侍奉其他的弟兄姐妹。这封爱之书信读起来是非常亲切劝慰的，保罗对此倾注了巨大的希望和对教会全心的爱，我们看到了保罗对他们的信心。这能否应用在我们的身上呢？我们是否能从腓立比教会所彰显出来的品性来使我们自己或是整个教会得到长进？我们能否用福音的样式来引导我们使我们更像天国的国民？我们是否能在同一个心志中站立的稳？

Yes, brethren & sisters we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (ch. 4:13)!

是的，亲爱的弟兄姐妹，我们能够通过基督得到力量去做所有符合神意愿的事情（4：13）！

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