

# Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

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## The TREE OF LIFE weekly teaching summary from the week ending January 25, 1998

Tree of Life 01/25/98

### Philippians 1:25-27.

Tree of Life for 01-25-98

This week we continued our study in Phi 1 in verses 25 through 27, the corrected translation being; :25 "**Since having this confidence, I fully understand that I shall remain and will be continuing with all of you [Philippians] for the purpose of your spiritual progress and your inner happiness from the source of Bible doctrine.**" :26 "**So that your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus because I'm coming to you again.**"

Believers need their right pastor-teacher in order to grow spiritually. And in spite of the attacks made against Paul and his ministry, God stands behind His man and continues Paul's ministry on earth proving that nothing can be done against the truth, only for it, 2Co 13:8! Paul's ministry continues in spite of the attacks made against him, which attacks apparently God has allowed it to happen for the furtherance of the teaching of Bible doctrine. Paul therefore remains on earth to complete his mission: his triumphal procession as an ultra super-grace believer and to lead others into the same status. Paul realizes his place in history and in God's plan for his life and refuses to let anyone or anything stop him from fulfilling his mission.

The mature believer is a blessing by association not only to those while he is alive, but also after he dies. Spiritual progress and inner happiness comes from one source only, Bible doctrine. Spiritual progress does not come from serving, giving, praying, or fellowship, doctrine alone is what gives us the spiritual growth needed to serve, give, pray, etc. Doctrine in

the soul is the source of the believer's spiritual advance and the source of his protection! Therefore, the more people attack a mature believer the greater becomes the attackers misery and frustration due to the principle of 2Co 13:8. But, any believer who desires to reach spiritual maturity (SM) and glorify God must have present in his life persecution and pressure from opponents, 2Ti 3:12; Mat 5:10-12; 10:24-26; Joh 15;16-21; 16:1-2; Act 14:22; Luk 6:26. To grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ requires the presence of pressure and persecution! Hence we should embrace adversity as our means to advance spiritually and never feel bitterness toward those who the kingdom of darkness uses to persecute us.

From verse 25 we have seven principles revealing why God left Paul on earth:

- 1) No believer can attain SM and glorify God in invisible heroship apart from perception, metabolization, AND application of Bible doctrine.
- 2) No believer can read the Bible for himself and attain SM.
- 3) Doctrine must be learned under the principle of authority, which authority is vested in the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher.
- 4) Every believer needs to have their thought pattern i.e., mental attitude renovated through doctrine in the soul, Rom 12:1-3; Pro 23:7.
- 5) This renovation or renewal cannot occur apart from the gift of pastor-teacher.
- 6) God has provided two systems of authority for the church age, one being animate, the other inanimate.
  - a) The animate is the pastor-teacher who enables the individual believer to become aware of his invisible assets which are needed to become an invisible hero.
  - b) The inanimate is the word of God with emphasis on mystery doctrine found in the epistles of the New Testament.
- 7) The objective mandate related to the three fold purpose of the pastor-teacher is given in Eph 4:12-ff:
  - a) To equip and train the Royal Family for combat [i.e., living the spiritual life and fighting the battles of the Angelic Conflict on the offensive and defensive, and knowing when which strategy is needed].
  - b) For the vocation of the ministry, i.e., training future pastor-teachers.
  - c) For the edification of the body, i.e., to teach, study, discipline (publicly), reprimand (privately), and encourage by steadfastness in doctrine.

God left Paul on earth not for Paul's own sake but for the good of others. So that their boasting may abound in Christ Jesus, Phi 1:26. When the mature or adult believer sees greatness in any person he sees in effect, the grace of God causing him to marvel and appreciate Christ Jesus. Now the immature believer on the other hand is focused on the man or woman

sporting God's grace and greatness, this is dangerous ground and should be discouraged by the pastor-teacher. God has a special purpose for each of us and a goal for us to reach collectively and individually, but in order to remain with the Spirit of God one must do so with one's pastor-teacher and congregation. Hence, for the sake of the Philippian congregation God retained Paul's service on earth and even though at this time Paul is in prison the Philippian congregation is proud to be under his teaching and thrilled to have him leading the way in their spiritual advancement. The Philippian congregation is right behind Paul and eagerly searching for more growth and they know they will receive it with Paul as their pastor which is why they are boasting of Paul's status in Christ Jesus.

Now verse 27 opens up to us a subject which is widely misunderstood, misrepresented, and abused... the conduct of a Christian. "**Only conduct yourselves**" does not refer to some system of morality or behavior pattern! The verb conduct is the pres/mid/imp of *politeuomai* which is *politeusthe* (the verb of the noun *politeuma* found in Phi 3:20). This verb means to have one's citizenship or one's home in a particular area; to administer civil affairs. This does not mean that the Christian never offends anyone and is always pure and unoffensive. It does mean to lead one's own life. It also means to rule or govern a state, that state being your own life; to live or to conduct one's life in a certain manner; to discharge one's obligation as a citizen; to behave as a citizen. But, what kind of citizen? A citizen of heaven, which Phi 3:20 and Mat 6:19-20 tell us is our true dwelling place. Each of us is to live as a privileged person even though we presently do not reside in our rightful country or location.

The middle voice of this verb *politeusthe* tells us that we simply make the proper decisions and God the H.S. will produce the action! This action causes the believer to live one's life according to a certain manner of privilege. Paul used this particular word with the Philippians knowing that they would completely understand its meaning seeing that though they lived in Philippi they resided in a province of the Roman Empire and so enjoyed all the privileges and benefits of Rome itself. They knew they were privileged citizens in a foreign country.

As a colony of Rome, Philippi was exempt from taxation and so became a thriving location. In fact, many of the retired Roman military lived in comfort and honor in Philippi. Philippi owed allegiance to Rome and in return received great privileges, benefits, and protection from her mother land. At the time Paul used this word, it meant a place of Roman citizenship, commonwealth, or a Roman community. Hence, the noun **politeuma** meant privilege to the Philippians and that is why Paul used the verb *politeusthe* which the English translators poorly documented as conduct. This word is misused by many preachers to place believers under

some system of legalism. A person can conduct himself in the finest way imaginable, but if he is not a believer in Christ his citizenship is not in heaven. As a citizen of heaven we follow the customs of heaven, which right now is looking forward to the future. As part of our heavenly citizenship we can also expect protection from heaven!

So, in verse 27 Paul was bringing out the fact that the Philippians were aliens or foreigners who's real homeland or commonwealth was in heaven with their Lord to whom they owed their ultimate allegiance. How do we apply this citizenship to our daily lives? If heaven is filled with believers without old sin natures how can we conduct ourselves like them? Well, this "conduct" if you want to call it that, is basically a lifestyle which is based on living your life in light of your eternal future. We are not to live our present lives entangled in the affairs of this foreign land, the devil's world. Your Father in heaven, and your Husband (TLJC) in heaven who restored the universe and God the Holy Spirit, who empowers the plan, all live within each believer! Such knowledge will encourage one to live in light of eternity future! In living for the future we do our best for the advance of the word of God. In light of the future, Bible doctrine becomes the most important thing in life! By such living many others grow and benefit spiritually as we have benefited from those before us who have lived their lives in light of the future.

Living your life worthy of your citizenship in heaven means to make the most of each day in aiding the advance of truth being taught and dispersed. While waiting for TLJC we are to live for His coming and our eternal residence. This life which appears so large now is in reality volatile and worthless and many come to this realization when it's too late and their strength has left them. Most believers allow this world system to exhaust them of their vigor and that is just what the pressures and adversities of the devil's world are designed to do. But we must remember that the sufferings of this present time are not even worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed to us, Rom 8:18! Whatever problems and adversities you encounter in this life (on earth) cannot compare with the eternal weight of glory which is far beyond all comparison, 2Co 4:17. Do not let the forces in this foreign land bring you down but continue to live the spiritual life that God has given through the privileges which are from heaven which privileges, we will learn about next.

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