

Philippians 4:20-23

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/phil/phil-4/philippians-420-23/>

Paul concludes his letter by praising God and sending regards from the believers in Rome to the Philippians. He wishes for Jesus's favor to be upon them all as they strive to imitate His example of radical obedience to God in the face of all circumstances.

Paul now winds up this letter to his beloved spiritual children and partners in the gospel, saying *Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Paul praises *our God and Father*. This seems to tie to the passage in chapter 2:5-11, which describes the mindset (“phroneo”) of Jesus to fully obey His Father, and be greatly rewarded by being exalted by God, His Father.

The word translated *glory* means “the essence of something being observed.” Paul here is likely wrapping up the coaching on the mindset (“phroneo”) we should adopt by acknowledging that “everything ultimately has its meaning in the essence of God.” That is why it makes sense to adopt the same attitude of radical obedience that Jesus adopted. Nothing else is real. Nothing else lasts. Nothing else is fulfilling. Nothing else completes our design. God is our creator, and has directed us to a path where we can have our deepest desires met. But it requires faith. It requires giving up the allures offered by the world. It requires enduring the rejection of the world.

The *glory* possessed by *our God and Father* is an eternal reality. It spans beyond time. It is *forever and ever*. The phrase *forever and ever* is a translation of two Greek words repeated for emphasis: “aion aion.” The Greek word “aion” means “age.” Context determines what age is in view, and what aspect of the age is contemplated. The age can be past, present or future. It is often translated “forever” and normally would be better rendered “to the end of the age.” However, in this instance, with the double use of the word “aion” Paul is saying “for the age of the ages.” In other words, “forever and ever.” This would include the time before time as well as the time after time. God’s *glory* spans all.

Now Paul ends with some housekeeping. He asks that the readers of the letter *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus* on his behalf. He then passes along greetings from the believers with him in Rome, saying *The brethren who are with me greet you*. This likely refers to the *brethren* who are immediately engaged with him in his ministry in Rome. Because he then adds a general greeting from *All the saints* in Rome. This might indicate that at this time the total number of *saints* in Rome was a number Paul could have known, and met. The word *saint* means “one set apart” and here refers to any believer in Christ. Paul used *saints* in this manner to greet all the believers in the church at Philippi (Philippians 1:1). Paul says all these *saints greet you*. Then he adds, *especially those of Caesar's household*.

Paul had already mentioned in Philippians 1:13 that one of the unexpected benefits of his imprisonment in Rome was that the cause of Christ had become well known to the Praetorian Guard. He doesn't specifically say whether any of them believed, perhaps to protect them. But

here Paul states that *those of Caesar's household* have especially asked Paul to send his greetings, and this group is included with the phrase *all the saints*. This means there were those in *Caesar's household* who were believers.

In his reference to *Caesar's household*, Paul might have intended to include the Praetorian Guard, as they provided Caesar's personal bodyguard. The term also could reference any of a large staff of various assortment of servants and officials. It could be that Paul was not concerned about compromising anyone in *Caesar's household* by passing along this greeting because he had favor with the Praetorian Guard. The Praetorian Guard was arguably the true power center of the Roman Empire. They were said to have assassinated some thirteen Emperors.

Paul finishes with the farewell, saying *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*. The Greek word translated *grace* is "charis" which means "favor." It is the same word translated "favor" in Luke 2:40, where Jesus is said to have grown in favor with God as well as man when He entered adulthood. Here, Paul wishes the favor of *the Lord Jesus Christ* to be upon the Philippians. He loves them. He desires the best for them. The very best wish Paul can send them is to wish them Jesus' favor. The entire mindset ("phroneo") that Jesus chose, is to seek the favor of God through radical obedience. It is in this path that we can find our greatest fulfillment. It is the favor of *the Lord Jesus Christ* for which we long.

Anyone with sufficient faith to look, hoping for healing from sin, is fully and unconditionally accepted as a child of God (John 3:14-16). Nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:39). God will never reject us as His child. In that respect His favor is upon all believers. But God's favor regarding our deeds done in this life comes through faithful obedience (2 Corinthians 5:10). The majority text states "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

Philippians is an amazing guide to living life effectively, with a transcendent purpose. It shows us the power of making good choices, most notably our choice of mindset, attitude, or perspective ("phroneo"). Our mindset or perspective shapes our choices of who or what to trust, as well as what we choose to do. Paul wishes most that his dear Philippian partners in the gospel would choose a true perspective, and guard themselves both from false teaching as well as pollution from the world. A practical test of whether we are choosing the right mindset is whether we live with rejoicing, gratitude, and whether we have spiritual peace—freedom from anxiety. If we have peace, it is a good sign we are looking at life truly, knowing that only God controls all things, and that He is benevolent, and will cause all things to work for our good.

Biblical Text

²⁰ **Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

²¹ **Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.** ²² **All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.**

²³ **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.**