

17 June 2026  
THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS  
“The Apostle’s sacrifice”

Phil 2:12–18

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

The Apostle to the Gentiles tirelessly instructs his community. The pursuit of holiness must not falter, even in his absence. In fact, when the Apostle is not present to encourage them and serve as an example, it is even more important that they persevere. In any case, the faithful must understand how noble the vocation addressed to each one of them is. How many generations longed for the coming of the Messiah and, with Him, the promised salvation! And they, the Christians of Philippi, received the inestimable grace of knowing Him. This should inspire deep gratitude and joy, and at the same time constitutes a great responsibility.

For this reason, Saint Paul exhorts them to work for their salvation “with fear and trembling.” This does not mean doing so with a fearful attitude, but rather being aware that we have the honor of having been called to be co-workers with the Redeemer. Jesus wants His work to reach humanity also through the Christian community in Philippi. To this end, He will provide everything necessary. When we embrace the holy faith, God Himself works in us “*both to will and to work.*” It is up to us to follow in His footsteps.

The faithful must follow Christ “*without grumbling or questioning.*” When difficulties arise from our excessive attachment to the world and the path we have taken begins to seem too arduous, we must overcome these obstacles with God’s help. Likewise, we must counter the various fears about what the future may hold with trust in God and in His guidance. The Lord will always grant us the necessary grace to continue, for He

never denies us what we need for our journey.

Imagine a community where everyone supports each other on their spiritual journey, encourages each other to do good, and fervently strives to fulfill God's will. It would be a true light for the world! This is how St. Paul must have seen the young community of Philippi, and this is where he wanted to guide them: "*That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish.*"

The Apostle does not overlook the disastrous situation of his contemporaries. He even speaks of a "*a crooked and perverse generation.*" In the midst of such darkness, a resplendent light is needed. The faithful must shine like stars in the world.

Do St. Paul's words not also apply to the world today?

It seems so lost and disoriented, overrun by powers hostile to God. These demonic powers take advantage of human weakness and obstinacy to establish their kingdom of darkness on earth. It would be so important if, precisely in the midst of the present darkness, there were more Christians and communities shining as the light of the world.

In addition to striving for holiness, we must proclaim the Gospel without cuts or distortions, just as the apostles handed it down to us and the Church has preserved it throughout the centuries. Any concession or adulteration dims the light of faith and can end up becoming a will-o'-the-wisp that leads to error and deprives people of the authentic message of salvation. In the worst-case scenario, one goes so far as to claim that all religions are paths to God, thereby abandoning the mission that Jesus entrusted to His apostles. Conversely, Paul exhorts his own to hold high the word of life, so that the proclamation of the Gospel may not have been in vain.

The Apostle to the Gentiles knows that his ministry is a sacrifice for the communities. He is willing to give his life for them and for the growth of their faith. Moreover, this is a source of great joy and exultation for him. He is deeply imbued with the spirit of his Lord and Master. Just as Jesus gave His life for us so that we might obtain salvation and enter into full communion with God the Father, His Apostle also did his part. He affirms this himself in another of his epistles: "*In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.*" (Colossians 1:24)

Paul has the privilege of serving his Lord in this way, and he wants his community in Philippi to share in his joy and rejoice with him. It is the greatest honor, and the Apostle was always mindful of what he wrote in the Letter to the Ephesians:

*“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.” (Ephesians 3:8–9)*

What an honor for the apostle!

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**Meditation on today's reading:** <https://en.elijamission.net/elisha-follows-elijah/>

**Meditation on today's Gospel:** <https://en.elijamission.net/prayer-fasting-and-almsgiving-2/>