

THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE CHAINED

SEARCHING FOR GRACE
IN PAUL'S PRISON LETTERS

- Philippians -

Mick Mooney

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Paraphrase by Mick Mooney www.searchingforgrace.com
This book is also available in paperback format on www.amazon.com

FOREWORD

This letter to the Philippians is one of four letters Paul wrote during his imprisonment in Rome, paraphrased, with a great deal of respect, in a way that highlights what I believe to be the heart of his message. I find it amazing that even in prison Paul still knew he was free; he still knew of a far greater reality that was his in Christ. The beauty of his message that lifts up and highlights God's love and grace in his prison letters touches my heart every time I read them. I hope it blesses your heart also. This letter has been taken from my book called: **'The Gospel Cannot Be Chained.'** It is a paraphrase and expression of my understanding of Paul's four prison letters.

Paul's letters reveal so much of his heart of love, his joy in God's grace, and his uncompromising faith in the redemptive work of Jesus. Paul has, in a spiritual way,

become one of my dearest friends; a wonderful brother in my own faith walk who has always encouraged me through his letters that I can truly live by the Spirit of God. Although I haven't yet met him personally, I certainly appreciate the letters he wrote to me, to you, and to all who are part of the body of Christ.

I didn't approach paraphrasing Paul's letters with the mindset that I was rewriting Scripture, but rather, respectfully attempting to clarify the heart of a dear friend who is no longer with us. The best way to read this book is in rest. Relax, and read it as if you are reading a few letters from a dear brother in Christ who is writing you a personal letter to remind you of the wonderful reality of God's grace.

As this is not a Bible, but rather a modern expression of four letters from a friend, I have not formatted it in the way modern Bibles format Paul's letters. There are no verses or chapters. The best way to read these letters is in one sitting, as you would with any letter you received from a friend today.

I hope that through reading my interpretation of Paul's letters it helps highlight for you his message of love and grace in whatever Bible translation you normally read.

Blue skies,
Mick Mooney

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PHILIPPIANS

From Paul and Timothy, servants of the greatest message ever proclaimed: the good news that God is not holding our sins against us, but rather, is graceful and mighty to save.

To all the believers in Jesus at Philippi, together with your fellow brothers and sisters among you who have been graced to oversee your communal life together: grace and peace to you all from God our Father who pours out his grace upon you without restraint through our Lord Jesus Christ.

My siblings in Christ, before I say another word, I just have to tell you how much I love you all. Oh, I'm telling you the truth, I find myself filled with joy and spontaneously thanking our God every time I simply remember you. I'm full of hope and happiness whenever I pray about you all, because I know how you have always stood with me in our mutual faith and commitment in God's gospel. The gospel that declares God is love, God is gracious, and God

has made a way to freely reconcile all of mankind to himself by faith in his Son apart from any other requirements. Your partnership in the gospel is so comforting, for, although there are those who reject the reality of God's radical good news, you have embraced it from the first day you heard it until now.

And so, knowing that you are planted in the truth of God's gospel, I am fully confident that all the good works God has begun in you will also be brought to completion. More than that, I'm certain that he will continue to outwork his loving ways in you until the day we see Jesus once more. It's only natural that I feel this way about you, for I hold you all in my heart. I am fully aware of how dearly loved you are by our wonderful Lord Jesus, and I too love you with all of God's love that abounds within me. And just as I hold you in my heart, I know that you too hold me in yours. It makes no difference what my circumstances are, whether I am chained hand and foot, or freely standing up for the defence of the gospel and passionately confirming the truth of God's eternal love, I know that all of you share in God's grace with me; and you know how much I love you. I'm not just trying to flatter you with words; God himself can testify how much loving affection I have in my heart regarding you all.

My friends, with the fullness of this God-given love for all of you, this is my heart's desire for you: that your love may continue to not only overflow, but abound with even more knowledge and understanding in regards to the nature of God, so that you may walk in his ways of love and discern, without needing to be told, what God desires and what he loves. I pray this for you, so you may be blessed with a life that reflects the truth of your present reality: that you truly are holy and blameless. I eagerly desire that you may be blessed, abundantly blessed, as you witness God outworking his ways of love in and through you until the day we see Jesus once more. We now walk with him, and we rejoice that we see him with the eyes of our heart each new day. What is more, the day is coming when we shall also see him face to face; oh, what a glorious day that shall be. And, until then, I am convinced your lives will be filled with the fruit of Jesus; for it is Jesus in us who is producing the fruit of heaven in us and he will continue to bless our hearts with the outworking of a fruitful life, to the glory and the praise of God.

I want you to be assured that my imprisonment is not something to feel burdened or anxious about. For it has all turned out to serve my heart's desire for the gospel to continue advancing. I rejoice, even

in what I am currently suffering, for I see how more and more people are accepting the reality of God and the truth of his grace.

Oh, how wonderful to see people not only coming to an understanding, but truly accepting God's incredible gift of new life in Christ. Indeed, the whole palace guard is aware I am not a criminal. They realise I am an ambassador for the incredible good news from God; the good news that is for all of mankind. It's not only those who have been ordered to guard me who understand I am in chains for Jesus, but actually everyone knows it. In fact, although I was placed in chains to silence the message of the gospel, my chains have only encouraged the brothers in the Lord to proclaim the gospel message even more courageously and fearlessly. Ha! It just proves that a man can be chained and silenced, but the message of God's abundant grace and love cannot!

I know that you are just as aware as I am that not everyone's motivation for preaching is pure; but you should also be assured that there are many who have the right motivation to preach. The latter are partnering with me, preaching God's good news despite facing the same opposition to the message of grace that originally placed me in prison. They know I am in chains for the message of God's new

life, new covenant and a new hope available to all. The former are more interested in their own reputation than they are in the message of God's grace; attempting to discredit my own ministry from their self-appointed positions that they have created for themselves.

But what does it matter? The most important thing is that Christ is being preached. Sometimes from false motives, and sometimes from true, but in every way Christ is preached. I rejoice that our glorious Lord and saviour is being preached. Oh, how pleasing it is to my spirit to know the testimony of Jesus is being proclaimed, and so, whether from impure or pure motives, I rejoice and am greatly delighted in my heart.

I rejoice, and I will continue to do so, for God is winning the battle in his eternal plan to rescue mankind from the lie enslaving the world and liberating them into the truth the gospel declares. With this in mind I am full of joy and confidence. What is more, I am greatly encouraged that because of your heart of love, that cries out to God for my well-being, together with the help that the Spirit gives me, what has happened to me will not ruin me, but rather it will be turned around by the powerful love of God for my deliverance.

I am full of hope and I eagerly expect that

when I stand before the authorities here I will not fall into weakness and conceal the gospel, but rather, that God would give me the sufficient courage I need to hold up the good news for all to see, and that Christ himself would be powerfully revealed in me and lifted high, as indeed he should be; whether that be through my release or my execution.

For to me, life is not defined by living, but by my united life with Jesus, and death does not bring my life to an end, but releases me to see Christ face-to-face and finally live in the fullness of glory with him. If I am released from prison I will continue, through the grace of God, in preaching his message and will surely be blessed to witness his message bearing fruit in the lives and hearts of those who accept it. But what do I truly desire? I honestly don't know! My heart is torn, for although I long to be with Jesus in glory, which is better by far, I also long to continue this walk of faith with you all, and as I ponder this thought, in my heart I realise it's more necessary for you that I do remain in the body. In fact, I'm already now convinced of this, and for this reason I know that Christ won't take me home just yet, but rather, I will remain for your benefit. I'm sure that I will continue with you all, helping you to see more of God's loving-kindness

and, through the power at work in the message of God's grace, establish you more and more in his nature and identity, which is also your identity in Christ. I'll stay for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your joy in Christ may abound and overflow on account of me, and my joy may also abound because God has granted me the blessing of being with you all once more; for you know how much I love you.

Whatever ends up happening, allow your life to be conducted in a way that reflects into the world around you the inner reality you are experiencing through the gospel of Jesus. Let your life reflect the abundance of grace, love and kindness you have freely received through the gospel. In doing this, not only will the light of love touch those around you, but also I will know that you are standing firm in the reality of your new creation life in Jesus. For although we had many separated lives before we entered into Christ, now in Christ we are one. Let yourselves therefore live in this divine unity, standing firm as one united spirit, taking your stand as one man for faith of the gospel without being afraid of those who oppose you. For as much as the gospel is glorious, it is also an offense to those who would rather hold to their false belief in a lifeless god, a brutal god or an angry god than accept the truth

that God is defined by his life, his love and his abundant grace. Stand firm therefore in your acceptance of God's true nature and identity, even in the face of slander and opposition, and let the very nature of God's life, love and grace shine abundantly. This will be evidence to those who are lost in their own religious obsession with the notion of an angry God that there is a way for man to be rescued from such destructive theology and be saved into the truth of God's love. For your lives testify that God loves and God saves, and all of this by grace; not by worldly will power, but rather by the divine power of Christ at work in you.

We know that Christ himself was rejected because he revealed to mankind the truth regarding God. He presented God in his divine and heavenly reality, and the religious and secular world alike rejected him because of it. We have not only been granted the joy of believing in Jesus, but also of being truly united with him, even suffering the same rejection he suffered because we too now stand up for the truth of God's eternal nature of grace and love, apart from any religious traditions and obligations. All who join us in our stand for the gospel not only partake in the joy of the gospel, but also the struggle. And so now you too participate in this struggle, just as I had the same kind of struggle

while I was living amongst you, and, in fact, as you now hear, I continue to have.

And so now, just as your soul has found its rest in your united life with Christ, and you have also taken your stand in this divine reality, allow the outworking of your daily actions to also be defined and empowered from this united life. I know how much all of you have been encouraged through being made new into the very body and life of Christ, how comforted you now are from his love and how you have all been filled with compassion through his life. So now, make my heart also rejoice by having that same love for one another. God has graciously softened our hearts with his love, so that we too can participate in his divine desire of pouring out heaven's love into the lives of others. Let us allow the love that God has so abundantly poured into our lives also overflow freely into the lives of those around us with great joy; and let us do this with one heart, as we now walk in unity, being one in spirit and purpose.

Don't seek a life that is driven by self-focused ambition, but rather, allow the ambition of Christ to drive you; for it is Christ in you who is ambitious to love, to show grace and to help others in their

weaknesses. And so, just as you are one with Christ, allow yourselves the joy of participating in his divine ambition and be open and aware of the needs and interests of others around you.

We are truly one with God, his beloved children and inheritors of all that is his. Now, let us enjoy this reality, not using our identity to belittle those around us or to exalt ourselves, puffing ourselves up in our minds and believing that we should be treated like gods in this world. It's true that we are one with God, but let us look to our saviour as our example of how to live in light of this glorious reality. For although we have been made one with God, our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

For Jesus was in every way God, and yet he did not consider his divine reality something he needed to grasp. He didn't desire to parade around as the all powerful deity, but rather he stripped himself of all his heavenly glory, and made himself nothing. He was still one with God, but he volunteered to take on the nature of a servant and be made in human likeness. He was one with God, and yet was willing to be found in the appearance of a man; he chose to humble himself for the benefit of those who were weak, lost and broken. He chose to die that they

may be strong, found and whole; even at such a cost as to die on a cross!

And what was the result of such love, such humility, and such confidence in his true identity through it all? Our heavenly Father exalted him to the highest place in all of eternity, and gave him a name more honoured than any name; the name of Jesus. It is Jesus, who, through the revelation of his unending love and sacrifice, will draw all men into the reality of his loving kindness. It is because of his willingness to humble himself and first serve all of mankind, that all of mankind will come to see the truth of Christ, understand the depths of his humility, and come to accept his divine identity. The love of Christ will succeed in bringing all of mankind to bow their knee before his great throne, each freely declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord; and as each individual acknowledges the way of salvation is received not by works, but by the grace of God, our Almighty God will truly receive all the glory!

In the light of this wonderful reality, let us freely and voluntarily walk in the same pattern as the one we have been united with forever. We are now walking this earth as sons and daughters of God, and yet, just like Jesus, we chose not to lord this reality over others; rather, we follow his example and take on the nature of servants. We don't

derive our identity from the world; rather, we are free to serve the world through God's love because we are already secure in our divine identity in Christ.

Therefore, my dear friends, we have been made heirs of heaven, but also called to be servants to mankind. With this in mind, continue to work out this great salvation with awe and amazement, for it is a radical reality; a heavenly gift that the Spirit will continue to establish you in as you walk with him. Your salvation in Christ is assured, and the Spirit of God will continue to shine the light of this truth into your hearts and minds, and also empower you to live a life in the same pattern as Jesus, full of grace and truth. It is the Spirit of God who worked powerfully in Jesus while he walked the earth, and that very same Spirit now works in you to live, to desire and to act in accordance with God's desires and purposes.

Allow the Spirit to remind you of the truth, that you are beloved heirs of heaven and have been made blameless and pure, children of God who are free to live in the light of his love. Although the world is cracked and corrupted, it cannot break God's children, for we have been made new in Christ without fault, and with the express purpose of shining the love of God into this broken generation. So rest in his love, do everything without

complaining or arguing, and allow his love to shine through you; for there is no greater light than the light of God's love, and that love abides in you. How wonderful is our reality, that God has chosen us to be a light in the world, like stars in the universe. Continue, therefore, to hold out the way of Jesus; the ways of his love, and bless my heart in doing so. For my greatest joy is seeing you stand firm in your belief in God's good news. Indeed, I look forward to boasting on the day I see Jesus once more that you truly lived in the reality of the gospel, your new nature and your divine inheritance.

I am in chains for the gospel you are now living out, and I rejoice to hear of your faith and assurance in the gospel, just as you should rejoice and be glad with me, for my chains only bind my body, but in my spirit I am as free as Christ himself, to the glory of God.

I am hopeful that God will create the way for me to send Timothy to you soon, for I long to hear news about you, and I'm sure that when I do my heart and spirit will be greatly refreshed. You know how dear Timothy is to me; I have no one else like him. He loves you all with the same affection I do, and his interests are not focused on himself, but rather in your well-being. For it seems everyone has set their focus on their own interests, instead of the

interests of Jesus. However, you know that Timothy has laboured alongside me, like a son with his father, as we worked to present and defend the most glorious of all messages: the gospel of God's grace. So I hope to send Timothy to you soon, and he also desires to visit you, but we first need to wait and see how things go with me. However, as I have already stated, I'm confident in the Lord that I will be released, and when I am, I will also come to visit you all.

I feel it's also necessary to send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a brother, a co-worker and a fellow soldier. I'm so thankful that you sent him to me to take care of my needs, and indeed he has done just that. His heart is full of love not only for me, but also for all of you, and he longs for all of you. In fact, as you know he was very ill, and almost died, but God was merciful to him, and also to me too, sparing me the sorrow of losing such a wonderful friend. He is back to full health now, and I am eager to send him back to you, that you can see him once more and be filled with joy at his well-being, and I too can relax knowing that you have been reunited with him. Welcome him warmly when he returns, and honour him, for he put his life on the line while he was here in Rome, helping me in all the ways you too would have helped me, if you had had

the opportunity.

And so, just as we are a united family in Jesus, enjoy your united life with Jesus and rejoice in him. I know I say this a lot, but it really cannot be said enough. It's a joy to write it, and it's also a healthy reminder for you. It does our hearts good to remember Jesus and the covenant of grace we have with him. Remind yourself of the depths of this love for you, and the inheritance that is yours in him. Rejoice in the reality of every good thing you have received through being made one with him. It is through remembering Jesus that the love of God refreshes us and the weight of the world is removed from our shoulders.

Watch out for those who desire to yoke you to religion. They are zealous for their own distorted ideas of what a follower of Jesus should be like, and will even try to use the name of Jesus, as well as taking Scripture out of context, to promote their false, religious perspectives. They love to establish their own form of religion, of which they lord their 'spiritual authority' over people. However, they purposely disregard the fact that Jesus did not come to start another religion, but to fulfill an old one! He now offers all mankind a covenant of grace that is based on his love and finished work upon the cross;

not based on mankind's observance of religious practices and obligations. We, who are in Christ, are truly free to live and commune with God and one another in spirit and in truth. We have had our hearts made new with the nature of Christ, and the old nature has been cut away by the Spirit of God. We don't put our confidence in what we do to prove ourselves faithful to God; we put our confidence in Christ, who has proved God's faithfulness to us. Religion will promote confidence in our outward performance in life, but we maintain that our confidence is inward. Our confidence is in the reality that Christ, our hope of glory, lives in us.

The reason I passionately place my full confidence in the reality of Christ in me is not because I have nothing I could boast about in regards to my own works. On the contrary, I could boast more than any man about my religious accomplishments in the flesh. In fact, according to a life devoted to God through religious acts, I was practically perfect. I was born into the right religion, passed through all the ceremonial rites of passage my religion required, I held to the strictest form of all the laws and spiritual disciplines my religion demanded of me. In fact, if someone were to judge me based on a legalistic, works based understanding of being a 'godly' person I would have been

found faultless. But boasting in our religious or 'godly' accomplishments goes against the truth of the gospel; for life with God isn't defined by how perfectly one can fulfil laws and religious requirements, but rather by God's grace to fulfil all requirements on our behalf so we can rest and walk with him. And so I consider the religious zeal I once had a loss, I could even go so far as to say I consider it rubbish; even if others around would gladly consider it to their credit, I consider it a loss. I think this way because I know God has offered me a far greater reality: the reality that Christ is in me, and the opportunity to know him as a saviour, a friend and a brother; to be one with him in perfect love and acceptance apart from any religious performance or self-imposed requirements. I long to know him more, and I desire to see myself in him. I want to see myself in the mirror of his perfection, and not in the mirror of religious obligations that can only reflect my poor attempts of earning a right standing before God. The mirror of Christ allows me to see the truth: that my right standing before God is by faith in all that Christ has accomplished on my behalf.

I want to know Christ, and this is exactly what God offers us freely, as a gift to all who freely receive it: the gift to know him. Like you, I've taken

hold of this great blessing and simply refuse to trade it in for knowing merely a religious formula. I desire to know Christ and grow in my understanding of just how powerful his resurrection truly was and how the ongoing effects of that glorious moment continues to impact my life and the lives of all mankind. I want to know all of Christ, not only the moments of his triumphs; I also want to identify with him in his suffering. For Christ himself suffered rejection by those whose agenda was to defend their religion and protect their own self-appointed religious authority. They even went so far in their zeal as to despise the living God they claimed to believe in. As for me, I want to walk with Jesus, and identify with him. I want to experience the heavenly acceptance that comes through uniting myself with him, even at the expense of suffering rejection by the religious zealots who so fiercely oppose the message of God's grace. I desire to be free in Christ's love, empowered by his Spirit and ultimately live forever in his resurrection.

Our united life in Christ is so glorious, and I know I still have more to discover and receive. I'm aware that my spirit, as a new creation, has been made perfect in Christ, but my body is still awaiting its redemption and is burdened by its imperfections. Regardless, I move forward with my full confidence

in Christ, for that is the reason Christ took hold of me. My beloved siblings in Christ, I can openly say I face moments of weakness, but I am not ashamed, for my hope is not in my perfect strength, but rather it is in the perfect strength of Jesus. And so I do this one thing: I forget about the past, including both my successes and failures. I leave them all in the past and I lay hold of a far more glorious future, one that is defined by my faith in Christ. For my life is now defined by my identity in Christ. I have already joyfully been made a new creation in my spirit, and I continue heavenward in this faith walk to one day also receive the gift of a new creation body.

All of us who are mature in Christ should take such a view of things. If you disagree, don't take offence at what I'm writing, but allow the Spirit to speak to you regarding my words, and ask God to make his ways clear to you. In all we do, let's enjoy the divine identity that we have already attained in Christ and also allow Christ in us to shine this nature of love and grace into the world around us as we journey from glory to glory together.

Join with others in following the way of love and grace, for Jesus himself lived a life full of grace and love towards those around him. He is our divine example, it is the example I follow, and it is this example others have seen in my life and the

example they have also chosen to live their own lives by. Take note of those in your community who live their life full of love and grace for others, and be encouraged by the light of Christ shining through them.

As I have already explained to you, I'll remind you again now. It is a foolish man indeed who can recite God's laws, but refuses to allow God's way of love to shine through his life. It brings tears to my eyes to know that many who have heard the message of Jesus have only taken hold of it as if it were merely a title to wear, while refusing to step into the full spiritual reality of the gospel. Instead of rejoicing in the completed work of Christ upon the cross, they live as enemies of his grace, choosing to remain yoked to the law that Christ came to free them from. They think this is to their glory, but it is actually to their shame! Their minds are yoked to a worldly understanding of God's kingdom; but our citizenship is in heaven, where our saviour is seated in heavenly places, and it is in him that we place our confidence and await his return in glory. Our hope is in Christ, who, through the very same power that enables him to bring the whole universe under his control, will bless us with what he has promised: a new creation body to house our new creation spirits.

Oh, the glory! He will be faithful to us and

transform our lowly, weak bodies so that they will be like his glorious body! Therefore, my family in Christ, you whom I love so much, this is how you can stand firm in the Lord. Keep the eyes of your hearts on your heavenly reality, and allow Christ to shine the light of his love in and through you.

Euodia and Syntyche, my dear sisters, just as you are ambassadors for the gospel of peace, live at peace with one another. I also ask all of you in Philippi to help these amazing women, for they have worked alongside me, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, for the sake of making the gospel known. The gospel is not a message of man's obligations to God, but the divine message of God's faithfulness to man: that he made a way for all of us to enter into his eternal intention of a covenant of grace. Indeed, it is through God's amazing grace that our names have been written in the book of life. What a glorious life we have received in him.

Oh, how we can rejoice! Yes, I'm aware that I'm in chains, and my body is wearing away, but the gospel cannot be chained and my spirit is being renewed every day. It is in light of this great reality that I say again: rejoice! Allow the graceful and gentle character of Christ in you to be evident to all,

for he is living in you. Don't fall captive to the fear of the unknown, don't let the uncertainties of tomorrow burden your hearts with anxiety, but rather, take hold of your divine reality. Talk with God about all your needs, not from a place of fear, but rather from a place of trust and thanksgiving, for he understands and he loves you deeply. He is our peace and he will guard our hearts and minds in times of trouble and difficulties. The world attempts to force its weight of worry upon us, but it is our God, who transcends worldly understanding, who will allow his peace, love and faith to reign in us to the glory of God.

And so, let your hearts and minds find their focus upon whatever is following the ways of love and truth; yes, let your minds ponder upon all that is noble, pure, lovely and admirable. Set your thoughts on all the things that you see God's character shining through, for he is moving within everything that is praiseworthy and full of love. Follow the way of love. This is the goal of my life: to live according to the pattern of God's nature, full of grace and love. So, take note also of my way of life, follow the ways of God's love and enjoy the gift of God's peace that he will continue to fill you with as you journey this life together with him.

I rejoice in the goodness of God, and I also

rejoice greatly to know how much concern you have for me; indeed, I know that you have always been concerned for my well-being, but you did not have the opportunity to show it. I am blessed to see how much loving affection you hold in your hearts for me. I am blessed; blessed by God for his peace, regardless of my circumstances, and blessed by you for your heart of love that shines towards me in my difficult circumstances.

I am a blessed man indeed, for I have learned, through resting in the love and grace of God, the secret of having a life that is content in every situation. I have been both free and in chains, well-fed and hungry, living in plenty and living in want. I have experienced a life that had need of nothing, and a life that had nothing but need. Yet, no matter what the circumstances are on the outside, I live with the inner revelation that Christ is always with me, he knows me, he holds me, and he loves me. I am truly united with Jesus. I'm in him, and he is in me. I'm secure in his embrace, and he is faithful to his promise to never leave me. And so, with such a glorious spiritual reality, I have discovered that my temporal circumstances and worldly burdens don't change my place of contentment in Christ. I can live, enjoy, and rejoice in all circumstances through my united life with Christ, who gives me strength.

Not only does Christ comfort me, but he also works through you to comfort me. I am greatly comforted to see how your heart's desire was to help me; even going so far as to share in my troubles. You're all aware of the situation I faced in the days you first came to accept and put your trust in the gospel. I travelled with the sole intention of testifying to the good news of God's grace, and although many were encouraged by my life and message, none of the believers felt moved to support me in my ministry, except you. You have supported me time and time again; whenever I have needed help, and I rejoice in the Lord that you once again have it upon your hearts to support me now. It's not that I desire a gift from you, but rather, I am grateful that you can share in the preaching of the gospel with me. From a worldly perspective you are crediting my account, but from a heavenly perspective it is God who is crediting yours; and because of this I rejoice.

As for me, I have more than enough now that I have received your generous gifts of support from Epaphroditus. My heart is blessed by your love for me; your support is a comfort to me and a blessing in the work I'm doing here, so thank you my dear friends. I know that just as you have given from a heart of grace to meet my needs, our God will move

from his heart of grace to meet all of your needs according to the abundant resources he has stored up in Christ Jesus. So, let us continue to walk in awe of our God and rejoice as we see him working in and through us; may he receive all the glory for ever and ever.

Please pass on my greetings to all the beloved saints in Christ Jesus, just as the brothers here with me send you their greetings. God has drawn many into his heavenly family here in Rome. Those who belong to Caesar's household, and, by the grace of God, now all the more to God's household, also send you greetings. May the grace of Jesus be with you, bless you, and keep you strong in his grace. Let it be.

(Paraphrased by Mick Mooney) Visit Mick's website:
www.searchingforgrace.com

*This paraphrase of Philippians is part of the paraphrase book titled: **"The Gospel Cannot Be Chained"** that includes all of Paul's four prison letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians & Philemon) You can buy a paperback version at www.amazon.com.*

Biblical Reference Text

The NIV (New International Version) is the translation I personally read, and it was the translation I used as my primary reference text for this body of work. As I stated in my foreword, this book is my own understanding and expression of what Paul originally meant in his letters. It is more of a commentary of Paul's letters that may help you see and understand his message in a fresh and positive way. Whatever Bible translation you choose to read, I hope this book has encouraged you to read the Bible more in order to search and discover the incomparable riches of Christ. I trust, and I am excited to know, that our good Lord is committed to leading you into greater revelations of his love and truth.