

***THE ONE YEAR BIBLE* Reading For September 29:**

Isaiah 57:15-59:21:

Today's reading continues the call to God's true people in Israel after the exile to leave their old ways and walk worthy of His grace and future. Specifically, this is done by doing more than going through the motions of religion and worship, but also practicing love and providing help for those in need (chapter 58), as well as leaving behind injustice and wickedness (chapter 59).

As you read today's Old Testament text, remember that as a New Covenant believer you have even greater resources and a far more thorough transformation by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit in you than did these Old Covenant believers (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-33; Hebrews 8:8-13). That means that we have even that much greater a call to leave behind our old ways and live as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Ask the Lord for the grace and wisdom to do that very thing.

Philippians 1:1-26:

As we see in Acts 16, the Church in Philippi was born when the Spirit called Paul to Macedonia where we read of the first European convert (Acts 16:14). Some 5-6 years after Paul's ministry there, while he was under house arrest in Rome (see Philippians 1:12-26; Acts 28:30-31), Epaphroditus was sent from Philippi to Rome to minister to Paul's needs (2:25-30; 4:18). Paul sent back with him this letter to Philippi. Paul had learned from Epaphroditus the Philippians were facing persecution (1:27-30), as well as false teachings characterized by legalism (3:2-21). From the repeated exhortations to rejoice (e.g. 3:1; 4:4), along with Paul's "I myself have learned" (suggesting they may have not [4:11]) and his "be anxious for nothing" (4:6), it appears the Philippians were caving in under the pressure they faced. There also was conflict present among them (1:9; 2:1-11, 12-18; 4:2-3, 5). Paul wrote to address these needs among the Philippians. Mainly, he is encouraging them to look beyond their circumstances to find joy in Christ which will lighten and improve their relationships, as well as set the right direction for them to take in the face of false teaching.

After Paul opens up the letter by revealing author, recipients, and expressing his desire for grace and peace (1-2), the apostle then expresses his thanks for the Philippians, as well as shares with them how he prays for them (3-11). In these verses we find not only a powerful model of how we should love and be appreciative for fellow believers (and the work God is doing in them), we also gain insight into how we should pray for self and others. Remember that one of the best ways we can learn to pray is by paying attention to how Paul and others, as recorded in Scripture, prayed. Likewise, we are wise to take these very prayers and use them as guides for when we come before the Lord.

In Philippians 1:12-26 Paul explains somewhat his current situation of house arrest. Though Paul believes he will be released and thus continue to serve other believers like the Philippians, he is not absolutely sure of this. Yet, Paul's outlook was that his current situation was advancing the gospel and thus bringing glory to his Lord Jesus Christ. That

encouraged him. In fact, he said whether he lives or dies, it does not ultimately matter since Christ will be lifted up either way.

Christian, as you read this section of the letter, you should come to see that whatever happens to us our desire ought to be that Christ be glorified through it by the gospel being advanced. The advancement of the gospel should be our ultimate passion and purpose, not comfort or amassing material wealth merely for self.

Psalm 71:1-24:

Here we find repeated themes we have seen often already throughout the Psalms: God is our protection; cry out honestly and openly to Him in the midst of trouble; praise Him in trials; trust Him. By sheer repetition the Psalms drive home these themes to us. We dare not ignore them.

Proverbs 24:9-10:

Verse 9 goes with yesterday's reading, saying #23 in the collection of thirty, a deterrent against being one who plans evil. Verse 10 forms saying #24 and consists of an encouragement to be strong in hard times. In the context of the Proverbs, this will happen only as we fear, trust in, and follow the wisdom of the Word of God.