

## Victory Christian Church, May 10, 2010

### **Subject: Walking along the book of Philippians**

Praise the LORD and Good Morning to all of you.

God is good! All the Time!

It is a rare privilege to stand at this pulpit. Many honorable men and women have spoken the words of God from this podium. I rather count fortunate to sit and learn from our respected Pastor Jayanta. I was amazed at his resourcefulness in practical ministry. His wide knowledge of Church ministry matches his advance age. Dear Aunty is such a sweet and warm personality. The women ministry team members are as formidable as IPL teams! Their united prayers are a force to reckon. Last Friday prayer meeting was one of the best times my wife would remember anything here at Guwahati city. She tirelessly shared her experiences till we reach home.

I have been anticipating this day and this hour. I am excited to see you, some for the first time, few off course at the teaching and training ministry at NWTC. I come here as a learner. I am going to preach not only for you but for myself too.

Reading time lines:

*(a) Global Economic Depression occurs: Man made happenings! Tax havens at many of the developing nations and misused of many companies tycoons or CEO!*

*(b) Many workers in a company felt suppressed as many of their friends left the job due to job cut. They have to work harder and spend more hours for work.*

*(c) The World Leaders and Intelligence Communities feared of Talibans and other Extremists allies for capturing the nuclear nation of Pakistan as the fragile and unpredictable nature of Pakistan Government.*

*(d) Assam Tribune, May 4, 2009: Swine Flue could worsen Global Recession: Analysts*

*(e) Time of India, May 7, 2009: UPSC: 2008- Joram Beda; 2009-John Mai, Padi Tatung, Nitu Tsering Glow*

*(f) Out of 791 successful UPSC candidate this year (2009), 23 candidates from NEI cleared UPSC; Assam-11, Manipur-5, 3 each from Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.*

### **Back Ground Studies of Philippians:**

#### ***Who Founded the City?***

The city had been founded by Philip, father of Alexander the Great in the year 368 B.C. This city was located at a strategic location which divided Europe from Asia. The city commanded the road from

Europe to Asia. It was at this place that Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius, which decided the fate of Roman Empire.

***Paul First Contact:***

Paul first step into this city in his second missionary journey in A.D. 52. Paul felt a great urgency to beyond by the vision of the men from Macedonia in his dream, appealing to come over and help them.

***People Groups:***

Three groups of people at Philippi: Merchant community (Lydia-dealer in purple); Slave girl-fortune teller; Roman middle class (Goaler).

***Occasion of writing:***

*When Paul wrote this letter he was in prison in Rome. His purposes of writing were:*

*(a) It is a letter of Thanks - the years have passed; it was around A.D. 63/64 and once again the Philippians have sent him a gift (4:10,11).*

*(b) It is to do with Epaphroditus – bearer of the gift and to be a server of Paul in his imprisonment. He nearly died because of his service for the LORD (2:29, 30).*

*(c) It is a letter of encouragement to the Philippians in the trial they are going through (1:28-30).*

*(d) It is an appeal for unity (2:1-11).*

Evan Billy Graham in his book, “The Sacred of Happiness,” wrote: A French philosopher once said, “The whole world is on a mad quest for security and happiness.” A former president of Harvard University observed, “The world is searching for a creed to believe and a song to sing.” A Texas millionaire confided, “I thought money could buy happiness – I have been miserably disillusioned.” A famous film star broke down: I have money, glamour, and popularity. I should be the happiest woman in the world, by I am miserable. Why?”

***Philippians is the loveliest letter Paul ever wrote. It has been called The Epistle of Joy.***

Victory Christian Church, Guwahati is very much like the Church of Philippians. There is a close resemblance in its intrinsic Church value and ministry focus. I believe and convince that this Church is going to be a model Church in and around Guwahati city.

I find very interesting in the meditation of the book of Philippians. There are four important exaltations, which I feel is very relevant in today Churches. The apostle Paul, at the brink of his life journey, took his last strength to write down a peerless theological and ministerial truths, which would become a real inspiration producing great joy and enormous strength to believers.

### ***Exaltation to the Pastors/Shepherders***

#### ***1. “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Ch 1:21)***

Many Churches go bankrupt because of financial mismanagement. I came to know few close Pastors who fall into this pitfall situation. Instead of tending the sheep, some feed on the sheep. Few months ago, while I was in Manipur, there were common people discussing, “Today Pastors and Evangelists enjoy higher prestige and privilege as they have hand-in-glove with various UG groups.” I was so a shame at hearing all this! It is true that in the present context of Manipur, few ministers of God have forgotten the call to ministry. They compromised with the world and attempt to enjoy all the worldly pleasures and appeals.

*For Paul, Christ had been the beginning of life. Christ had been the continuing of life. He was the inspiration of life and the dynamic of life. It was Christ, who made him an apostle and sent him out as evangelist of Gentiles. To him Christ had given the strength for life, for it was Christ’s all – sufficient grace that was made perfect in Paul’s weakness. If Christ were to be taken out of life, for Paul there would be nothing left. For Paul, death was entrance into Christ’s nearer presence. If we believe in Jesus Christ, death for us is union and reunion with him and reunion with those whom we have loved and lost awhile.*

### ***Exaltation to Overseers/Deacons***

#### ***2. “Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others. (Ch 2:4)***

Most Churches in North East have a tussle/fight among the Deacon members. Who should be the Head Deacon? How many splinter groups come out from the seven members’ deacon board of X Y Z Churches? Pastor’s vision and dream of Church Growth and Evangelism effort reach nowhere as a result of differences of opinion among the deacon members. There seems to be four or more political parties having to form the Church government. The Senior Pastor including the Junior Pastor are hand and mouth tie to do anything to promote God’s kingdom.

*The one danger which threatened Philippians church was that of disunity. There were three great causes for disunity.*

*(i) There is selfish ambition- [There is a great danger when people advance themselves than advance the work of God's kingdom. There are selfish motive such as to gain credit or to get something rather than to give everything for the LORD],*

*(ii) There is personal prestige – [to be admired and respected; to have platform seat, to be known by name and appearance], and*

*(iii) There is concentration of self- [If a man is too concerned on his own interests, he is bound to collide with others. If a man concentrated too much on 'self,' the aim of life becomes not to help others but to push them out or down].*

### ***Exaltation to laymen/laywomen about (Christology)***

***3. "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, become like him in his death." (Ch 3:10)***

We live in a great transition period. Church polity and administration do not confine alone with Pastor alone or Pastor plus deacon board members. Laymen and laywomen play a pivotal role in the strong foundation and propagation of the Church. We are blessed with many facets of expertise in the Church. They should be used as a great tool for the extension of God's kingdom, not man's kingdom. There are professional, administrators, govt officials, lecturers, bankers, economists, doctors, nurses etc. They become Church asset to advance the work of extending God's kingdom. If and when Christ is known properly, those human resources could be used in glorifying God. Very often the end result is – instead of glorifying God, self glorification creep into the Church and start degenerating the body of Christ. This is what we have come across a wide complacency in today' North Eastern Churches! We are very helpless at the new trend and many attendances feel frustrate to attend the Church. They seek alternative! Who should we blame for this?

*Paul had spoken the surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ. He used "to know" ginoskein to mean personal knowledge. It is the personal experience of another person. In O.T. account, "Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bore Cain" Genesis 4:1). In Hebrew word the verb is "yada" and in Greek it is translated as "ginoskein."*

*To know the power of resurrection, it is –*

*(a) The guarantee of the importance of this life and this body in which we live (cp I Cor 6:14).*

*(b) The guarantee of the life to come (cp Romans 8:11; I Cor15:14f). Because He lives, we shall live also; his victory is our victory.*

*(c) The guarantee that in life or death and beyond death the presence of the Risen Lord is always with us. It guarantees that this life is worth living and there is world beyond.*

To know Christ means that we share the way he walked, we share the Cross he bore; we share the death he died; and finally we share the life he lives for evermore.

#### ***For X- Generation (Younger Generation)***

***4. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Ch 4:6)***

Some time back, a youth leader told me that today youth culture is “I don’t care culture.” Youth today don’t really bother the parent instructions. They live in and they live out. They don’t accept absolute truth. Every thing is related. They believe in relativism. They live as they feel fit!

Few weeks ago I read the News Paper and I was shock to read the lines: A young techie (IITians) who recently got a job at a company in south India committed suicide because he was sacked from his job after the company down size its man powers. The boy’s parent at Kolkata advised him to be calm and return back and thing will be all right. But the youth took this extremity!

Time of India, May 7, 2009: Arsenal fan S.A. Omondi (Kenya) 29 years old hung himself at the defeat of Manchester United 4 by 1. Youth today are over anxious! They want to know their future. They want to live easy life with no sweat. They want to get the most handsome dream lady/dream guy? They spend long hours in cyber chat room or orchid website than study their lessons. They want to go to heaven just by mere attending the Church. They do not know that they are in danger zone!

*In the Early Church, the normal worry of the human situation was added the worry of being a Christian, which means taking one’s life in one’s own hands. Christianity was considered a threat to Emperor Worship. The Christians were thought to be human blood drinker and anti-society and progress. To this Paul solution is Prayer. M.R. Vincent puts it, “Peace is the fruit of believing prayer.”*

*Paul stresses that we can take everything to God in prayer. We can pray for the forgiveness of our own past, our present need, also help and guidance in the future. Paul also stresses that “thanksgiving must be the universal accompaniment of prayer.”*

*Three things to be remembered while praying:*

*(a) the love of God –ever desire what is best for us,*

*(b) the wisdom of God- alone knows what is best for us, and*

*(c) The power of God-which alone can bring to pass which is best for us.*

He who prays with a perfect trust in the love, wisdom and power of God will find God's peace. The believer's prayer is very strong and will stand like a sentinel on guard upon our hearts. Paul used *phrourein*, similar to military word for standing on guard. The Apostle Paul was exalting the Philippians Church members to grow in the knowledge of Christ, abundant in service and the Christian unity be kept intact. This alone will glorify the Name of Christ JESUS.