

**THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS**  
**"Part XLIX: Philippians - Overcoming The Tragedy Of Broken Dreams"**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) On Monday evening, during the ABC Evening News, Peter Jennings ran a story on a convention that met to display the shoes of Americans who have died unjustly. Many of them were murdered or slain by drunk drivers. The idea was probably borrowed from the exhibit in Israel where the shoes of the holocaust victims are displayed, but the exposition was astounding, nonetheless!

I saw shoes of little boys and girls, of teens, mothers, white and blue collar heads of households, and thought of all of the wasted dreams and hopes that were wrapped up in the lives of all of those people who once wore those shoes!

**How can the surviving families and friends of all of those people cope with what "could have been?"**

(2) One of the moving stories of the TWA flight 800 crash off of Long Island dealt with a young man who boarded the doomed plane at Kennedy Air Port. He had fallen in love with a girl in France and was crossing the Atlantic to meet her in Paris to ask her to marry him! We suppose that he had the ring with him. Both the man and his ring went down off the Long Island coast, leaving a grieving, shocked young woman in France wondering "what could have been."

**How can this woman deal with what she has lost by way of forfeited dreams, a lost husband-to-be and her life's goals?!**

(3) I heard on the news this week that the number of American women who will be abusively treated by men **each year** equals the population of all the women in the states of Montana, Idaho and Utah **combined!** **How can our culture simply ignore this fact--who is going to address all the injustices, the lost hopes and dreams from this ongoing tragedy?!**

**When people just want to live a decent, honorable, sensible life, and bad things blow their dreams sky high, what sense is there to it?! How can they HANDLE it?!**

(We turn to the "Need" section of the message . . .)

**Need: "I realize that not all my dreams of glory will come true, so I am content to be respected, well-keeled and reasonably well-off! However, others or life's events have challenged or postponed or ruined even these dreams, and am I UPSET about it! Any ideas?!"**

- I. **When man broke fellowship with God, his values became distorted, leading to selfishness and unfulfillment with his life's ambitions.**
  - A. Though God created the world and set up man as His deputy, sin deposed him, so Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
  - B. God renewed human history by the Noahic Flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
  - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy, **replacing** God's help (by faith in spreading out on the world, Gn. 9:1) with staying put and seeking **fulfillment** by self-help **ambitions**, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9.
  - D. However, as exemplified in the history of Philippi, such errant goals only yielded **unwholesome actions** that led to **unhappiness**:
    1. When Rome came to power, long discord between its aristocracy and poor classes over wealth's distribution erupted when aristocrat, Brutus assassinated Julius Caesar, Burns, Western Civ., p. 218ff.
    2. Two civil wars followed, the final battle occurring at Philippi with Caesar Augustus' men avenging Julius Caesar's death by defeating Brutus, and Brutus committing suicide, Z.P.E.B., vol. Four, p. 760.
    3. Soldiers who had seen their lands taken by Brutus were relocated to Philippi, and it became a Roman colony offering rights equal to Rome's citizens unlike the other towns in its area, Ibid.
    4. Thus, the Philippian Christians in Paul's day inherited a selfishly competitive mentality from their culture that could only lead to additional strife and failure to find happiness, B.K.C., N.T., p. 648.
- II. **God had Paul write Philippians to reveal FULFILLING ambitions:**
  - A. In his opening remarks, Paul wrote that he prayed for these Philippian believers to be able to **DISCERN lofty** matters from **base** ones so that they could really live **righteously**, Phil. 1:1-11, esp. v. 10-11.
  - B. Paul then supplied **EXAMPLES** of **fulfilling, godly AMBITIONS**:
    1. Example One: Though very mistreated and blocked from reaching personal goals as a prisoner, Paul reported on his life's **fullness**:
      - a. Though unjustly imprisoned for witnessing, the ministry God had assigned him, Paul saw his confined state cause **other Christians** to carry on God's work, Phil. 1:12-14.
      - b. Some carnal believers sought to irritate Paul by competing for his ministry territory as he was confined, 1:15-17. Paul only **rejoiced** that **God's** cause meanwhile continued forward, 1:18f!

- c. In fact, not even knowing if he would be **killed** in jail, Paul was **selflessly** relaxed, knowing that God's will was his highest calling, a destiny ending in "**FAR BETTER**" eternal rewards for **GREAT spiritual achievement**, Phil. 1:20-30!
  - 2. Example Two: Paul used Christ's **OVERWHELMING** example of the incarnation and servanthood work of Calvary **resulting** in God's **exalting** Him as **motivation** for us to live **selflessly**, Phil. 2:1-11!
  - 3. Example Three: He then told how Timothy and Epaphroditus were also great examples of selfless service for these believers, 2:19-30.
  - 4. Example Four: To ward off a competitive spirit by Judaizers who sought "converts" among these Philippians, Paul told of his **superior** Hebrew pedigree, and of his **repudiating** it to serve Christ as a **higher** calling than upholding his **pedigree**, Phil. 3:1-15.
- C. In the process, He gave directives in **applying** this mindset:
- 1. In Phil. 2:12-18 and 3:15-21, he urged the believers to seek God's **higher** will of **selflessness** for glorifying **God** for **eternal reward** rather than living for the shallow goals fostered by this **earthly** life.
  - 2. Thus oriented, they could live at peace with **others**, 4:1-4.
  - 3. Thus oriented, they could to live at peace with **themselves**, 4:5-9.
  - 4. Thus oriented, they could live at peace with **whatever** level of **material wealth** was their divine assignment, Phil. 4:10-20!

III. **Philippians contributes to the "thread of redemption" in revealing that the SELFISH broken dreams of this life are GUARANTEED REPLACEABLE by SELFLESS ACHIEVEMENT with GREAT ETERNAL REWARDS through Christ, Phil. 2:5-8, 9-13; 1:21.**

***Application:** To obtain fulfillment when this life's dreams are blocked or dwindle, (1) believe on Christ as Savior from sin, Jn. 3:16; Ep. 1:3-6. (2) Then, (a) confess any sins outstanding (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) depend on the Spirit for the power (Gal. 5:16-23) to (c) obey God selflessly for the cause of CHRIST'S glory, Phil. 2:5-13. (d) In response, we will avoid inner unrest by finding all events in life so monitored and controlled by God that we will be eternally rewarded ABOVE the proportion to how "bad" it gets from the earthly perspective, cf. Phil. 1:12-21, 22-24 and 2 Cor. 4:8-18!*

***Lesson:** When man focused on pleasing himself, he ruined his ability to find happiness. God calls us to LOSE self in Christ, thereby turning this life's worst broken dreams into victories with enormous eternal rewards!*

**Conclusion: (To illustrate the solution . . . )**

Seventeen is a fairytale age for a young woman. She is near her high school graduation, preparing to enter life, perhaps to get a good college education, get married, settle down and have a family. She is at the age when her dreams are all ahead of her.

However, for Lee Ezell, a new convert to Christ, her glistening hopes at age seventeen turned into a brutal nightmare when she was raped by a co-worker in 1963 which resulted in pregnancy. She fled from San Francisco to Los Angeles to hide her condition lest others not understand, and to give up her newborn daughter for adoption.

In Lee's own words in her book, The Missing Piece (Bantam Books), she described her condition as one of "shock, disbelief and pain." Such bad things were not supposed to happen to Christians like her! She didn't understand why God had allowed it to happen.

However, through the help of Christian counselors, peers and speakers, she was directed to Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

**Another favorite passage came from Philippians 4:11b, 12: ". . . for I have learned to be content no matter what the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether we are well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."**

Through the years, Lee married Harold, and was even reunited with her birth daughter, Julie Makimaa and her adoptive mother, Eileen Anderson. Julie is saved, and **with Lee, Julie shares on platforms across the nation what Christ can do to bring healing and spiritual victory to mother and child EVEN IF the child was conceived by rape. Contrary to current secular thinking, Lee's testimony shows abortion is not necessary because of cases of rape!** ("No Fairytale Faith For Ezell," Dee. J. Swilling, Church Life correspondent)

**Where the world looks at soured dreams as impossible hurdles, God can take the downtrodden and produce great eternal victory through Jesus Christ!**