

Phil. 3:1

I. Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord (1a)

“rejoice” is a key word in Philippians. Paul uses it in 1:18, 2:17, 18, 28, 4:4, 10 as well as this passage. Joy is a normal characteristic of a thoughtful Christian, not because of outward circumstances (which change often), but because of the truth of what Christ has accomplished, and its result for the inward circumstances and eternal destiny of the Christian.

II. Writing this is no harm to me, and does you good (1b-c)

Paul addresses the motivation for his writing. It is not a negative for him, and it is potentially a positive for them. This is not so much a contrast between these two realities, as a ‘both/and.’ It is a good thing on both ends, for both parties.

This is a reflection of the great relationship between Paul and this church.

This may refer backward to “rejoice,” but in light of the idea of safety in 1c, it may also refer ahead to the warning in 3:2-11

A. It is not bothersome to me to write these things to you (1b)

“bothersome” has the connotation of something that would cause someone to hesitate, to be reluctant.

Paul, by using the understated negative of this idea, probably means something like, “not only is it not a bother, it is a joy, a privilege for me to write these things”

B. And it is a safe thing for you (1c)

“safe thing” has the connotation of a safety/security feature, a safeguard like a guardrail. Hopefully it is not necessary to state this, but just in case, Paul will say it for their spiritual protection.