

Date: September 23, 2009

Reading: Philippians

I don't enjoy eating in restaurants which are dimly lit. For one thing, I have difficulty seeing in dim light because of an eye problem and thus reading the menu can be a challenge in some establishments. Although I understand that many restaurants are probably trying to create



mood with their lighting, dim light has the added advantage of not allowing patrons to clearly see if tables, silverware and plates are clean. The waitperson brings your food, but you can hardly see what it is that you are eating in some places because of the dim lighting. I sometimes wonder if I would still eat in some restaurants if I could clearly see the food!

Paul's relationship with the Philippians was apparently very close. They had supported him in the preaching of the gospel (1:5; 2:25; 4:10-18) and the apostle had a strong emotional attachment to the brethren at Philippi (1:3-8).

As was his habit, Paul composed a request to God on their behalf (1:9-11).

^{NKJ} Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul wanted the love of the Philippians to "abound still more and more," but in conjunction with knowledge and discernment. Such understanding would enable these Christians to do two things. They would be able to recognize the things "that are excellent" and (perhaps as a result?) would be "sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."

The word translated "sincere" (eivlikrin_{h,j}) is an interesting one. It is thought by some lexicographers to be essentially the combination of two words – one meaning sun or sunlight and the other meaning to discern or judge. Thayer suggests that this word means "found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun's light."

Like the food in some restaurants, some things look fine in dim light because imperfections or weaknesses are not visible to the eye in such light. When such things are examined in bright light, however, their true condition becomes apparent. Some people appear to be holy at first glance, but when the light of close scrutiny is shined on them, obvious and serious character flaws jump out at the viewer. Paul's prayer for the Philippians was that they would be sincere, i.e., that their lives would stand up to scrutiny in bright light.

Hopefully our lives will stand up to the bright light of divine judgment!

Stay out of the dark,
Allen