

Bible Study January 25, 2023

PHILIPPIANS 4 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

¹ Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer

² I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³ Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Paul did not warn the Philippian church of doctrinal errors, but he did address some relational problems. These two women had been workers for Christ in the church. Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts. It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for his Kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause. But we have no excuse for remaining unreconciled. Do you need to be reconciled to someone today? If you're facing a conflict you can't resolve, don't let the tension build into an explosion. Don't withdraw or resort to cruel power plays. Don't stand idly by and wait for the dispute to resolve itself. Instead, seek the help of those known for peacemaking.

The identity of this "true partner" remains a mystery. It could be Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, or a comrade of Paul's in prison. It could also be someone named Syzygus, the Greek word for "partner." Paul mentions this person specifically in their role as a peacemaker.

Those "whose names are written in the Book of Life" are all who are marked for salvation through their faith in Christ (also see Luke 10:17-20; Revelation 20:11-15).

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- **Prayer - Proseushe (Pro-Sue-Hay) Meaning - A Fixed position in a place outside of your normal worship (Stop Drop and Pray)**

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

It's not enough to hear or read the Word of God or even to know it well. We must also put what God is teaching us into practice. How easy it is to listen to a sermon and forget what the preacher said. How easy it is to read the Bible and not think about how to live differently. How easy it is to debate what a passage means and not live out that meaning. Exposure to God's Word is not enough. It must lead to obedience.

God's Provision

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

In 1 Corinthians 9:11-18, Paul wrote that he didn't accept gifts from the Corinthian church because he didn't want to be accused of preaching only to get money. But Paul maintained that a church has the responsibility to support God's ministers (1 Corinthians 9:14). He accepted the Philippians' gift because they gave it willingly and because he was in need.

¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. (independent of External circumstances) ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

¹⁴ Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

¹⁵ And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

¹⁹ And my God will supply every need (Necessities) of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

We can trust that God will always meet our needs. Whatever we actually need on earth he will always supply, even if, like Paul, it is the courage to face death. We must remember, however, the difference between our wants and our needs. Most people want to feel good and avoid discomfort and pain. We may not get all that we want. But by trusting in Christ, our attitudes and appetites can change from wanting everything to accepting his provision and power to live for him.

Final Greetings

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

There were many Christians in Rome; some were even in Caesar's household. Perhaps Paul, while awaiting trial, was making converts of the Roman civil service! Paul sent greetings from these Roman Christians to the believers at Philippi. The Good News had spread to all strata of society, linking people who had no other bond but Christ. The Roman Christians and the Philippian Christians were brothers and sisters because of their unity in Christ. Believers today are also linked to others across cultural, economic, and social barriers. Because all believers are brothers and sisters in Christ, let us live like God's true family.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

In many ways, the Philippian church was a model congregation. It was made up of many different kinds of people who were learning to work together. But Paul recognized that problems could arise, so in his thank-you letter he prepared the Philippians for difficulties that could crop up within a body of believers. Although a prisoner in Rome, Paul had learned the true secret of joy and peace—imitating Christ and serving others. By focusing our minds on Christ, we will learn unity, humility, joy, and peace. We will also be motivated to live for him, and we will be examples for others to follow. We can do this confidently because we have “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” with us.