

## Philippians 4

In Chapter 3 we saw Paul's warnings about Judaizers and then his advice of not clinging to the past but rather keeping focused on the present reality of a guaranteed future with Christ!

(Philippians 4:1 NKJV) Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast **in the Lord**, beloved.

Philippians 3:20-21 NKJV (20) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Standing fast for a future promise can be difficult. Especially for one for which we have no frame of reference. A glorified body in Heaven. But, that one little phrase that we almost gloss over, is critical: "in the Lord". (((Paul says it 9 times in this letter and in 1 Corinthians))).

(Philippians 4:2 NKJV) I implore Euodia (yoo-di-o) and I implore Syntyche (soon-too-kay) to be of the same mind in the Lord. (3) And I urge you also, true companion (sood-zoo-gos yokefellow and may actually be a proper name for a man in the church), help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

Paul takes a moment to address an issue of unity within the church. Two women whom Paul knew and with whom he worked side by side were having a disagreement. The word "implore" means, I exhort, I beg, please. Paul was always focused on church unity. Disagreements are common but if the parties will not reconcile, the whole body suffers. This is why Paul humbly asks them to be of the same mind. As an apostle, he could have approached the situation in a heavy-handed manner – like "be in unity" or "be gone".

Notice also that he does not take sides, but he pleads with each. He reminds them now about their future (their names are in the Book of Life).

Paul solicits the help of a man whose name means "yokefellow". It apparently fits him well as Paul says "true yokefellow". He asks him to mediate the difficulties the women are having. He tells him (or reminds him) that the women are co-laborers with Paul and others in ministering the gospel.

Any sort of disagreement will certainly cause disunity within the church. But Paul was also acutely aware of how our behavior can affect how the gospel is received by those outside the church!

(Philippians 4:4 NKJV) Rejoice **in the Lord** always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Why did Paul say this now? It seems disconnected to the prior 3 verses. Or is it?

(this is a remedy and even preventive medicine)

And what do we rejoice about?

1. That Jesus never changes and his mercy endures forever
2. That He is faithful even when we are not
3. That He is righteous even when we are not
4. That His grace is always sufficient
5. That His blood, applied to the doorposts of our hearts does not fade or lose its efficacy.
6. His arms are open wide to receive us if we fail him
7. His promises are always true through all time
8. He will bring us home when the Father says, “Son, go get your bride”

I can probably go on for about an hour or so, but I think you get the point. We have more than enough reason to rejoice. This is NOT an emotional response but a heart conviction to have joy in all things.

*(See: Philippians 1:4; Philippians 1:18; Philippians 1:25; Philippians 2:2; Philippians 2:16-18; Philippians 2:28; Philippians 3:1; Philippians 3:3; Philippians 4:1; Philippians 4:4.)*

**(Philippians 4:5 NKJV)** Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

Some translations say “moderation”, or “appropriate”, or “reasonable”, or “considerate”, or “patient” and the like.

The word, in the Greek is a combination of a word that can mean what I just listed but it is prefixed by “epi”. Epi is a special word that adds power or importance to the other word.

The point for those of us who don’t care much for grammar is that Jesus is “at hand”. Paul could mean that He is ready to return, or He was close by however, most believe he meant that Jesus was coming soon. This isn’t a veiled threat but a call for us to continue steady in our walks. Do not the servants want their master to be pleased with how they took care of all his possessions which he left behind?

**(Philippians 4:6 NKJV)** Be anxious for **nothing**, 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 minds through Christ Jesus.

Peace of mind is something I rarely have in this world. And, the sad thing is, I could have much more if I obeyed these two verses. Look at the superlatives: **nothing, everything, all**. Paul is speaking for Jesus here who taught this in His ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (Matthew 6:25). These three words are, in a sense, attributes of God, for only God can use these words and truly mean it. Therefore, “in Christ”, we too can accept them. In Christ, both our hearts and minds will be protected for He will do it for us!

Paul said something similar in 1 Thessalonians:

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NKJV (16)** Rejoice always, **(17)** pray without ceasing, **(18)** in everything give thanks; for **this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you**.

Once again we are faced with seeing the world through our eyes or through His. He has continual joy because He knows that there is a huge “amen” coming at the end of the age.

**(Philippians 4:8 NKJV)** Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are noble*,

whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of **good report**, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Noble = true; good report = good reputation.

Mediate = think on. But, it has the connotation of self-examination, like taking a personal inventory. So, perhaps, it's not as much positive thinking as it is, "am I walking the walk?"

It's a lot more difficult to see the log in our eyes than the tiny speck in others eye. But, of course, the good news is, whenever you see yourself falling short, pray and then allow the Holy Spirit do His work of transformation.

**(Philippians 4:9 NKJV)** The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul wants the Philippians (and all readers of this letter) to be at peace with God. Nearly 50 times in his letters he commented on the peace of God. He preached the "gospel of peace" given to us by the God of peace thru the Prince of peace, Jesus, so that we can keep our bond of peace with Him and each other.

**(Philippians 4:10 NKJV)** But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.

This is where Paul thanks the church for their generous gift and to let them know that he understands that they could not get it to him sooner. It has caused him much joy and refreshing.

**(Philippians 4:11 NKJV)** Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: **(12)** I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

This was always Paul's heart. His focus on Jesus and on his true citizenship in heaven caused Paul not to be tossed about by the circumstances of life. Growing up in legalism led me to believe that all of life's events were either punishment for doing wrong or blessings for doing right. What a mess!!

**Romans 7:24 NKJV** O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Only Jesus the Christ can deliver us! So, with our Gracious Savior all things **are** possible;

**(Philippians 4:13 NKJV)** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Paul says "all things". Many immediately start thinking about how His strength will deliver us from trials and tribulations. That's only part of it: Yes! Sometimes we are delivered FROM them and sometimes we are delivered THROUGH them. Both of these end up at the same place of deliverance. But what about those times when we are not delivered at all? Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was never removed. Jesus strengthened him to live with it, still doing what he was called to do and doing it all for the glory of God.

But there's still another side. "all things" can include blessings! He said "all", didn't he? **Why would you need the LORD's strength in your blessings?**

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(Philippians 4:14 NKJV) Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.

The word "nevertheless" means that Paul was sensitive to their feelings. He just finished saying, "I am content in all things". He didn't want to give them the impression that their gift was unnecessary but rather quite welcomed during his time in Rome.

(Philippians 4:15 NKJV) Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. (16) For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. (17) Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. (18) Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

He further praises them for their gifts because few other churches helped him. They even sent gifts when he was preaching in another church!

There's a principle here that Paul is revealing to them. I learned this also from my Rabbi. Someone once offered to buy him a suit. He told them no thanks (when he knew in his heart that he was being prideful) but the Lord spoke to him about his attitude AND told him he was stealing the man's blessing. He turned around and called out to him, "yes, you can buy me a suit and God bless you for thinking of me". Yes, **giving** turns out to be an even bigger blessing than **receiving**.

Paul told them their giving is like spiritual fruit that does not go unnoticed by the LORD; He then expounds on that thought and tells them that

1. He is full to overflowing
2. That he recognizes that their gifts were sacrificial, not coming from those of wealth but rather from those who had little.
3. This, like all good sacrifices to God, was acceptable and God was well pleased for they did it in love and certainly in faith.

(Philippians 4:19 NKJV) And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Paul reminds them that God will be the One who supplies their "need". It is singular. Their need would be met according to His glorious riches **IN** Christ Jesus, which is a better translation than "BY". And His riches are endless. He will pour into them as empty vessels filling them to overflowing.

Is this a promise of "megabucks" winnings? No. The promise is to supply each one who gave, and His supply would meet a need. And our need is Jesus.

Does this negate a material blessing? No. but we have to keep in check our motives for

giving!

(Philippians 4:20 NKJV) Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

And like we pray here every time we gather together, Glory to God in deeds, thoughts, and words.

(Philippians 4:21 NKJV) Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

Notice first that there are just a few saints but every believer is a saint.

(Philippians 4:22 NKJV) All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

We don't know if those in Caesar's household were family or some of the many guards, servants or others who attended to Paul. Paul was a prisoner of Nero and perhaps is letting the Philippians know that there was fruit being born even in the emperor's palace.

(Philippians 4:23 NKJV) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Our Christian lives begin and end with the Grace of our Lord. Amen!!