

# Philippians 4

[See *Acts 28.30-31* – in custody in Rome]

## Philippians 4.1-3

**V1 – "Therefore" – Based on what?** *Phil. 3* - the ultimate goal of salvation (*3.20* – our citizenship being in heaven)

-**Terms of endearment Paul had toward Philippians?** Beloved, brethren, joy, crown, beloved (twice)

-**How was this church his "crown"?** Probably the best congregation he had established

The church at Philippi had not given Paul any trouble (think about the church at Corinth and the churches in Galatia)

-But he didn't have to worry about the church at Philippi

-Notice Paul's deep affection in this verse

-Probably the worst thing about being in prison was that Paul was not able to visit the church at Philippi

-No other letter of Paul is like this one in expressions of love for the people

"Stand firm" = Paul's example in *Acts* (see *Phil. 1.16*) = he never backed down from preaching what people needed to hear

**V2 – Where in the letter had Paul urged them to be united?** *Phil. 2.1-4*

-**What had happened between Euodia and Syntyche?** Some kind of argument (not doctrinal)

-**Why didn't Paul go into details or take sides?** It probably was not important, and maybe the two women could not even remember

-**What did Paul urge for these two women?** To live together in harmony

-**Had Paul had his arguments?** Yes, with Barnabas (*Acts 15.36-41*) over John Mark

-but see: *2 Tim. 4.11* and *Col. 4.10*

Lesson: We are going to have disagreements even in the best of times in the best of congregations

-Strong-willed people are going to disagree, but only strong-willed people can keep the church from falling apart and disbanding (or getting taken over by false teachers)

-Solution: Learn to live in harmony

-**Can two Christians take each other to court?** No, *1 Cor. 6.1-5*

**V3 – Much discussion over the identity of the "true comrade"**

-Maybe one of the elders, maybe the preacher, maybe someone who received the letter and read it to the congregation

-**What do we learn about Euodia and Syntyche?** Helpers of the apostle Paul

-**How could they have helped?** Financially, maybe in working with the women of the congregation (older women are to teach the younger ones)

-So they were both good, faithful Christian women

-**How were the Christians at Philippi to help Euodia and Syntyche?** To help them to get along together better

**V3b** - They all helped spread the gospel: *my fellow workers*

- In some congregations, the load is placed on a few people
- No one will remember our names in a hundred years
- But let us hope that faithful Christians will take our places when we depart
- They will say: *There were faithful Christians in the opening decades of the Twenty-first Century*
- Our goal?** To have our names in the Lamb's book of life – **Read Rev. 20.11-15**

## **Philippians 4.4-7**

**V 4** – We as Christians are to be happy people

- What parts of the Christian life lead the way to happiness? Examples?** No drunkenness, drugs, smoking, adultery, gambling (debts), divorce, suicide, etc.

**V 5** – *V 4* – theoretical, *V 5* – practical

- KJV: *moderation*, RSV: *forbearance*, NIV and NASB: *gentleness*

-**What attitude are we to have in the church?** Not to insist on getting our own way, being more willing to suffer for the sake of peace

-**Why has this attitude?** Lord is near and will take care of us

**V 6** – **Anxiety vs. concern? Difference?**

-We are not to worry to a harmful extent

-Example: If hungry, we are to work for food

-If out of work, we are to search for a job, but worry is forbidden – **Read Matt. 6.25-34**

-**When we have needs, what are we to do?** Make our requests known to God

-Those who say that the Holy Spirit only operates through the Word (Bible) today need to think about this verse

-Why make requests to God if he only works through his Word?

-We all have copies of the Bible

-This writer was at a lectureship several years when the speaker was adamantly saying that God only operates through the Word today

-But at the end of his lesson, an announcement was made about a little girl in the congregation who had suddenly taken very ill and was on the way to the hospital

-Everyone was urged to pray for the little girl

-But why? If the Spirit only operates through the Word, why not just hand her a copy of the Bible and tell her to read it?

-**When we make requests, what else are we to do?** Offer thanksgiving to God

**V 7** – **As we mature as Christians, what will happen?** Greater and greater inner peace

-See *John 14.27*

-A deep peace begins to develop in our lives

## **Philippians 4.8-9**

**V 8-9** – Six things that we are to think about

**V 8** – 1. True = the truth of the matter

- There are several very dangerous false doctrines attacking the Lord's church today, and our first job is to find out the truth (what the Bible says about these doctrines)
- 2. Honorable = avoiding appearance of evil
- Some things are technically not sinful, but leave the wrong impressions and bring dishonor to the Lord's church
- 3. Right (KJV: *just*, RSV: *just*, fair = being fair with other people
- 4. Pure = indicates moral purity and self-control
- 5. Lovely = dignified – **What kind of person is a "lovely person"?**
- 6. Good repute = spoken well of by other Christians
- "We are what we think"*

**V 9** – **How did Paul teach?** Precept and example (his third time to say something like this)  
 -Note: "*Practice these things*" – we have to work at it

## **Philippians 4.10-23**

**V 10** – The real purpose of this letter: to thank them for their financial support of him in Rome  
 -**The story?** The church had sent him aid and had to stop for period of time  
 -They were now sending help again  
 -**Had they ever lost concern for Paul?** No

**V 11** – **Was Paul starving to death in prison?** No  
 -**What was the answer to not having everything he wanted?** Not to want so much  
 -**What had he learned?** To be content with what he had  
 -A great lesson, especially at Christmas time, but really for all year-long  
 -**What does American advertising tell us about new products?** They will make us happy

**V 12** – **What two extremes had he had?** Humble means and prosperity (maybe as a tentmaker, maybe before his conversion)

**V 13** – Many of us say, "*I can do all things....*"  
 -If time, see the poem "Invictus" by William Henley  
 -It is an example of the thinking the world (relying on self, rather than on Christ)  
 -This was the favorite poem of Timothy McVeigh, who blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City, OK, April 19, 1995, and killed 168 people  
 -But what was the source of Paul's confidence? Jesus Christ  
 -There are many man-made systems of thought for building up self-confidence: Dale Carnegie (when I was growing up), Transcendental Meditation, assertiveness training, Scientology, etc.  
 -They may attract many followers, but the real answer is here in *Phil. 4.13*  
 -Paul could face all circumstances of life through his faith in Jesus

**V 14** – He could bear all things, but he appreciated the help of the Philippian church  
 -God used the Philippians as a tool to help support the apostle Paul  
 -Paul didn't want to leave the impression that their support was not welcomed

**V 15** – Which congregation had helped Paul when all others had not? Philippi

**V 16** – Probably after establishing the church in Philippi on the Second Missionary Journey  
-So from its beginning, the church at Philippi had been a mission-minded church

**V 17** – Real benefit of doing mission work: it helps the local congregation  
-**How is a congregation helped by being involved in missions work?** (thought question)  
-The church at Crystal had supported dozens of mission works since it became self-supporting in 1980, but has not gone bankrupt yet!

**V 18** – Was Paul suffering at this time? No  
-**Who had brought the gift?** Epaphroditus  
-**Our giving?** Like a sacrifice to God (a pleasing aroma)

**V 19** – What would God do in return for their giving? Supply all their needs

**V 20** – All glory was to be to God  
-*Amen*: this is certain - it is beyond question

**V 21-23** – Final words of farewell

**V 21** – Final greetings  
-We are to greet one another today as Christians

**V 22**- Where had Paul been doing his personal evangelism? Where he was: among Caesar's guards and household workers  
-Old saying in church work: *Bloom where you are planted.*

**V 23** – Farewell

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