

Philippians 4

v1

“Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and yearn to see, my delight and crown (wreath of victory)”

- Would Paul be able to write this of me? Would Paul consider me his beloved brother? His delight? Would Paul say of me that I am a fellow labourer?
- Lord, please teach me to be a fellow labourer in your gospel. Teach me Lord to humbly serve those around me with your word and your life and love.
- Lord, please teach me to live as Paul did in full surrender to your will and glory.

“stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.”

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing and being continually aware that your labour in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose].*
- Storms will come, distractions will call, temptations will pull, enemies will attack... But we must stand firm. We have a responsibility to stand. We have a command that we are to follow/obey.

v2

“I entreat and advise Euodia and I entreat and advise Syntyche to agree and to work in harmony in the Lord.”

- It would seem that there was a reason for Paul to mention these two by name and to remind/exhort them to be in harmony.
- In life there will often be individuals with whom we really struggle. They will be close, close enough to cause friction, close enough to cause frustration and harmony/unity to be affected/lost. These things can start so trivial but become so big, so distracting and so infuriating!
- Paul reminds us to be “in the Lord”. In The Lord there can be no disunity. This really hits at the root/source of the problem. We are not told the issue between Euodia and Syntyche but whatever it was, it was not in The Lord. Somewhere the flesh had gotten in and had been given space to grow.
- In The Lord we will remember how much that we have been forgiven, in The Lord will prefer one another, in The Lord we will serve with all humility and grace. In The Lord is a singularity, we are all in HIM!!

v3

“help these [two women to keep on cooperating], for they have toiled along with me in [the spreading of] the good news (the Gospel)”

- We often, to our shame, put so much focus on higher roles/positions. We want to be seen to serve the esteemed people. It pleases us to be known by them... But Paul here gives focus and attention to some unnamed women... Unnamed but yet they have also have this high praise of being called fellow labourers.
- May we look and be aware of those who are serving faithfully around us. God moves ever so mightily in what we consider “the small things”. Let us be ready and willing to serve alongside these people and to support them in their work. Let us stand with them in prayer and perhaps also in service.

v4

“Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, gladden yourselves in Him]; again I say, Rejoice!”

- If we would learn to obey just this one command... Oh how wonderful life would be!
- 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. [25] After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*
- It's in remembering, rejoicing and singing God's praises that we find His presence and victory! When we lift up Jesus in praise, He will draw all men unto Himself! It is in remembering Him and all that He is and all that He has done that we find joy and rest, hope and peace! But it is not enough to only remember! There is a victory in the singing!
- Psalm 22:3 *But You are holy, O You who inhabits the praises of Israel.*
- 1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:*
- God literally dwells in the place where His praises are offered. When we bring a sacrifice of praise, when we sing in the valley and sing in the fire... We bring His presence into our hearts! He comes. The chains in our hearts will be broken, the darkness will become light, the mourning will turn to dancing as we take our eyes off of our flesh/trials and sing of our Saviour, Redeemer and God!

v5

“Let all men know and perceive and recognize your unselfishness (your considerateness, your forbearing spirit). The Lord is near [He is coming soon].”

- Let the love of Jesus be seen. Let His love, selflessness and preference for others be unashamedly on display in your life. For it is Jesus who will get all the glory!
- 1 Samuel 18:28 *And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David...*
- Acts 4:13 ... and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.
- John 13:35 *By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves].*
- There ought to be an outward show of an inward reality. Christ's Life WILL live!! His Light WILL shine!!

v6-7

“in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God.”

- This is a description of a truly intimate relationship with God.
- Paul says in “everything”! However dramatic or menial; however insignificant or consequential; whatever the time, whatever the situation, whatever the context. Bring it all before The Lord. Bring every care, every concern, every need, desire, hurt and failure. Come with liberty, come with welcome, come with honesty and humility...
- But come with thanksgiving! Bring everything before The Lord but always come remembering all that He is, all that He has done, how He has met every need, how He has freely given Salvation, forgiveness, tender mercies and loving compassions, wisdom, freedom and victory!

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

- When we truly remember Him... We will be much guarded with peace.
- Minds at rest and hearts in peace. Looking unto Jesus and abiding, resting wholly in Him, in His secret place.

v8

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honourable and honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely and lovable, whatever things are kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these things [fix your minds on them]."

- In short, keep your minds fixed on Christ and all that pertains to Him.

- Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- There is such a precious protection in keeping this verse in our mind often. Let us print it out and place it in our bedrooms, above our computer screens, near our televisions, in our workplace... Be reminded often to keep your mind on Christ/His Word and off of yourself, your lust and your circumstance.

- *Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

v9

"Practice what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and model your way of living on it, and the God of peace will be with you."

- John 14:21,23 The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [too] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him. [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.]... [23] Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him.

- James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.

- James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- We cannot pass off this teaching as just an optional extra for those who wish to be "spiritual". This is a command and an urgent encouragement in love.

- Paul isn't concerned with making disciples of himself and the proof of this is in the final sentence. We can only have the peace of God as we walk in The Spirit and walk in intimacy with Him. It is not that we religiously imitate Paul but that we follow after him as he follows after Christ. Then, as Paul says, we will enjoy the benefit/blessing of such a walk.

v11-12

"for I have learned, in whatever state I am in, with that to be content."

- We should take much encouragement from these verses. Paul stresses that he has "learned". The "great" apostle Paul had to learn contentment! Let us take heart in our failure to be content that it is something that we CAN learn and should seek to learn.

- It may have taken multiple trial and multiple situations... So let us press on to learn and maintain this heart of rest in our Saviour. That in all things we might be content with the lot that He has prepared for us.

v13

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

- I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency.

- This verse is so often taken out of context. People take this short line and twist it to mean that they can choose any goal that they set for themselves and that God will give them the power to achieve their own aims. That is not at all what Paul is saying!

- Read in context, Paul is saying that He has learned that whatever situation he finds himself, whether in persecution or comfort He can glory God in Jesus Christ! He can suffer need, go hungry, be beaten, shipwrecked or abused and still be a vessel unto honour for His Heavenly Father. He can be abounding in provisions, full, comfortable and wealthy and still be a vessel unto honour for our Heavenly Father. Paul has learned to be content in every circumstance and His learning and His strength are through Christ!!

- 2 Peter 1:3 According as His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

v14-18

"I do seek and am eager for the fruit which increases to your credit [the harvest of blessing that is accumulating to your account]."

- Paul, recognising his role as an apostle and travelling minister of the gospel, understood the blessing of giving and serving as a body.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver.

- Acts 20:35 I have showed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

v19

"And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

- A precious promise in scripture that we can cling to and build our faith upon.

- EVERY NEED!! There will be nothing lacking! Our Heavenly Father will supply all that we need to serve and glorify Him.

- *Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack.*

- I have seen firsthand this promised lived and proved. Truly He has never failed my family and He truly does provide every need. He is truly Jehovah Jireh. He is truly Beer-Lahai-Roi.

- Take hold of this promise. Claim it by faith and prove it to be true. As you serve The Lord and walk in His ways prove that He is faithful. Hallelujah!!

- *Psalm 34:10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

v22

"especially those of Caesar's household."

- There is no boundary to The Gospel. There is no stronghold that can keep it out.

- What an encouragement to the church to know that there were believers in the very household of Caesar. Praise The Lord!