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FIRST A/G FORT MYERS, FL  
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Session 9

**PHILIPPIANS**  
**The Letter of Joy**  
**CHAPTER 4 (Verses 1-5)**

**PUSH- BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY & BARCLAY NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY**

**RECAP OF CHAPTER 1:1-3:7**

- Philippi was the church that blessed Paul's heart the most. They were the ones who had reciprocated his love and had lived their faith out in a purity that other churches he established had not.
- The city of Philippi was a miniature version of Rome. It was a "Rome away from Rome" in every respect.
- (1:13) "The whole praetorian guard" came to know that Paul was IN CHAINS FOR CHRIST!

**POWER VERSE: (1:21) "FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN."**

**POWER VERSES: (2:6-11)** Scholars consider this the greatest passage Paul wrote about Jesus!

**POWER VERSES: (2:12-13) CONTINUE TO WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING**

- (2:12) The Greek word for "work out" is *katergazesthai*. It means to bring to completion, showing that although we are gifted salvation by grace from God, we have personal responsibility to continue in that work of the Spirit through our obedience in walking out and working out our faith.
- (2:15) A Christian's life should be lived so beautifully that no one could find any fault with it. There is such a purity to it that it stands the test of all those who would try to come against it.
- (3:1) The word "further" in the Greek also means "finally." It was used by Paul in several Epistles when he is coming to the practical conclusion after the doctrinal portion of his letter or Epistle.
- (3:3) Paul gives us three examples of how true Christians are the true circumcision. "*Who serve God in spirit.*" "*Who boast in Jesus Christ.*" "*Who put no confidence in the flesh.*"
- (3:4-6) Paul's saying "if there's anyone who would could brag about having confidence in the flesh, it's me." I was the best of the best. Paul sets out to silence any comparison by the Jews from their standards of righteousness. "*Circumcised on the eighth day.*" "*Of the people of Israel.*" "*Of the tribe of Benjamin.*" "*A Hebrew of Hebrews.*" "*As for the law, a Pharisee.*" "*As to zeal, a persecutor of the church.*" "*As for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*"

**POWER VERSE: (3:7) BUT WHATEVER WERE GAINS TO ME I NOW CONSIDER LOSS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST.**

- (3:10) Paul's goal and aim was simple, yet profound. His sole desire was to know Christ! That's it.
- According to Paul, to know Christ intimately means to know the "power of His resurrection," the "participation in His sufferings" and "becoming like Him in His death".
- (3:12) Until another English translation of the Bible words it so beautifully, "I press on to try to grasp that for which I have been grasped by Jesus Christ."
- (vs14) The Greek word for "press on" is *epekteinomenos* was used speaking of a runner in a race straining at the finish line.

**PAUL'S CROWN AND JOY (4:1)**

- (vs1) Paul is revealing how incredibly deep his love and affection was for the Philippian church. Despite his dire circumstances in prison, their faith and friendship brought him incredible joy.
- PAUL JUST WENT THROUGH A LONG SESSION OF THE DANGERS, EMPTYNESS, AND DESTRUCTION THAT LEGALISM BRINGS. HE ALSO JUST TAUGHT HYPER GRACE & LAWLESSNESS BRINGS DEATH AS WELL.
- He "yearned" for his Christian friends and family. They were a source of happiness and pride for him.
- There are two Greek words used for crown. *Diadema* was the royal crown for a king. Paul uses the other Greek word *stephanos*; that crown was made of interwoven wild olive, parsley and bay leaves.

- It was a crown for a victor of athletic games, for the highest honored guest at an important banquet, or for those who had achieved their highest ambition or conquest.
- Paul is saying to the Philippian church, compared to all my other achievements for Christ, you are my greatest achievement. You are my pride and my joy. At our final banquet of God, you are my crown.
- THERE IS NO GREATER JOY THAN TO REACH SOMEONE FOR JESUS. TO KNOW THEY WILL BE WITH YOU FOR ETERNITY. TO KNOW THAT THEY'VE BEEN SAVED FROM HELL. TO SEE GOD MULTIPLY THROUGH THEM ETERNAL FRUIT IN HOW THEY LIVE, LOVE, AND LEAD THEIR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND THE WORLD.

**ILL: FOUGHT MY WHOLE LIFE BEING A PASTOR... NOW IT'S MY JOY. PEOPLE OF CALVARY WEST, BOSTON, HERE. SEEING ANYTHING I DO AS MAKING AN ETERNAL IMPACT & ENJOYING THAT FRIENDSHIP... AWESOME**

**ILL: FOLLOWING EXPLOITS ON FACEBOOK... SEEING PRIESTS, TORRES, ROSES, KUNKELS ALL IN ONE WEEK.**

**ILL: PASTOR BETZER & PASTOR DARLENE... YOU AND THEIR FAMILY ARE THEIR CROWN. I GET IT!**

- Three times in the first four verses of Chapter 4, Paul uses the charge “in the Lord” for good reason.
- “Stand firm in the Lord in this way dear friends”. The Greek word *stekete* is used for “stand firm”. It means to stand firm in the shock of a battle when an enemy is attacking.
- Paul is saying don't give into the pressure, temptation, or ease of trying to live in the flesh, whether it's in legalistic attempts of righteousness, or in indulging in sinful pleasures under the false idea that Jesus' grace covers unrepentant sins. He just said in Chapter 3:17 “join together in following my example.”
- Paul in that verse was saying “follow me, as I follow Christ”

**ILL: WE ALL NEED PEOPLE TO ENCOURAGE US, BUT MAKE SURE THEY'RE ARE FULLY FOLLOWING CHRIST.**

- Only when we “stand firm in the Lord” can we have the strength, character, and desires to resist all the temptations, evils, and carnality that are offered to us every day.

In vain the surge's angry shock,  
In vain the drifting sands:  
Unharm'd upon the eternal Rock  
The eternal City stands.

(iii) Paul bids the Philippians *to rejoice* in the Lord. The one thing all men need to learn about joy is that it has nothing to do with material things or with a man's outward circumstances. It is the simple fact of human experience that a man living in the lap of luxury can be wretched and a man in the depths of poverty can overflow with joy. A man upon whom life has apparently inflicted no blows at all can be gloomily or peevishly discontented and a man upon whom life has inflicted every possible blow can be serenely joyful.

In his rectorial address to the students of St. Andrews University, J. M. Barrie quoted the immortal letter which Captain Scott of the Antarctic wrote to him, when the chill breath of death was already on his expedition: “We are pegging out in a very comfortless spot. ... We are in a desperate state—feet frozen, etc., no fuel, and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and our cheery conversation.” The secret is this — happiness depends not on things or places, but always on persons. If we are with the right person, nothing else matters; and if we are not with the right person, nothing can make up for that absence. The Christian is in the Lord, the greatest of all friends; nothing can separate the Christian from his presence and so nothing can take away his joy.

## **HEALING DIVISIONS (4:2-3)**

- (vs2) Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche to “agree in the Lord.” When there's division between Christians the great unifier is their identity and submission to Jesus, not in their fleshly attempts at unity.
- For the Church, which is to be made up of every type of person from every type of background, race, language group, nationality, economic status, personality type, the only possible unifier is Christ.

- We can't love each other, if we haven't allowed Christ to fully love us, and if we haven't fully loved Him back. Jesus calls us to be one as He and the father are one! One!
- Paul is pleading with these two women to come into agreement "in the Lord." He's saying, "It's not about you. It's about Jesus who paid it all for you to be sisters. Your loyalty to each other is directly tied to your loyalty to Jesus." GET IT TOGETHER! GET TOGETHER, LITERALLY!

**ILL: HOW MANY DIVISIONS HAVE HAPPENED IN CHURCHES OVER WHEN SOMEONE MAKES IT ABOUT THEMSELF AND NOT ABOUT JESUS. HIS CHURCH BECOMES THEIR CHURCH. HIS MINISTRY IS THEIRS, ETC.**

- **ARE WE KINGS OR SHEPHERDS?**

**ILL: FORGIVENESS... DISUNITY IN JOE HUNKIN'S CHURCH... ROLLY & I SPEAKING**

- (vs3) These two women obviously were close to Paul, were strong in their ministry together at one point and were mature enough to know better.
- There is only conjecture on what their quarrel was about. Does it really matter? Often times, we want to know the juicy details and the play-by-play drama. Paul simply pointed them and the church both to find unity and agreement in Jesus.
- He mentions the unity they all have in that their "names are in the book of life." In other words, is this quarrel bigger than Jesus, unity in His Church, and that we are an eternal family?

**ILL: BIG DEAL OR LITTLE DEAL**

- What's sad is their lasting testimony. Clement is known as a peacemaker. These women as peace breakers. We don't know the rest of the story. But, isn't that often the case?

**ILL: WHAT'S OUR LASTING TESTIMONY? A PERSON WHO BUILT THE CHURCH? A PERSON WHO TORE DOWN THE CHURCH? A PERSON WHO HAD TO BE RIGHT? OR A PERSON WHO MADE THINGS RIGHT?**

- What is beautiful about this passage is the underlying fact that women had a prominent place in leadership in the Philippian church.
- In Greek culture women were supposed to be seen and speak as little as possible.
- Paul obviously saw the incredible value of women just like Jesus did. This was revolutionary.

**ILL: KIRK PRIEST ON THE FACT THAT ROMANS WAS PROBABLY READ LIKE A MONOLOGUE... PREACHED TO THE HOUSE CHURCHES OF ROME BY A WOMAN! PRETTY COOL.**

**ILL: ASSEMBLIES OF GOD... OVER 60% OF THE CHURCHES IN THE FIRST 20-30 YEARS STARTED BY WOMEN!**

**ILL: WE HAVE WOMEN SITTING HERE WHO COULD TEACH TO YOU. GAIL ROSS. SHARON McLAUGHLIN.**

**REJOICE IN THE LORD (4:4-5)**

**POWER VERSE (4:4) REJOICE IN THE LORD AT ALL TIMES. I WILL SAY IT AGAIN—REJOICE!**

- (vs4) "Rejoice in the Lord." Everything Paul is doing points his brothers and sisters in Philippi to the centrality, power, salvation, freedom, friendship and joy in Jesus Christ.
- "Don't be distracted by legalists, hyper-grace people, hardships, divisions, drama, or anything else."
- Paul, who could have everything to complain about, is rejoicing in Jesus, his church family, eternal life and victory. When we have true focus, perspective and intimacy in Jesus, nothing should get us down.
- The first mention of "rejoice" was the importance of rejoicing and refocusing.
- But, it's almost as if Paul, as he was writing, was analyzing his circumstances, Philippi's circumstances, all that was uncertain, but came back to the centrality of who Jesus is for us, to us, through us and the promise of guaranteed victory and life in heaven. So, he again emphatically writes "I will say it again—Rejoice!"

**ILL: DEAR JOHN PHONE CALL IN SINGAPORE. MARTY SAMPSON "AND I WILL CLIMB THIS MOUNTAIN, AND I STEP OFF THE SHORE, AND I HAVE CHOSEN TO FOLLOW, TO BE BY YOUR SIDE FOREVER MORE"!**

- No matter what you are going through right now in life. In Christ, you can rejoice!

**4** Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

<sup>2</sup> I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### **Final Exhortations**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

### **Thanks for Their Gifts**

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. <sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Final Greetings**

<sup>21</sup> Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. <sup>22</sup> All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. <sup>1</sup>

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