

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church – Southfield, Michigan
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#hope in the field

Bible Study Series: Philippians
Unified Hope: Loving Christ as we Love One Another

“Exhortations and Thanksgiving” Philippians 4:1-23

Reflection Questions:

A. What experiences bring you the most contentment?

B. When was a time you felt contentment in the middle of problems or uncertainty?

Key Terms:

- ☐ Abundance
- ☐ Attitudes
- ☐ Believers
- ☐ Book of Life
- ☐ Church
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Contentment
- ☐ Dissension
- ☐ Example
- ☐ Generosity
- ☐ Gentleness
- ☐ Gifts
- ☐ God

- ☐ Gospel
- ☐ Grace
- ☐ Jesus Christ
- ☐ Joy
- ☐ Partnerships
- ☐ Peace
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Prayer
- ☐ Sacrifice
- ☐ Sharing
- ☐ Strength
- ☐ Thankfulness

Important Emphasis:

Philippians 4:18 Gives to us an initial reminder to remain conscious concerning the aroma that we are spreading among our Christian fellowship. So, What Aroma are you bringing to the fellowship? “Pepe Le Pew Personalities”

William Shakespeare stated, and I quote “All things be ready if our minds be so”

We should take note of the “**In the Lord**” Statements:

Stand Firm in the Lord – Paul doesn’t desire for them to be feeble in their faith. To stand firm means to be resolute against enemies and or opponents.

Harmony in the Lord- Paul gives them the foundation of a healthy faith.

Paul uses the word Urge or Entreat (parakalo “call alongside”) beg, encourage and consoling. Help or assist--it means to bring together. It is a word used in the gospel of Luke for fishermen pulling in the nets together.

Rejoice in the Lord- Paul provides the fortitude of our faith (in rejoice in everything) Repetition but this is also an imperative [authoritative command].

These are a few things that Paul desired for them to execute and the only way this could be done is **in the Lord!**

Paul is giving this advice from a place of love and from a place of joy. Joy is a leit motif [theme] of the letter and marks the transition.

Euodia vs Syntyche (instead it should be) Euodia and Syntyche

Euodia- Name means good journey or pleasant, meaning sweet smell. A play on Philippians 4:18

Syntyche- Fortuna Greek for a goddess of good luck. Its name bearer may have been a pagan. Syn (implies unity)

All of the things that Paul mentioned. They were in the interest of the Gospel. On the contrary the grudge they possessed was blinding their eyes from the greater goal in the gospel. There was a need for intercession, a checking of their interest and the integration of the principles.

There was a dispute at hand. Paul calls it out; He calls them out. The spirits of people must be called out of the shadows so that a spiritual strategy can be implemented to bring forth reconciliation in Christ. Verse 5 Paul speaks of their spirit. What is your

spirit like? How does it function. **Luke 9:55** There are times you can think you're doing the right thing but you can be going about it in the wrong way.

God's Peace

The peace of God appears only once in the New Testament

God gives us peace that (Surpasses) which means to "rise above"

Guarding your hearts--idea of guards keeping watch. Keep was the place at the center of the castle where valuables (and people) were put for safety. Guard your mind and Guard your heart!

There is a **List** that Paul gives us to think on. This will assist in the guarding of your heart and mind. Once their thoughts were aligned then they could discern the needs of others. When their thoughts were not in the right place they couldn't effectively minister appropriately to the need. Because disagreements can skew your discernment.

Did you Get It! We have a need according to Philippians 4:9:

They learned it
They received it
They heard it
They practiced it
They held it

Introduction

In Philippians 4:1, Paul had urged the Philippian believers to "stay true to the Lord." In order to stay true against false teaching, divisiveness, and persecution, the believers needed to develop certain attitudes in their lives.

Lesson Outline

- I. Push for Perfect Unity and Joy -- in the Lord (4:1-4)
- II. Push for the Peace of God -- in the Lord (4:5-7)
- III. Push for the Presence of the God of Peace -- in the Lord (4:8-9)
- IV. Push for Peaceful Contentment – in the Lord (4:10-14)
- V. Push for Prosperity and Abundance – in the Lord (4:15-23)

Exploring the Text

I. Push for Perfect Unity and Joy -- in the Lord (4:1-4)

4 Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, whom I long to see, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. ² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. ³ Indeed, true companion, I ask you also, help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement as well as the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

4:1 Because of these amazing and certain promises, the believers in Philippi ought to stay true to the Lord—standing against false teaching or divisiveness from within and persecution from without. Paul referred to the Philippians as his _____ and _____ (reward), proof that his labor had not been in vain (2:16). This congregation was dear to his heart. His words to them were of vital importance, for he cared about their very souls.

4:2 Paul not only warned the Philippian church of _____ errors (3:1–4:1), he also addressed some _____ problems. Two women, Euodia and Syntyche, had been workers for Christ in the church—perhaps deacons. Their broken relationship was no small matter: Many had become believers through their efforts (see 4:3), but their quarrel was causing _____ in the church. We do not know the reason for the disagreement, but Paul pled with them to settle it. He expected them to work it out themselves. The _____ of the church was to be their highest concern.

4:3 The identity of this _____ teammate [companion] remains a mystery. The reference may have been obvious to the Philippian believers. Paul knew that he could count on this man to help these women work out their disagreement so they could once again fellowship with one another and be good _____ in the church.

Euodia and Syntyche had worked hard with Paul in telling others the Good News. In many of the churches Paul visited, men were the key players, but women played a key role in founding the churches of Macedonia (see **Acts 16:14, 40; 17:4, 12**). At Philippi, women were the first to hear the gospel, and Lydia was the first convert. Those who were among the first to understand the gospel would be asked to teach. Thus, Euodia and Syntyche were to take an active part in teaching. Their quarrel was highly visible and threatened to disrupt the unity of the church. This intermediary was asked to help.

4:4 Paul returned to writing to the church at large: Be full of joy . . . _____! It seems strange that a man in prison would be telling a church to keep on rejoicing. But Paul's _____ teaches us an important lesson: Our inner attitudes do not have to reflect our outward circumstances. Paul was full of joy because he knew that no matter what happened to him, Jesus Christ was with him. While believers often encounter situations in which they cannot be happy, they can always rejoice and delight in the Lord.

Understanding the Text (4:1-4)

1. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian congregation? (4:1)

2. Why did Paul plead with Euodia and Syntyche? (4:2)

3. How had Euodia and Syntyche helped Paul in the past? (4:3)

4. How could Paul count on his "true companion" ["yoke fellow" (KJV) or "partner" (AMP)]"? (4:3).

5. What did Paul encourage Philippian believers to do always? (4:4)

Exploring the Text

II. Push for the Peace of God -- in the Lord (4:5-7)

⁵ *Let your gentle spirit be known to all people. The Lord is near.* ⁶ *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

4:5 Joy isn't always visible to others, but acts toward others are readily seen. So Paul encouraged the Philippians to let everyone see that they were considerate. They should have a spirit that is reasonable, fair-minded, and charitable.

4:6 Attitudes of _____ and _____, combined with constant awareness of Christ's return, should dispel any worry. Believers should not set aside life's responsibilities so as not to worry about them; Paul was focusing on believers' attitudes in daily life and as they faced opposition and persecution. Christians are to be responsible for their needs and their families and to care about and be concerned for others, but they are *not* to worry (**Matthew 6:25-34**).

Worrying is bad because it is a subtle form of distrust in God. When believers worry, they are saying that they don't trust that God will provide and they doubt that he cares or that he can handle their situation. Paul offered _____ as an antidote to worry. Instead, pray about everything. Prayer combats worry by allowing us catharsis [release, liberation]. We can off-load our stress onto God. Paul said to take all the energy that is used in worrying and put it into prayer. Worry and prayer cannot coexist.

4:7 If the Philippians would take to heart Paul's words in 4:4-6, then they will turn from _____ to prayer and be filled with God's _____. This peace is different from the _____ peace. It is peace that Jesus promised his disciples and all those who would follow him (**John 14:27**). True peace is not found in positive thinking, in absence of conflict, or in good feelings; it comes from knowing that God is in control. Believers are given peace *with* God when they believe (**Romans 5:1**), and they have the inner quiet of the peace *of* God as they daily walk with him.

Why does God give his people peace? Because it will _____ their hearts and minds. The Greek word for "guard" is a military term that means to surround and protect a garrison or city. The Philippians, living in a garrison [barracks] town, were familiar with the Roman guards who maintained watch, guarding the city from any outside attack. God's peace is like soldiers surrounding believers' hearts and minds (that

is, emotions and thoughts), securing them against threatening and harmful outside forces.

Understanding the Text (4:5-7)

6. How did Paul tell the Philippian Christians to treat others? (4:5)

7. How should an awareness of Christ's imminent return affect a person's attitude? (4:5-7)

8. What did Paul say about anxiety and worry? (4:6-7)

9. How can a believer enjoy the peace of God? (4:6-7)

III. Push for the Presence of the God of Peace – in the Lord (4:8-9)

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is ^[g]lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ As for the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

4:8 If one is to have this inner peace from God and maintain a life free of worry, then certain steps must be taken, notably in his or her thoughts. This list describes what should pervade believers' minds. Believers should fix their thoughts on things that are:

True. Truth includes facts and statements that are in accordance with reality (not lies, rumors, or embellishments), sincere (not deceitful or with evil motives), and loyal, faithful, proper, reliable, and genuine. Truth is a characteristic of God.

Honorable. These matters are worthy of respect, dignified, and exalted in character or excellence.

Right. Thoughts and plans that meet God's standards of rightness. They are in keeping with the truth; they are righteous.

Pure. Free from contamination or blemish; unmixed and unmodified; wholesome. Paul probably was speaking of moral purity, often very difficult to maintain in thoughts.

Lovely. Thoughts of great moral and spiritual beauty, not of evil.

Admirable. Things that speak well of the thinker—thoughts that recommend, give confidence in, afford approval or praise, reveal positive and constructive thinking. A believer's thoughts, if heard by others, should be admirable, not embarrassing.

Excellent. Moral excellence; nothing of substandard quality.

Worthy of praise. This phrase may be restated as "anything that deserves the thinker's praise" or "anything that God deems praiseworthy."

4:9 Paul had lived out and was continuing to live out his words, so he could urge the believers to put into practice what they had learned from him (from his teaching and training). The Scriptures were not compiled into a Bible until later, so the _____ of _____ and _____ were embodied in the teachings and example of those in authority. Paul could speak confidently; people could follow his example because he was following Christ's example (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). If the believers would keep on practicing the virtues that Paul cited above, they would experience the God of peace. God is the source of peace for all believers.

Understanding the Text (4:8-9)

10. What are the qualities of wholesome thoughts? (4:8)

11. How can believers enjoy the presence of the God of peace? (4:9)

Exploring the Text

IV. Push for Peaceful Contentment – in the Lord (4:10-14)

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked an opportunity to act. ¹¹ Not that I speak from need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my difficulty.

Although Paul had already thanked the Philippians for their _____ with him in spreading the gospel (1:5), in this section he specifically thanked them for their monetary gift. Paul never asked any of the churches to support him, yet the believers in Philippi had sincerely wanted to give, so Paul accepted.

4:10-14 Are you able to get along happily (be content) in any circumstances you face? Paul knew how to be satisfied whether he had plenty or whether he was in need. The secret was drawing on Christ's power for strength. Do you have great needs, or are you dissatisfied because you don't have what you want? Learn to rely on God's _____ and Christ's _____ to help you be content. If you always want more, ask God to remove that desire and teach you how to be satisfied in every circumstance. He will supply all your needs, but in a way that he knows is best for you.

4:12, 13 Paul could get along happily because he could see life from _____ point of view. He focused on what he was supposed to do, not what he felt he should have. Paul had his priorities straight, and he was grateful for everything God had given him. Paul had detached himself from the _____ so that he could concentrate on the _____. Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life. To what are you drawn when you feel empty inside? How can you find true _____? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities, and your source of power. **Saint Augustine of Hippo writes in his Confessions, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”**

4:13 Paul's contentment was not gained through stoic self-discipline. Instead, it was through Christ alone. In context, the word everything refers to the list in 4:11-12. In every possible circumstance, Paul could truly be content because he did not let outward

circumstances determine his _____. Christ was giving him the strength to continue with his ministry and the work of spreading the gospel whether he had plenty or was in need. Paul had complete confidence that, no matter what the circumstance, _____ would give him the strength to meet it.

Understanding the Text (4:10-14)

14. What lesson had Paul learned about contentment? (4:10-13)

15. Why could Paul handle any kind of circumstance? (4:13)

16. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian believers? Why? (4:14)

Exploring the Text

V. Push for Prosperity and Abundance – in the Lord (4:15-23)

¹⁵ You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone; ¹⁶ for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek the profit which increases to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 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. ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

4:15-16 The _____ the Philippians had done with Paul refers to their _____ with him, revealed in the practical expression of financial support (see 4:10). Only the Philippian church had been ready to give financial help to Paul while he was ministering to them, and then when he traveled on from Macedonia to minister in

other places. It seems that other churches did support Paul's ministry later (**2 Corinthians 11:8**) but that the Philippians had been especially attentive and generous, sending gifts not only while Paul was in Thessalonica, but later when he was in Corinth (**2 Corinthians 11:9**).

4:17 Paul made it clear that his thankfulness for the Philippians' generosity was not a veiled request for more. Instead, Paul focused on what their good works on his behalf were benefiting them in heaven. He knew that they would receive a well-earned _____ because of their kindness. When we give to those in need, we benefit as well as the receiver, as we grow in the grace of giving (**2 Corinthians 8:1, 6-7; 9:14**). Paul appreciated the Philippians' spirit of love and devotion more than their gifts.

4:18 This was Paul's acknowledgment that he had received the Philippians' most recent gifts and that Epaphroditus had faithfully fulfilled his mission (see 2:25). Their generous gift was more than Paul needed. Surely the Philippian church _____ that they had been able to meet Paul's needs.

Paul described the Philippians' gift as a sweet-smelling _____. Their very gifts were acts of worship, and God was the true recipient. They had given in faith, not so much to Paul as to God. That should be the ultimate goal of every act of love, care, concern, and charity—to help, but also to please God (**2 Corinthians 5:9; Hebrews 13:16**).

4:19 We can trust that God will always meet our needs. Whatever we need on earth he will always supply, even if it is the courage to face death as Paul did. Whatever we need in heaven he will supply. We must remember, however, the difference between our wants and our needs. Most people want to feel good and avoid discomfort or pain. We may not get all that we want. By trusting in Christ, our _____ and appetites can change from wanting everything to accepting his provision and power to live for him.

4:20 God the Father was both Paul's God and the Philippians' God—and he is also our God. God who supplied Paul's needs and met the Philippians' needs is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and he _____ to meet our needs. To God belongs all glory forever and ever. Paul broke into a doxology [liturgical expression of praise to God] of praise as he remembered God's great love and provision. God alone deserves all glory from his creation. Amen, so be it.

4:23 This letter to the Philippians begins and ends with _____ (see 1:2). Paul had experienced God's undeserved favor, and he never tired of _____ that others would also experience that grace. 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. Paul recognized, however, that problems could arise, so in this thank-you letter, he prepared the Philippians for potential difficulties they might encounter. Though a prisoner in Rome, Paul had learned the _____ of joy and peace—_____ Christ and _____.

By focusing our minds on Christ we will learn unity, humility, joy, and peace. We will also be motivated to live for Christ.

Understanding the Text (4:15-23)

17. How had the Philippians supported Paul in the past? (4:15-16)

18. What did Paul want for the Philippians? (4:17)

19. How did Paul respond to the Philippians' generosity? (4:18-19)

20. How would God reciprocate the believers' generosity? (4:19)

21. To whom did Paul give thanks and praise? (4:20)

22. To what did Paul give prominence in closing his letter? (4:23)

Life Application:

- Who do you know that could use a word of encouragement from you today?

- What can you do to develop an attitude of contentment in all circumstances?

[Resources: Life Application New Testament Commentary, The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, Adult LessonMaker Questions]