

## #10 Philippians

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**Chapter 4:1** 'Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

Over the past several verses, Paul has been urging the Philippians to walk, talk and live in unity, that they not allow divisions in their body. Now, after 3 chapters of preparation, he begins to even name names. It appears that Euodia and Syntyche were divided and perhaps leading opposing factions, causing a real schism in the Philippian Church... the kind of things that have caused countless church splits over the centuries.

Paul deeply loved the Philippian Church; he thought of them as his joy and crown. They were, sometimes, the only believers in all of Asia Minor who sent financial help to Paul in his times of need, more than once. He fully expected, as He stood before the Judgment Seat of Christ, to receive rewards, to see all of those from Philippi and Thessalonica, as well as every other church he had planted or fed, standing there as his joy and crown, as his reward.

The Crown Paul spoke of was the 'Soul winner's Crown.' Just imagine how Paul's 'soul winner's crown will be embellished: not only those he led to the Lord in planting his various churches, but even every Christian who's ever been led to the Lord through Paul's letters... many millions of Christians are to his credit.

Paul wrote, 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.'<sup>7</sup> So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.<sup>8</sup> Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.<sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building.<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,<sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.<sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.<sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Cor 3:6

Debbie and I know just a little of what Paul felt; as we stand before Jesus Christ, we'll see a great crowd of Chinese faces who've come to Christ as a result of the thousands of Bibles we've carried into China or the faces of the many to whom we've ministered over the radio for 29 years. All of us will see the results of our times of ministry of which we had no idea concerning our influence for Christ.

None of us will ever see the completion of the work God plans and does within us and through us until we stand before Him on that day, soon.

Paul always felt a deep responsibility for every one of his 'children,' in the Lord. He agonized over their spiritual growth and maturity. We saw, in his letter to the Galatians, how strongly Paul fought against the wicked Judaizers who sought to lead his flock into the heresy of legalism, of believing they must become circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law.

We were privileged to lead a young woman to Christ several years ago and to help her, and her husband, in their walk with the Lord and with their marriage. Now, come to find out, they are struggling in their marriage and we feel our responsibility, before the Lord, to once again be available to counsel them, to the best of our ability. We know that every hour we invest in their lives, God will, eventually, repay richly and abundantly beyond anything we could think or imagine; the same is true for all of us. If we have led someone to the Lord or been instrumental in their spiritual growth, we should always recognize our responsibility, before the Lord, to be available to God for whatever He intends.

John said the same thing regarding our walk, our maturity, our standing fast as we look forward to His coming for us in the Rapture: he wrote: 'And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.'<sup>29</sup> If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.' 1 John 2:28

Paul was telling Euodia and Syntyche to grow up in Christ and to *practice* righteousness.

**Verse 3:** 'And I urge you also, true companion, 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 is probably speaking directly to Epaphroditus, to whom he was probably dictating this letter and who would soon be the one to carry it back to Philippi. I can see Paul, praying deeply in the Spirit and speaking out the words which the Holy Spirit inspired him to say. When he spoke out, 'and I urge you also, true companion,' perhaps Epaphroditus interrupted, saying, 'do you want that included?' and Paul said, 'Yes, the Holy Spirit moved me to include even that, my dear companion.' And Epaphroditus just beams, wanting to take this to Philippi as soon as possible so he can be so commended before all the Church. He's only human.

Paul names Euodia and Syntyche as well as Clement, and others, unnamed, as those who had, with Paul, labored in the Gospel. Their names are in the Book of Life; there can be no greater joy, or blessing, than to have been chosen and elected by God, to have their names written in the Book of Life from before the foundation of the World: 'And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, *whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world*, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.' Rev 17:8 '...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...' Eph 1:4

Here, Paul is telling us that women are just as valuable as men in 'laboring in the Gospel.' Even though, in other letters he makes clear that God does not endorse women as pastors, they are highly valued and here even personally named in Paul's letter; they have always been instrumental in the growth of the Church through the Gospel, even to hosting growing Churches in their homes: 'Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.' Col 4:15

Here's an interesting fact: the KJV and NKJV interpret Nymphas as 'he.' The NASB translates Nympha as 'she.' I looked it up and the concordance says, 'a proper feminine noun.' It really should be Nympha(s); she is a woman who is hosting a Laodicean church in her home. It looks like the translators of the KJV, back in the early 1600's, were so anxious to prove Paul's word, that he doesn't allow women to speak or preach in church, that they purposely made 'Nympha' a 'him.' It seems that they purposely mistranslated the name; it's as if they were saying that Paul was saying something like: 'greet Charlene and the church in his home.'

The Greek word, 'nymphas,' means: bridegroom. The word, 'Nympha,' is a proper feminine noun. The word Paul wrote, in Colossians, is: Nympha... no 's' on the end. Such things happened but it is no cause to doubt or disbelieve God's Word. Women were important to Paul and they have always been important to God.

**Verse 4:** 'Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!'

Back in chapter 3:1, Paul said, 'Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.' But it wasn't really finally because, then, suddenly the Holy Spirit inspired him to insert another whole chapter of exhortation. Now, as he really does begin to close, he says, again, 'rejoice!'

Every Christian is commanded to rejoice! Our joy comes through our sure understanding of our Salvation in the Lord. We are saved completely; we are eternally secure in Jesus Christ. We are clothed in his Righteousness and our names have been written, from the foundation of the World, in His Book of Life. We have been washed clean and He has purified us through His Sacrifice.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. 'Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this day is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'" Neh 8:10

Jesus said, 'These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.' John 15:11

The things He had said, that should be the source of joy in every child of God, were: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know." John 14:1 And then, He told them of the promised helper to come, the Holy Spirit, and He said:

'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' These are just a few of the things which should give every child of God, peace and joy.

Paul is saying, 'Everything about our Salvation and our security in Jesus Christ, including all His promises, are the things which should fill our hearts with joy. God doesn't just hand us joy; we are the ones who are commanded to rejoice, to have joy, to recognize and remember all that God has done for us, in us, to us and through us and then to rejoice in the Lord.

**Verse 5:** 'Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.'

Paul is saying, to these who have been at odds with each other... to all of us who have ever been less than kind and gentle, that we are to be, and known to be, gentle, kind, seemly, suitable, equitable, fair, mild and patient. Simply put, we are to love. 'Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; <sup>7</sup> it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Love never fails.' 1 Cor 13

I think it's best summed up as, 'getalongableness.' We are to do everything necessary, from our part, to love, put up with and get along with... every other believer... not seeking our own way, not being provoked and not keeping a list of those who've wronged us but always forgiving and always loving.

'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup> Never repay evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all people. <sup>18</sup> If possible, ***so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.*** <sup>19</sup> Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.' Rom 12:14

Our getalongableness means: always, in every circumstance, if possible, we are to give in... to give up our rights and privileges; we are to exercise intentional bendoverbackedness with all people. It's a very tall order but it is God's call on our lives; we are the children of God, Most High; we are called to higher. For now, we are without rights or privileges. At the moment of the Rapture, everything will change. Then, we will rule and reign, with the Lord Jesus Christ, over all Creation, over the entire Universe; then, we will be princes and princesses of our Father, God, and the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will be coregents with Him forever! Why are we to walk in Him without rights and privileges? Because ***the Lord is at hand!*** His coming for us, in the clouds, could be at any moment; we will stand before Him, then, and we will answer for how selfish, self-centered and unforgiving we've been or we'll be praised and glorified for how unselfish and Christlikeness we've been. This, then, is Paul's 6th reference to the Rapture in this letter: 'The Lord is at hand.'

**Verse 6:** 'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, ***with thanksgiving***, let your requests be made known to God;'

We worry about so many things: financial things, political things, medical things, family things, our children and grandchildren... adequately serving our guests: is the house clean enough... is the bathroom clean enough... are the cobwebs swept from the ceiling and the light fixtures... is the food good enough... will they be impressed?

Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus is the perfect example of how we all worry: 'Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. <sup>42</sup> But one thing is needed, and ***Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.***"

Everything we worry about will end the moment we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and the only thing which will have been accomplished by our worry will be that we chose to set our hearts and minds on those worrisome things and not on the Lord Jesus Christ. Every minute we worry will have been a minute lost with no reward for having set our hearts and minds on Him. Every one of those minutes and hours could have been, and should have been, that which could never be taken away from us; it could have been time we spent with Him, in prayer, praise and thanksgiving... trusting and believing in His love and ability to cause that thing to work together for our good.

If it is something that we want to worry over, then it is something that we should come boldly before His Throne of Grace to find help in time of need... it is something which we should carry to Him and then, in prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, we should lay it at His feet and trust Him to accomplish His will for us in that thing.

When we can do that... then we can rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice.

**Verse 7:** 'and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

When we choose to refuse to worry then we can know the peace of God which surpasses all understanding; no one can really understand the peace of God... we know when we have it and we really know when we don't. It's not something we can manufacture and it is not something for which we can 'fake it till we make it.' Not only will the peace of God settle our hearts and minds... but God, through His peace, will guard our hearts and minds. How does that work? When worry tries to rise up in us... when an evil spirit tries to distract us but we choose to believe God and trust Him... that is how we are 'resisting the devil and forcing him to flee from us.' We learned in Ephesians that when an attack comes... and worry is often the avenue of attack, we are to stand firm in the Lord. We don't stand firm in the Lord and then His peace comes but, rather, we choose to trust Him, He gives us His peace to guard our hearts and minds, and then we are able to stand fast and stand firm in the Lord without worry, without fear, without any anxiety at all.

Paul said that the peace of God would guard us, through Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of Peace, He is the author and finisher of our faith and certainly of our peace. He said, 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' John 14:27 That was just seconds after He had said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know."

That is our surest source of peace: our secure and blessed hope that He will come for us, soon. We can trust Him; we can rely on Him and we should cling to Him always.

**Verse 8:** '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.'

What is true? He loves us and He has saved us eternally. What is noble? That's better translated, 'honest.' What is honest? The Lord Jesus Christ, in everything He has promised us throughout eternity. What is just? We are just; we have been justified; 'But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.' Rom 5:8 What is pure? We are pure: '...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.' Titus 2:14 Because of our blessed hope, in the Rapture, we purify ourselves: 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And **every-one who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**' 1John 3:1 What things are lovely? Our future home: 'How lovely is Your dwelling place, Lord of Hosts.' Psa 84:1 We are lovely when we share the Gospel: 'How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news...' Isa 52:7 ... to be continued in #11