

Philippians 4

Introduction: Chapter 4 really consists of two sections

- Final appeal (1-3)
- Concluding matters (4-23)

I. Final appeals to steadfastness and unity (1-3)

A. Appeal to the church (1)

1. He pours on his relational expressions (beloved, longed-for, my joy and crown)
 - a. They are his joy now
 - b. But also an eschatological hope of being together eternally

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 1 Corinthians 9:25 NKJV

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 NKJV

2. Calls them to stand firm, even amidst the uncertainty of times

B. Appeal to those in conflict (2, 3)

1. A remarkable thing that Paul would call them out by name—seldom does this in conflict settings—extraordinary moment in culture of honor/shame—not so much today.
2. Calls them out NOT because they were the bad or evil ones—pre-supposes the opposite
 - a. Long time ministry partners
 - b. Now some event has separated them

3. Their names indicate parents wanted them to make good in the world
 - a. Euodia—success, prosperous journey
 - b. Syntyche—lucky (goddess or foreign god—probably pagan origins)
 - c. Co-workers in church (Philippian church began with women—God-fearers)

And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us. Acts 16:13-15 NKJV

4. His appeal—be of the same mind (auto-phroneo—see 2:2)

Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Philippians 3:15 NKJV

Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things. Philippians 3:19 NKJV

- a. Does not take sides—both are responsible
5. Ask for help (3)
 - a. Maybe Luke (Epaphroditus and Timothy not there)
 - b. Luke was with him in Acts 16

See Acts 16:11, 12 (we passage)

See Acts 17:1; 18:1; 19:1

See Acts 20:1-5 (we again)

NOTE: Luke probably oversaw that work during those years

Three Important Truths

- While not sure, the dispute is probably not petty, but likely about how to do the Gospel ministry.
- Cannot deny women in leadership in the New Testament church
- For the sake of the Gospel advancement is still key

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Philippians 1:27 NKJV

Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. Philippians 2:14-16 NKJV

II. Concluding Matters (4-23)

A. Concluding exhortations (4-9)—two sets

1. Call to spirituality (4-6)

a. Rejoice in the Lord always (4)

- Should be identifying quality of Christians
- Does not come and go with circumstances

b. Let your gentleness be known to all men (5)

NOTE: Pauline warning and Peter's word

Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. 1 Peter 2:23 NKJV

- In the midst of adversity a gentleness
- The Lord is near (in trial)
- His coming is near (an end to the trial)

c. Don't be anxious—let your requests be known to God (6)

- Because the Lord is near—don't have to be anxious
- Let gentleness be known to men
- Let requests be known to God
- Don't live with anxiety but submit yourself to God (Jesus in Matthew 6)
- Prayer, supplication, requests not distinguished
- Do it with thanksgiving (gratitude)
- Not "thanking in advance"
- Instead recognizing our dependence
- Un-thankfulness leads to idolatry

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Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Romans 1:21 NKJV

2. Promise of peace (7)
 - a. When we submit all to Him in prayer—He gives peace
 - b. God is peace (shalom) wholeness, completion—He dwells in peace and gives peace
 - c. Transcends the merely human and unbelieving mind which is full of anxiety
 - d. Will protect hearts and minds (emotions and thoughts)

NOTE: This kind of peace in an uncertain world is a powerful evangelistic weapon

3. Call to wisdom (8, 9)

Focus of godly thinking—YES citizen of heaven, but still in the world. There is some good and we are to focus here.

- a. Things true—truth as a virtue in Jewish wisdom has to do with speech

That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, That you may answer words of truth to those who send to you? Proverbs 22:21 NKJV

- Over against lie and deceit
- We should be people who will not entertain deceit, rumor, slander, etc.
- Sensationalism, social media

- b. Things noble (honorable, worthy of respect)

Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things. Proverbs 8:6 NKJV

NOTE: Things worth considering

- c. Things just (or right)
- d. Things pure

The way of a guilty man is perverse; But as for the pure, his work is right. Proverbs 21:8 NKJV

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but the words of the pure are pleasant. Proverbs 15:26 NKJV

- Things not twisted by evil

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— Not worldly (entertainment)

- e. Thinking lovely (this is beyond New Testament Christianity—could include symphony, arts, loveable, enjoyable)
- f. Things of good rapport (admirable)—people do admirable things, even when people are not Christians
- g. Any virtue or praiseworthy

APPLICATION: Two ways we can treat our godless culture

(Two postures are important to understand)

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Philippians 1:27 NKJV

Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. Philippians 2:14-16 NKJV

But also...

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:20 NKJV

- We tend to reject culture
- Paul call us to embrace it BUT with discrimination
- Then we can actively reach it
- Problem—we have those who reject it
- We have those who assimilate into it with NO discrimination

B. Acknowledgement (10-20)

1. Gratitude for this gift (10-13)

- a. Thank them for their care for him with a gift (10a)
- b. Acknowledges he knew they cared even when gift was not possible (10b)
- c. Their friendship is not based on need

NOTE: He was not using them (11ff)

- d. He told them to be anxious for nothing—he now shows how he has done the same (12, 13)

IMPORTANT: He knows the secret of “plenty” and “want” and reading the New Testament we realize he had “plenty of want”. But he does not make “want” a higher spiritual plane.

Danger of abusing 4:13

2. Their gift is Gospel partnership (14-17)
 - a. Partnered in his afflictions (14)
 - b. They were the very ones who did (15, 16)
 - c. What he most desires is spiritual fruit for their generosity (17)

NOTE: Paul’s careful, humble, and almost apologetic approach to money and his own need. He was wise to be this way.

3. Their gift was a sweet aroma to God (18-20)
 - a. Paul is blessed (18)
 - b. Knew God would meet their need and He responds to their generosity (19)
 - c. Doxology (20)
4. Final greeting (21-23)

Conclusion: Repetition of Christ in final four verses

*Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. Philippians 4:21
NKJV*