CAPITOL® COMMISSION
Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders

Don't Worry Be Happy

April 30, 2024

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule
Tuesday, April 30, 7:00-7:45 AM
House Hearing Room 3
All Welcome!
Capitol Commission is NON-PARTISAN and NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Introduction

Paul directs the Philippians to keep his sequence of instructions in the forefront of their mind. The use of admonition in Philippians 4:1-9 can be understood in a cluster of words: instruct, encourage, correct, and direct. These verses offer seven biblical principles/themes to live by: unity in Christ (4:1-3); gentleness and rejoicing (4:4-5); prayer, thanksgiving, and peace (4:6-7); and life-giving thoughts (4:8-9).

4:1 – Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

Paul extends his teaching with a transition statement, "Therefore", referring back to the previous three chapters of teaching that encourages us to rejoice in the Lord regardless of life's challenges. Elevated from friend and partner to family, Paul continues with the language of love. A community of Jesus followers raised spiritually by the Apostle Paul. It's been years since they saw each other. Paul is writing from within a Roman prison.

My children are a joy to me and my wife. We raised them. We have significantly invested into their lives: manners ethics, virtues, biblical principles, and more. It seems Paul feels the same way; he significantly invested into their lives: teaching them about Jesus and the Kingdom of God. About their social and spiritual responsibilities as citizens of heaven. To stand firm in their faith in the face of opposition. To remain faithful to God at all times.

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21) Paul was good with going to heaven and fine with remaining on earth. Either way he wins. He thirsted to be with Jesus in heaven, and he understood his call was to remain on earth for the sake of the church. He was invested in the spiritual formation of the Philippians. His teaching included the idea of suffering, in word and in deed; to experience the power of the resurrection. Thus, Paul called the Philippians his joy.

Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. (1 Thess. 2:9)

For this reason, Paul will receive a crown. Staying with the athletic imagery used, crowns were given to victors in sporting games. The crown was a Laurel wreath placed upon the head of the victor. Ancient Greeks were known to give hero's public crowns. Paul could be considered a spiritual hero in the faith, especially one to the Philippian church. Paul understand that crown of transient nature, but fully aware that at the end of his race (life) eternal crowns will be given for specific reasons to the Christ follower.

The "Five Crowns" mentioned in the New Testament that believers can receive for their faithfulness and service to God.

⇒ **The Crown of Life**: promised to those who endure trials and remain faithful to God even in the face of persecution or temptation. (James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10)

⇒ **The Incorruptible Crown**: promised to those who exercise self-discipline and perseverance in their spiritual lives, likened to athletes who compete for a perishable crown but believers compete for an imperishable one. (1 Corinthians 9:25)

⇒ **The Crown of Rejoicing**: promised to those who have faithfully shared the gospel and led others to faith in Christ. (1 Thessalonians 2:19 and Philippians 4:1)

⇒ **The Crown of Righteousness**: promised to those who eagerly anticipate the return of Christ and live a righteous life in accordance with God's will. (2 Timothy 4:8)

⇒ **The Crown of Glory**: promised to pastors, elders, and leaders who faithfully shepherd and care for God's flock, demonstrating humility and dedication in their service. (1 Peter 5:4)

4:2-3 – Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in

telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life.

Euodia and Syntyche were a part of Paul's original team of laborers (16:13-15). Women in Rome and Macedonia had more freedoms than traditional regions. It seems to be a clash of personalities, a classic leadership divide.

When leaders are in conflict how should it be managed? I could cite some of the great leadership gurus, authors, seminar speakers, politicians, pastors and such. However, the most important person to cite, and to follow His leadership is Jesus: *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.* (Phil 2:1-5)

As the great leader John Maxwell once said: "your attitude will determine your altitude." It doesn't matter your leadership capacity and skills, if you can't get along with people you will be grounded. Here is Paul, the hero of the faith, a leader of leaders, one with a resume to behold, and yet, in humility he says, if you want to walk in unity the attitude of Jesus will get you there.

Paul appeals to a friend, named Syzygus, to assist these women to resolve their differences. His name means "yokefellow". In Paul's mind, perhaps Syzygus would live out his name by guiding the women into a united friendship. Leaders who work together with the same attitude of Christ yield from having matters their way. Focus was not on the fault rather on harmony. Harmony unites, it allows for peace, and puts others first.

The book of life is where God records, or will record, the names of every person who is destined for Heaven and the world to come. Paul says his team members names are written in the book of life.

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 20:12, 21:27)

4:4-5 – Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

Gentleness disarms arguments and opposition, and breeds harmony. Be considerate in all you do and to all.

Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can break bones. (Prov. 25:15)

Not only choose gentleness choose joy. Regardless of your circumstance rejoice in the Lord. Rejoicing in God shifts perspective for one's situation. Faith is inspired, hope is elevated, and discouragement is minimized. It is not a one and done. The idea is a continual rejoicing. It is a God joy from within, a choice, not solely a feeling. We are not immune to troubles, or sorrow, but walking in the will of God results in joy, inner peace in every circumstance.

The second coming of the Lord is soon. God delays because He wants all to follow Him. God is full of patience. Hope lifts faith and turns discouragement upside down. The Judge will settle all matters. Human differences, conflict, disagreements will be handled by God. So let it go, get perspective.

4:6-7 – Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

God's peace transcends human comprehension. In the midst of worry, fear, anxiety, illness, financial struggle, marital separation, God will guard your heart and mind. The Greek word used for guard is in a military sense to ensure military and political security as seen in the Roman Empire. Anxiety distorts reality. It can create a false narrative. The saboteurs voice that elevates fear, and mutes peace.

4:8-9 – And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

True: reliable, trustworthy; **Pure:** morality; **Right:** worthy of God's approval; **Noble:** worthy of respect; **Lovely:** agreeable, pleasing; **Admirable:** praise-worthy; **Discernment** what is from God and what is not.

Rejoice!