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Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

We are now getting to the final chapter of Philippians and it begins with the word “therefore”. So we need to understand this command in light of the preceding passage. What is the “therefore” referring back to?

- It's possible that this command to stand firm is a restatement of 1:27 that we need to “let our manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” so that when he comes he will see that they are “standing firm”. It looks like Paul is intentionally closing the main body of the letter in 4:1, thus forming an inclusio with the idea of standing firm. He only uses this term twice in the letter, 1:27 and 4:1 (only used 10 times in the NT).

Phil. 1:27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents.

- Secondly, I think he is emphasizing the grounds for why they should be standing firm. He says that they should “stand firm” “in this way” or “thus”. What is he talking about? I think he is looking back to the second half of chapter 3 which is what we talked about last week. So let's review that really quick by asking, “How can we stand firm?”:

1Cor. 16:13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Gal. 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

2Th. 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

- Because Jesus has made us his own

Phil. 3:12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, **because Christ Jesus has made me his own.** **13** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Wow! What an amazing statement. We cannot be expected to follow the example of Jesus laid out in chapter 2 (doing nothing from selfish ambition but being like Jesus in giving of ourselves) unless Jesus intervenes. And He has!
- We can press on to be like Jesus because Jesus has taken hold of us. We are his!
- This is the most encouraging thought that could ever come into our minds

And remember what we have talked about over and over about the relationship between the indicative and the imperative. We need to know what is true about how the Gospel has changed us as a grounds for our pursuit in the Christian life

- Because we are citizens of heaven

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

- What we see here is the already/not yet tension that Brody talked about last week.
- We are currently citizens of heaven and we need to live like it.
- The reality is that Christ has made us new creatures with a new nature and he will soon transform our physical body to be like His glorious body, which is our new, true self!
- Again we can see a parallel to 1:27. The term that is translated as “manner of life” (2x) is from the word for citizen that we see here in 3:20 (1x)

Phil. 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Now to chapter 4. He calls them brothers. He is constantly highlighting his relationship to them. He has said over and over how much he loves them and wants to see them. Now he spells it out even more clearly.

Look at the amazing relationship that exists between this pastor and his flock. Wow.

Brothers

- 1:12
- 3:1
- 3:13
- 3:17
- 4:1, 8, 21

Those who are loved

- This is a shorthand way of saying, “I love you”
- 1:7 I hold you in my heart
- 2:12 my beloved

Those for whom he longs to see, and will soon.

- I yearn for you with the affections of Jesus 1:8
- I know that I will be released to see you 1:19
- I know that I will remain and continue with you all 1:25
- 2:24 I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come to you
- And here is reminding them of the longing that he has to see them soon

They are his joy and his crown:

We see this combination of words only one other time in the NT and it's in 1 Thes 2:19,20

19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? **20** For you are our glory and joy.

This is his way of saying not just how much he cares for them as people, but that they are the actual result of his work in the Gospel.

On the basis of the love that he has for them he now continues to give them personal, individual instruction on how they can be faithful to stand firm in the Gospel.

Phil. 4:2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. **3** Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

We have to ask ourselves, "What is going on here?" Remember Paul is writing (the Bible) from prison and it has come to his attention that there are 2 ladies in the church that are in a pretty public disagreement.

We of course would normally say something like, "that's none of my business". Or if we're in a disagreement with someone we say to others, "stay out of my business". But if we are the physical representation of Jesus in the world then we are mutually connected and a problem with 2 individuals in the church is the church's problem. This is a big deal.

I really appreciate how Paul isn't content to just handle this in a broad theological way, but that he applies it personally. We should follow this example. Has he already addressed this? Sure remember chapter 1:

⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

And also chapter 2

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
- and then to follow the example of Jesus

Again, this is a restatement of 1:27 where whether he comes to them or not he may hear that they are "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel"

What is he asking them? To agree in the Lord. He literally says that he wants them to "think the same thing" "in the Lord". It's obviously not a doctrinal issue, but it looks like they are causing division in the church, so now it is a sin issue.

The body of Christ is so precious that it is sinful to try to divide it.

And these are obviously godly women. They have labored "side by side" (this term is only used twice in the Bible and it's in 1:27 and 4:3). It carries with it a kind of military imagery. They have been faithful of what he was asking in 1:27, but now they've run into a roadblock.

He calls them fellow workers (sunergos) whose names are written in the book of life.

He even asks someone to help them agree. Our text calls him “true companion” but some have guessed Ephroditus, Luke, Paul’s wife, a fellow prisoner, or a guy who’s name is Sudzugos...

Regardless of who he is asking to help, it’s important to note that he is bringing the whole community into the conflict because of what a big deal it is.

Application: Are you striving for unity? Is there someone that you need to seek out and apologize to? Is there a conflict that you know of and you’re doing nothing about?

Let’s not forget the words of Jesus from Matthew 5:

23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Now on to the last paragraph:

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Rejoice and again I say Rejoice. Paul is constantly talking to the Philippians about rejoicing. In this letter he mentions it 9 times.

And let’s not forget Paul is in jail. He’s in jail and there are some Christians out there using it to promote themselves and he’s telling us to rejoice. Whoa. It’s going to get even more uncomfortable when he turns around and tells us to be content in any situation.

But here he is saying that we should rejoice in every situation.

Why do you think that is?

I think it is tied to the fact that God is in ultimate control of the world and that the Gospel is conquering.

You want a reason to rejoice? Jesus Christ is on the throne. He has conquered sin, death and hell. We are citizens of heaven who have been made citizens because Jesus has snatched us out of destruction and he is coming back soon to fully give to us the glory that he had with the Father before the world existed. So, yeah, at all times, rejoice.

He then bounces back real quick to the unity issue for a minute and tells us to let our gentleness/reasonableness be known to everyone before moving on. We need to agree in the church love each other well and have the proper perspective, because Jesus is near.

What does he mean by near?

- It could be that he is coming back soon (3:20-21 we are waiting for him to transform us into what we really are)
- Or it could be that he is near. He inhabits his people
- Both?

Do not be anxious about anything

Every one of us needs to hear this. When we are anxious we are revealing to ourselves that we don't trust in God. Look at the word of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

Matt 6:

Matt. 6:25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? **28** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? **31** Therefore do not be anxious,

saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matt. 6:34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

We have a Father who is in heaven who is all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful. We should trust in him.

For so many of us we have no problem trusting Him with our eternity but can't seem to trust him with our immediate future. He has conquered sin, I think he can take care of supper, and mortgages and education.

BUT

In contrast to being anxious Paul tells us to pray at all times (in everything). The obvious point is that if we are trusting God in prayer then we will not be anxious.

The command is to let our requests be made known to God and this is done through prayer. There is confusion on whether or not there are subtleties that we should point out between the 2 words (prayer and supplication) used for prayer, but the main point is that we are commanded to pray about everything. Prayer for everything is a continual reminder that we are dependent at every moment on our Heavenly Father.

Giving thanks reinforces this.

We need to acknowledge God's generosity in everything to counteract our natural prideful inclinations. Remember Paul's words in 1 Cor 4:

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

When we do this God's peace will guard our hearts and minds. Wow.

God's peace is beyond comprehension it is so far superior to human reasoning that human reasoning cannot even comprehend it.

Let's Pause for a second. What is the direct object of "will guard"? It is *our* hearts and *our* minds. I didn't really think about this until I was studying through it but the concept of "peace" in biblical times was not rooted in an individual inner feeling, it includes that but it was intrinsically social. For Paul too, peace was primarily a community matter. The closest parallel to this verse is Col 3:15

Col. 3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Fee says, "the fact that 'the peace of God shall guard your hearts and minds' reminds us that what is to be reflected in the gathered community must first of all be the experience of each believer."

And this is done. **In Christ Jesus**