

Philippians 4

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Tape # 8179
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Tonight we finish Philippians chapter four.

Notice the way Paul speaks to those in the church of Philippi. He speaks with such warmth, such love, such a personal kind of feelings and greetings.

Therefore, my brethren (brothers) dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, I love that! Paul's intimacy with the church and the love that he had. It's so far from much of what we see today as far as the ministry is concerned, where they sort of get set in an ivory tower, on a pedestal and are more or less untouchable. But Paul as he thinks of those in the church in Philippi, my brothers, dearly beloved. I long for you. You are my joy. You are my crown.

so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

Then he begins to turn to some of the personal issues. And he said, ²*I beseech (beg) Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* Now evidently and of course we have no Biblical insights in this, further than what Paul is saying is, "Get along." And they were probably a couple of ladies, perhaps they were deaconesses in the church in Philippi. There were things going on between them. Paul is urging for a unity that they have the same mind in the Lord. But set aside the differences, just have the same mind in the Lord.

Now some commentators believe that Syntyche was actually the husband and Euodias was the wife. But there is no Biblical basis to believe this. But if that be so, it would be rather embarrassing for us for the wife to have a public rebuke from Paul that would be known throughout all of the history of the church as we read Philippians.

I would hate to have things between Kay and I aired like that.

³*And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow,* Again, Paul, see the intimacy with which he is talking with them—my beloved, my true yokefellow. Now that is a reference to one who labors alongside of me. One who labors with me. The oxen were yoked together in their pulling of the plow in the laboring together. So you have labored together with me, my true yokefellow.

help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. The women, Paul said, that labored with me. Now it is interesting that we do know that there were many women who were involved in the work of the gospel; however, they just do not receive much attention as far as knowing exactly what ministries they were fulfilling.

We read, concerning Jesus, that many women from the Galilee region, when He would travel with His disciples down to Jerusalem, many women would come with Him. And it said, the women ministered unto Him.

You know, when you are travelling in a group like that, you need someone to prepare the meals and to take care of a lot of the womanly kinds of things that come up.

So with Paul and those that would travel with Paul, there were women also that would travel as companions, ministering to the needs of the apostles, even as they traveled with Jesus to minister to the needs of Jesus and the disciples.

This is an important part of the ministry. Paul is encouraging now, help those women, which labored with me in the gospel. It is interesting that, as I said, we don't really don't have any record of the women or what they did, but yet they were there and they were an important and vital part.

There is an interesting thing, Paul in Romans, chapter ten, talks about how shall they believe on Him whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher and how can they preach unless they have been sent? As the Scripture says, how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring the gospel of peace.

Now, there is a Biblical kind of reckoning whereas those who labor together, and Paul calls them

fellowlabourers, those who labor together in the work of the gospel, all receive equally of the rewards for the fruit of the labor. And those who work in the background, doing that necessary work, are rewarded equally. In fact even more than those that are in the more prominent aspect and part of the ministry.

I believe that there are just an awful lot of rewards from the ministry, the teaching, you know, being where I am and being able to speak to people, there's an awful lot of reward that comes from it, as people come up and share.

There was a fellow at the door this morning who said, that sixteen months ago, as I was listening to your radio broadcast, I received Jesus Christ. And I came out to California. I just wanted to thank you for what, you know, the radio ministry did for me.

I hear this wherever I go. This is very rewarding! It's tremendous feedback! You know, all right! But that's rewarding! So when I get to heaven, I'm sure that I, you know, I'll have a back seat. The Lord will say, well you had so many rewards down there, what more do you want, you know?

But you are fellow laborers and your part of the reward is just as great when we stand before the Lord. And that's the wonderful thing. We are fellowlabourers together. We are in this together. And as laboring together for the cause of Jesus Christ, many times what the person, what you do, may not be noticed, may not be acclaimed, may not receive any public recognition, but it's extremely important! So Paul looked upon them as fellowlabourers.

You remember when David was in exile (1 Samuel 30), actually Saul was attempting to kill him. He finally fled to the Philistine city of Gath to escape from Saul. There he became friends with King Achish. When the Philistines went to battle against Israel, David actually went with Achish and his men. The other Philistine lords, when they saw David, they said, oh, we don't want that guy fighting with us. In the heat of the battle, he is an Israelite, and in the heat of the battle, his heart might turn towards them and he would turn against us. We don't want him. Send him home. So David and his men were sent home. They weren't allowed to fight with the Philistines against Israel.

When they came home, they found the Amalekites had invaded the area when all of the men of war had gone. They came in and they ravished the cities. They took captive as hostages the wives and the children of David's men. They came back to find that their houses had been looted and their families were gone. So David and his men began to pursue after the Amalekites. Towards the end of the day, some of the guys said, hey, we're too tired. We just can't on any further! We're just beat.

So David said, okay, you guys stay by and watch our stuff here. Who will go with me? And some of the men went on with David. They went on all night. They came in the morning and caught the enemy by surprise. Of course they had all of this built up within them because you know, our children and our wives' safety is involved here. These men have taken our wives and our children. I mean they were really pumped up for this one! And they wiped out the enemy! They took back their wives and their children plus all of the loot that these fellows had taken from the many Philistine cities that they had invaded.

So they came back to the men. Here they had all of this booty from the battle. And the men who went with David and fought against the Amalekites, they said, too bad guys, you don't get any of this. David said, wait a minute! They that stayed by the stuff share equally in the fruit of the battle as those who went to the battle.

He saw the importance of logistics and the supplies and those that are there. Taking care of the supplies are just important to the battle itself. If you don't have the supply lines and all, you can't have the front line troops.

So it is with the work of the gospel. There is that equal sharing with the rewards as we are fellowlabourers together.

And so Paul is telling them, now help those women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also. Now this is possibly the Clement who later became the bishop of the church in Rome and wrote an epistle called the letter of Clement. It is possibly that same Clement, we don't know for sure.

And with my other fellowlabourers, whose names are in the Book of Life. You know, the Bible makes several references to the Book of Life, the names written in the Book of Life. I'm sure glad my name is written there! You might take and follow that up on a reference through the Bible, the different references to

the Book of Life. It's an interesting study.

⁴*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.* As we told you when we started this letter to the Philippians, Paul was there in a prison in Rome. He speaks about that. He is a prisoner in the palace. And many of the people within the palace as a result of Paul's being in prison there, had come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Yet, the theme of the Book, is rejoice! And so here we have it again, rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice!

Now as I told you, next week as we start Colossians, the theme is the pre-eminence of Christ. That is the recurring theme through Colossians.

But here in the Philippians, the major theme is that of rejoicing in the Lord. Christians, above all people should be the most joyful people in the world! We have so much to rejoice in! Rejoicing in the Lord! Now, I can't always rejoice in my circumstances, but I can always rejoice in the Lord!

⁵*Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.* Now the word, moderation, here, is your kindness, your mercies. Let your tender mercies, really, be known unto all men. Be generous in your forgiveness of others because the Lord is at hand! We don't really have time to be involved in differences and in petty differences. Let's just get along with each other, as he was encouraging earlier Euodias and Syntyche, to get along. The Lord is at hand.

Now, in the early church, they were expecting the Lord to return at any time. Paul believed that Jesus was coming back very soon, at any time.

There were even rumors in the early church that Jesus was going to return before John died. And thus as John was getting up into his nineties, the excitement began to grow within the church, you know he is getting up in his nineties, so boy, it can't be long because the Lord is coming before Jesus dies.

That rumor in the early church was actually sparked by the statement of Jesus when Jesus told Peter (John 20:20-23) how that He was going to have to die by crucifixion, Peter said well what about him? Jesus said, if I will that he remains until I come, it's really none of your business. What is that to you? You follow me! And so the rumor went around that John was going to remain alive until the Lord comes. So when he wrote his gospel in his later years, he said, no that's not what Jesus said. Jesus said, if I will. He didn't say that I was! But if I will that he should remain until I come.

Yet the early church was anticipating the coming of the Lord very soon. You find that throughout the New Testament epistles. The exhortations, the coming of the Lord is at hand or the coming of the Lord is close.

It was something that I believe was designed by the Lord. I believe that the Lord has always wanted the church to live in a state of expectancy of His immediate return. I think that was deliberately planned and designed by the Lord, that the church would live in anticipation of His immediate return. So He set it up that each church age would believe that the Lord was coming during their lifetime.

I think that one reason for that is that it always gives an urgency to giving the gospel out. We don't have much time! Let's get the gospel out while we have the opportunity. It gives an urgency to getting the gospel out!

The second thing it does, it gives to us a good sense of priority as to the things that are really important. It is very easy for us to get caught up in material things. And to put the Spiritual things sort of on the back burner while we are involved and engaged in the physical things. And we so often are putting the major thought and emphasis and investment into material things rather than into Spiritual things. But the realization that the Lord is coming soon, it helps us to place our priorities right and we place a proper priority on the things of the Spirit over the things of the flesh, realizing that this present material world is going to soon pass away. It gives us that urgency, that realization, that we need to place the major emphasis upon the work of the gospel upon the things of the Spirit.

The third thing that this belief that the Lord is coming soon, at any moment, it gives a purity to our walk and to our lives, knowing that at any moment, any moment, the trump of God can sound. We who are alive and remain shall be caught up and meet the Lord in the air, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. I think that it has a great emphasis towards holy living. I don't want to be engaged in some unholy activity when

the Lord comes for His church.

Now I was taught when I was a child that there were places that if you were involved in, when the Lord came, you would be left! And I remember when I was in high school, the first time I went to a movie. That was one of those places that the Lord wasn't going to gather His church out of the movie theatres, you know. And under peer pressure when I was in high school, I went to a movie. I went to see the Stars and Stripes Forever. I'll never forget it. That was one of the most miserable nights I ever spent. During that whole movie, I don't even know what the movie was about, all I know is that I was praying the whole while, don't come for the next hour and a half! Please don't come!

Now I don't feel that way any longer. I'm His child and I have confidence that He's coming. But I wouldn't want to be engaged in some unseemly kind of activity. I think it's a tremendous incentive towards purity.

In fact in 1 John we read, beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we are going to be, but we know that when He appears, we are going to be like Him, for we are going to see Him as He is. The Lord is going to appear at any time. And John said, he that has this hope in him, that is the immediate appearance of the Lord at any moment, purifies himself even as he is pure. It's a tremendous incentive toward holy living, knowing that the Lord is coming at any time.

So Paul said the Lord is at hand. And they really believed that the Lord was coming. Actually, the church in Thessalonica, they were grieving because some of the people had died before the Lord returned. And they had the mistaken notion that because these people died before the Lord returned, they were going to miss out on the kingdom age, that Jesus is coming to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth. They thought, oh, what a shame! They died and Jesus didn't come. They are going to miss it now!

So Paul wrote his second letter to them to correct that mistaken notion. Now concerning those who sleep in Christ, I write to you, that you sorrow not as those who have no hope, for we believe that if Jesus both died and rose again, so those who sleep in Christ, will He bring with Him when He comes. So they are going to be a part of the kingdom, Paul is saying. But they really weren't expecting the Lord to come and they felt that because some had died before the Lord had come, they had missed out. It was one of the driving forces of the early church.

I believe there, where ever in church history you hear of and you read of a real moving of the Spirit and a real emphasis upon missions, where you see the work of the Lord being done really diligently, there is that belief that we are perhaps, the last generation.

The Lord is coming and I believe that. I think that we are blessed to be in that generation and that the Lord is coming soon. I believe that. Now, I could be wrong. You know, the Lord may not come for another thousand years, but God, perish the thought. I'm looking for the Lord to return very soon. I think there are just an awful lot of indications that we are in the final generation and that the Lord will be coming back very soon and establishing the kingdom of God upon the earth. And that's my hope! I think that God intended that to be our hope and to each generation to live in that kind of anticipation.

So the Lord is at hand. This is the motive for getting along. Let's set aside the petty differences. They are so insignificant. It is tragic that in the church, there are those like Euodias and Syntyche. They are at odds and they can't identify the real enemy. You see within the church this kind of division and all over ideas, doctrines and beliefs that really are non-essential. Now, over the essentials, yes unity, but over these others, charity. Walk in love! But there are some people just don't understand or think that. Thus let your moderation, that's what he is talking about, this getting along. Just let it be known to all men because the Lord is at hand.

⁶*Be careful for nothing; Or don't be filled with care. Don't worry about things.*

Be careful for nothing *but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* Don't worry about it, whatever it is that is worrying you! Pray about it! Rather than worry, pray! Worry will do nothing towards solving the problem. Prayer is the answer. So Paul is encouraging them. Don't be anxious! Don't worry! But rather pray with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.

And the result will be ⁷*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and*

minds through Christ Jesus. You don't have to worry. You don't have to live in anxiety. You don't have to live in a constant fear, for the peace of God can keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. If you just pray about it and commit things to the Lord.

Your circumstances will not always be pleasant. God doesn't promise that as a Christian, you're not going to have trials. In fact, just the opposite, He said in this world you are going to have tribulation. He said if you were of the world, the world would love its own. But you are not of the world; therefore, the world hates you! And they that live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. You are not promised an easy path, a bed of roses. But you are promised that the Lord will never leave you or forsake you. And that the Lord will be with you in every circumstance of life. He will take care of you. He will provide for you.

So Paul is encouraging them. Don't worry about these things. But just pray about them. Commit them to the Lord! Then you can experience the peace that passes understanding. People can't understand how you can have such peace in such difficult circumstances.

⁸*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* Our lives are so controlled, really, by our thoughts. There are some people who are always thinking on negative things. They can always see the dark side of every situation. And Paul is telling us not to be in that camp, but the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report. If there is virtue and praise, think on these things!

Then he said, ⁹*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.* Now notice, Paul said, the things, which you have both learned and received, that is, Paul taught them these things. You have learned them. And you have heard—I have told you. And you have seen in me. In other words, I modeled for you.

Paul writing to Timothy, said, be an example unto the believers. And this is an exhortation to anyone who would be involved in a ministry. Be an example to the believers. Don't just set out the precepts, but live the precepts. Live the life! So Paul said you have heard and you have seen to be in me. I have lived before you as an example. You have seen it.

He told the elders of Ephesus, when he last visited with them in Acts, there, he said you know that for the space of three and one half years how I taught you and showed you, daily, both in the public places and from house to house. And so Paul lived before them the example.

Then he said, you've seen in me, these are the things that you should do. And the result, the God of peace shall be with you. And you will have the peace that passes human understanding.

But Paul said, ¹⁰*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again;* The word flourished there is, been revived. It's like the trees in the springtime. The word in the Greek is used for the blossoming of the trees that appeared to be dead, but now they are blossoming again. And so it has flourished again, blossomed again.

wherein ye were also careful, That is, in sending support for Paul and for Paul's work.

but ye lacked opportunity. It flourished again. I'm glad that your help has flourished once again. He said, it isn't that you didn't want to, but you lacked opportunity. They perhaps, were going through, themselves, a financial problem. Thus, they lacked and thus could not send to Paul, because of their own lack. Or it just could be they didn't know where to send it, so the opportunities were, to sending it, they didn't know where. But now again as they know where Paul is, he is in Rome in prison, they were able to send it to him.

¹¹*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* I am not trying to put anything on you, like, you know, bail me out. I don't know where my next meal is coming from. Can you send me a dime, you know? Not that I have respect of want. I've learned to be content. I'm content with whatever God provides. You see, when your life is in God's hands and you recognize and acknowledge, Lord, my life is in Your hands, then you learn to be content with whatever the Lord provides. And if He doesn't provide, then I'm content. God is going to take care of me anyhow. He is going to teach me some lessons of His faithfulness.

I've learned whatsoever state I am in to therewith to be content. So I'm really not trying to butter you up

to send me, more is what Paul is saying. He was very careful about receiving money from the people. You would never have found Paul sending out these mailings that say, would you please help me as this time of the year, we are going through a tremendous financial crisis, but you would please, you know, make an extra donation? Paul would never do that. In fact, he said that your giving should never be out of constraint, that is pressure. You should never feel pressured to give to the Lord. And yet how often times we see people trying to pressure others.

There is a lady, a very lovely lady, who has been very generous in her support of Calvary Chapel in years past. This year we didn't hear from her. I wanted to call her to just find out how she was, how she was doing. Was everything all right? But I have hesitated and have not called her because I was afraid that she might interpret it as sort of a, you know, haven't heard from, haven't received a generous check this year, kind of a thing. And for fear that she might think that, that I am calling to solicit funds, I haven't contacted her. I did get a lovely Christmas card from her and I'm glad that she is doing well. It didn't have the generous check, but that's fine. That's not the basis of a relationship. I didn't want her to think that we were contacting her for the money. I appreciate her friendship and all, though she may never give another dime, I don't know and it doesn't matter. That has nothing to do with the relationship and should it ever. And for fear that she might think that, I just haven't made contact with her all year long. It's an important thing, I believe, that we be extremely careful in these issues, as far as giving is concerned, because I believe that it is a completely personal matter between you and God—how and what you should give to the things of the Lord.

So Paul said, I'm glad that you have sent to me again, that your support has been revived, not because I speak out of respect of want, I'm not trying to, you know, poor out.

For I've learned in whatsoever state I'm in, therewith to be content. ¹²*I know both how to be abased,* Now here is God's apostle, Paul, a man of God, a man of faith, and yet there were times when he was abased.

He said, I know how to be abased, *and I know how to abound*: There have been times when there has been more than enough.

every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I've been on both sides. I know what it's about. But in everything I am content because my life is committed to the Lord, my life is in His hands.

Now earlier, he said, be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication, let your request be made known unto God, and the peace of God that passes human understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Now he is demonstrating to them in his very experience, content, my life is committed to God, whether I am hungry or I am full, it doesn't matter, my life is committed to God! If I'm abased or if I abound, it's all in God's hands. I've learned just to be content and thus the glorious peace that Paul spoke about, that passes human understandings because I've committed my life so fully and so completely, to God, whatever God wills, whatever God wants, whatever God wishes.

For Paul said, ¹³*I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.* There is a verse in John fifteen, where Jesus is talking about the importance of abiding in Him. And He says, abide in Me, for without Me, you can do nothing! Without Me, you can do nothing! I have that verse underlined. But I have this verse underlined, I can do all things through Christ. Without Him I can do nothing, but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And you need to have both of those underlined in your own life. Apart from Christ, we are nothing. We can do nothing. But thank God, through Christ, I can do all things!

So I learned to be content. My life is committed. I can accept the good and the bad, through Him who strengthens me.

¹⁴*Notwithstanding* (he said) *ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.* It was good! Thank you! It was good that you sent for my needs.

¹⁵*Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel,* Paul first ventured into Europe when he came to Philippi. And he went from Philippi to Berea and to Thessalonica and all.

You know also that in the beginning of the gospel *when I departed from Macedonia, no church*

communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. You were the only church that supported. You were the only church that sent me any help. None of the other churches sent me any help, but you were the only one.

¹⁶*For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.* Twice, you sent offerings to me to help.

¹⁷*Not because (he said) I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* Now God has a very interesting and fascinating bookkeeping system. And those who supported Paul's ministry, those who financially made it possible for Paul to minister, the fruit that came from Paul's ministry, abounded to their account.

Even as today, the fruit that abounds from the ministry, it is accounted to those who have made the ministry possible. When we get to heaven, you are going to meet so many people, who are going to come up and thank you for their salvation. You may say, well, who are you? You look like a Zulu to me. And they will say, no, you gave in an offering to this missionary. They came and brought me the gospel, but you were the one who helped support and send them. And I want to thank you. And the fruit will abound to your account. Paul is saying, that's why I'm thankful gift, not because I needed it, but I wanted fruit to abound to your account.

That's why I like to invest in the lives of young men, who are really have potential of doing something for the Lord. I think of it as fruit to my account, investing in them, helping them. That's why we were happy to buy the first church for Greg Laurie, out in Riverside. Because we could see the potential in this young man and I wanted fruit to abound to my account. That's sort of selfish. So we bought the Baptist church that had gone bankrupt. But that's the type of God's booking, fruit abounding to your account.

¹⁸*But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.* The things that they sent, sacrificial giving unto Paul. They were just as a sacrifice that was offered in the Old Testament, the sweet smelling savor unto God. So, the sacrifice that you made in giving, I'm blessed by it! I abound! I am full! I've received the things that you have sent through Epaphroditus.

¹⁹*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* What a glorious Scripture! What a wonderful promise! How many times I have stood on this promise! But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. How much is that, I wonder, His riches in glory?

²⁰*Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The last little salutation, ²¹*Salute (or greet) every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.* ²²*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* Now Paul was able to lead many of those in Caesar's household to Jesus Christ. There are writings in the early church history that two famous Romans, Synica and Lukin were both converted by Paul, there in Caesar's household, so to speak. Also, that the empress was converted. Josephus wrote concerning her, that she was a believer in the true God. And so, interesting, that many of Nero's servants, personal servants, had become Christians. All of the saints greet you, chiefly those that are of Caesar's household.

²³*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* So Paul's letter to the Philippians. There is so much to be gleaned for our own lives from this letter. But we move on now to Colossians. Here again, he takes us to heights of, Spiritual heights, in his letter to the Colossians, as he deals with the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ. It's sort of a polemic against the Gnostic beliefs that began to infiltrate into the churches at that time.

Father, we give thanks tonight for these wonderful promises, the peace of God that passes human understanding, that will keep our minds and our hearts. That we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us and that You, Lord, will supply all of our needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Lord, free us from the cares of this life. And from the worries and the anxieties and the stress of

living in this culture. And help us Lord, to realize that our citizenship is in heaven. And we look, Lord, for Your return because we know that You are at hand. And so Lord, bless, we pray, as we seek now to put into practice these things that Paul instructed. That we, Lord, spend more time in prayer, rather than worrying about our circumstances. Help us Lord, to learn to just pray and commit them to You so we can walk away and just experience Your peace, knowing that You are going to take care of it according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Lord, help us to grow and to become strong in our faith. And as with Paul, help us Lord, to be so committed that in every circumstance that we find ourselves, that we find Your peace and Your contentment, contented in whatever state we're in. In Jesus' name. Amen.