

True Joy - The Wisdom of Philippians
Rejoice in the Lord - The Blessing of Discipleship (Phil 4:1)
6-27-10
Scripture Reading - Phil 3:17-4:3

Paul does two things with this important transitional verse.

- 1) He brings to conclusion a large section of his letter that he began way back in 1:27.
- 2) He sets the tone for the specific, and potentially difficult, entreaty of Euodia, Syntyche, and his true companion in 4:2-3.

Stand firm thus in the Lord.

Paul brings to conclusion a large section of his letter that he began way back in 1:27.

- **Philippians 4:1 (ESV)**
¹Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, *stand firm thus in the Lord*, my beloved.
- **Philippians 1:27 (ESV)**
²⁷Only 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,

Why did Paul spend more than two chapters teaching, encouraging, and reminding the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord?

- Because Paul knew that standing firm in the Lord was at the heart of *living a life worthy of the Gospel* which was the Philippians' desire and his desire for them as well.
 - o **Philippians 1:3-5 (ESV)**
³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.
 - o **Philippians 1:9-11 (ESV)**
⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so 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.

- Paul also knew that the Philippians were facing some trials, and that the trials were beginning to wear them down.
 - o Persecution from without
 - o Which resulted in selfishness, division, and grumbling within
 - o Which made them more susceptible to both legalistic and licentious false teachers and teachings

- Finally, Paul knew that nothing brings more *glory* to God than when His followers stand firm in the Lord in the midst of trial.
 - o Anyone can stand firm in the Lord when life is going well. It's when trials and temptations come that the genuineness and sincerity of our faith is truly tested for the world to see.
 - **Mark 4:16-20 (ESV)**
¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; Then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²⁰ But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."
 - o It's in the midst of trials and temptations that we have *the greatest opportunity* to bring glory to our Lord and Savior and to help draw others onto Him. The more trials we face the more opportunity we have.
 - **Acts 5:40-42 (ESV)**
⁴⁰ and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they left

the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

- Paul saw the trials and temptations his beloved Philippians were facing *as opportunity*. He desperately wanted to see them *stand firm* in the same way the apostles in Jerusalem had, and thereby bring *much glory* to God. That is why he dedicated more than half his letter to teaching, encouraging, and reminding them how.

Seven keys to standing firm in the Lord in the midst of trial.

1) Focus on others instead of yourself

a. **Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)**

³ Do nothing from rivalry 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.

2) Work hard in dependence on God

a. **Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV)**

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

3) Remember, learn from, and follow the example of others

a. Jesus

i. **Philippians 2:6-8 (ESV)**

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

b. Himself

b. **Philippians 3:17-19 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

7) Rejoice in the Lord, especially in knowing Christ

a. Thanksgiving is the antidote to grumbling, complaining, and despair

b. We have much to be thankful for in Christ, *especially knowing Him*

c. **Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV)**

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

d. **Philippians 1:21 (ESV)**

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

That is how you stand firm in the Lord my beloved!

The second thing Paul does in this important transitional verse from the body of his letter to its conclusion, is He sets the tone for the specific, and potentially difficult, entreaty of Euodia, Syntyche, and his true companion in 4:2-3.

An entreaty is an earnest request or petition. Entreaties, especially ones that are corrective and require you to do something difficult, are usually best received when they are posed in a positive and gentle way by someone you know genuinely loves and cares about you. This is exactly what Paul does here.

▪ **Philippians 4:1-3 (ESV)**

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

I want to spend the rest of our time focusing on one of the many terms of endearment Paul uses for the Philippians in these verses, “my joy and my crown.”

My joy and my crown

I read 4:1 at Duncan’s 20th anniversary celebration just the other day because nothing is more representative of a minister’s body of work than the quality of disciples God uses him to produce.

- Duncan has MUCH to be proud of!
- And so did Paul...

Paul was so proud of his disciples that he couldn’t wait to cast them at Jesus’ feet!

- **1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 (ESV)**

¹⁷ But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, ¹⁸ because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. 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.*

- The changed lives and steadfast faith of the Philippians and the Thessalonians and all the other disciples Paul had led to the Lord made all his hard work and sacrifice MORE than worth it!!! They were his prize, *they were his joy and crown.*

What is your joy and crown? What are you pouring your life out for? What is your crown of boasting that you will present to the Lord on the day of His return? Does God reserve the blessing and joy of making disciples only for men like Paul and a select few pastors and leaders in our churches today? Is it possible for all of us to have a crown like his one day? The answer to that question is most definitely YES!!!

- **Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)**

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- **Acts 1:8 (ESV)**

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- **2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come...²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

God wants to use YOU in the lives of others!

- If you think otherwise, listen to this...
 - o Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands (pp. 17-18)

God can use you no matter where you're at! All you have to be is willing.

- God used the woman at the well despite her social standing, her sin, and the fact that she'd just met Jesus that day!
 - o **John 4:28-42 (ESV)**

²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. *Can this be the Christ?*" ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him...³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

He can use you too!

- Each one teach one

