

**True Joy - The Wisdom of Philippians**  
***Rejoice in the Lord - For Agreement in Him (Phil 4:2-3)***  
**7-4-10**  
**Scripture Reading - Phil 4:1-3**

The problem with disagreement - a true story

- Two young women on fire for the Lord.
- Embraced the call to be ambassadors for Him.
- Longed to see the Gospel advance in their own lives, in the lives of those in the church, and in the lives of those outside the church.
- They were a great team and were working side by side until one day they had a disagreement that they couldn't resolve.
- Theirs happened to be personal, but it could have been anything.
- Their disagreement affected their individual walks with God, their ministry at church, and doubtless their witness to their unbelieving friends and family members.
  - o Disagreements break down relationships and broken relationships can be absolutely consuming.
- Though they sought the wisdom and help of others, they were never able to completely reconcile their relationship.
- I believe the affect of their disagreement are still being seen to this day.
  - o Individual walks
    - Took one a long time to get back on track with the Lord.
    - The other still isn't back on track
  - o Potential progress with youth (two of the most promising youth workers I've seen)
    - Those they were ministering to at the time
    - Those they may have ministered to in the future
  - o Potential progress with unbelievers in their life.

Two women in Philippi, Euodia (yoo-od-ee'-ah) and Syntyche (soon-too'-khay), also had a disagreement that was negatively affecting both their lives and the lives of those around them. Paul addresses their disagreement directly in this passage, and some would argue,

and I think rightly so, that he has been indirectly addressing it throughout the letter.

- There is much we don't know about their disagreement.
  - o Who exactly were these women, what role did they play in the Philippian church, and why did Paul choose to put them "on the spot" by naming them directly in a letter that would doubtless be read publically before the entire congregation?
  - o What was their disagreement about? Was it personal, philosophical, theological, or some combination of all three?
  - o How long had they been in disagreement and how much damage had already been done?
  - o Who was the mysterious "true companion" that Paul asked to help the women to reconcile their dispute, and who was Clement and why did Paul choose to mention his name as well?
- These questions will never be answered for sure and can only be conjectured about. Therefore, rather than spending our morning taking our "best guess" at answering them, I want to focus instead on three things we know for sure.
  - 1) The disagreement was between two believers.
  - 2) Paul desperately wanted to see it resolved.
  - 3) And, Paul felt it was necessary to involve others in resolving it.

1) The disagreement was between two believers.

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

<sup>2</sup>I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree *in the Lord*. <sup>3</sup>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. Paul urges them to "agree *in the Lord*"
  1. The fact that they are *in the Lord* is the grounds on which Paul urges them to come to agreement.

a. **Philippians 4:2 (NLT)**

<sup>2</sup> Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, *because you belong to the Lord*, settle your disagreement.

ii. Their “names are in the book of life”

1. Though this is the only instance that Paul refers to “the book of life” in all his letters, it is a clear reference to salvation in other Biblical passages.

2. **Revelation 20:12-15 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> *And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

iii. They “labored side by side with (Paul) in the gospel”

1. You’re either for Christ or you’re against Him.

2. Though it is possible to seem like you’re on Christ’s side and not be, there is NO indication from this passage that that was the case with these women. Paul embraced them as his *fellow workers* along with Clement and the rest of the Philippians whose names were in the book of life.

We are all fellow workers in Christ.

- **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

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

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.* The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.* We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- Paul and the Philippians absolutely embraced this idea.

- o **Philippians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, *servants of Christ Jesus...*

- o **Philippians 1:3-5 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, <sup>5</sup> because of your *partnership in the gospel* from the first day until now.

- o **Philippians 1:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to *advance the gospel...*

- o **Philippians 1:21-22 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means *fruitful labor for me.*

- o **Philippians 1:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> 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,*

o **Philippians 2:22 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has *served with me in the gospel.*

o **Philippians 2:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and *fellow worker* and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need,

o **Philippians 2:29-30 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, <sup>30</sup> for he nearly died *for the work of Christ...*

- Summary of point #1 – The disagreement was between to believing women who were co-laborers with Paul and the rest of the Philippians in the Gospel.

2) Paul *desperately* wanted to see their disagreement resolved.

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

<sup>2</sup> I *entreat* Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

i. Entreaty – an *earnest request* or petition

1. **Philippians 4:2 (TLB)**

<sup>2</sup> And now *I want to plead* with those two dear women, Euodias and Syntyche. *Please, please,* with the Lord's help, quarrel no more—be friends again.

b. Why was Paul so desperate to see them resolve their disagreement? Because he knew that...

Disagreement hinders our work in the Lord. Or in other words, disagreement hinders the advance of the Gospel (which is our work).

It does so in three ways all of which begin with W:

- o It hinders our *walk* as individuals.
- o Our *work* as a church.
- o And our *witness* as a church.

#### 1) Walk as individuals

- o Disagreements are distracting at best and consuming at worst.
  - How does your quiet time go when you are upset with someone or know that someone is upset with you? Especially if it is someone you love?
    - Tough to focus when Jess and I are off or when I know someone from church is upset with me.
    - No matter how hard I try to set them aside, those things are on my mind until the conflict is resolved.
- o Disagreements are almost always rooted in sin and sin hurts our personal relationship with God, especially unrepentant sin.
  - Every unresolved disagreement I've ever been involved in has included some combination of the following things: pride, self-righteousness, stubbornness, bitterness, and unforgiveness. All of these are sinful attitudes and all of these will eat away at your personal relationship with God, especially if they are not repented of.
  - If you're struggling with your personal walk with God, it may well be because you have unrepentant sin in your life and that unrepentant sin can often be tied to a broken relationship.
  - If you are in this place, please hear these words from Scripture, take them seriously, and repent

of your pride, self-righteousness, bitterness, and unforgiveness today.

- **1 John 1:5-7 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>*If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

- **1 John 2:9-11 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup>Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup>Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup>But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

- **Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- **Matthew 5:21-24 (NIV)**

<sup>21</sup>"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. <sup>23</sup>"Therefore, if you are offering your

gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

## 2) Work of Church

- o As a church we're called to work as a team in order to accomplish our mission of getting the good news about Jesus out to others. Disagreements distract us and keep us from moving forward.
  - As an athlete, I always knew my opponent was in big trouble when they started to argue with each other.
  - The same is true of the church.
- o Resolving disagreements can take up A LOT of the church's time and energy, and disagreements can arise over the LITTLEST things.
  - Chairs colors
- o This is why it is so important that we...
  - Pray hard
  - Communicate clearly
  - Be willing to give in for the good of the team
  - Trust the decisions that are made
  - Support the decisions that are made

## 3) Witness of Church

- o One of the things that should be most attractive about the church community is its unity, love, and ability to resolve conflict.
  - **John 17:20-23 (ESV)**  
<sup>20</sup> "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent

me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, *so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*

- **Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. *And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

- **1 Corinthians 6:1-8 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? <sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! <sup>4</sup> So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? <sup>5</sup> I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, <sup>6</sup> but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? <sup>7</sup> *To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be*

*defrauded?* <sup>8</sup> But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

- Summary of point #2 –Paul desperately wanted the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche to be resolved because he knew that it would hinder their own personal walks with God and the work and witness of the church.

3) Paul thought it necessary to involve others in resolving the disagreement.

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

<sup>2</sup> I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> *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.*

It often takes the help of others to solve our disagreements

- **Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> *But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.* <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

- Involving others can be a hard thing for everyone involved, including the mediator or counselor (true companion). But the results are often worth it!
  - o One of the biggest causes of disagreement is *miscommunication*.
    - Counselors can be a huge help here.
  - o Another huge cause of disagreement is *blindness to our own sin*.

- A neutral counselor can be a huge help here as well, since you are often not in a position to hear the person you are in disagreement with.
- Though there is never any shame in involving a counselor, if we truly embrace this closing point, a counselor should not be necessary.

Because of the cross, no disagreement is unresolvable.

### **Matthew 18:21-35 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"  
<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents (1 talent = 15 years wages thus 150,000 years wages). <sup>25</sup> And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup> So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (1 denarius = 1 day's wage thus 100 days wages) and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' <sup>29</sup> So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup> He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup> Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. <sup>35</sup> So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."