

Phil Ch 4 Vs 1-7

What are you trying to say?

I would remind you at this appoint as we begin to consider this closing ch of the book of Phil that so far in this book we've seen the philosophy for Christian living in ch 1. The pattern for Christian living in ch 2, the prize for Christian living in ch 3 and ch 4 reveals to us the power for Christian living. You recall that in Ch 3 Paul seemed as though it was in his mind to close the letter, he begins it with a "finally brethren" but apparently the Holy Spirit wasn't finished with him yet because even though he'd given us the philosophy that we need as believers "to live, Christ, to die gain." A philosophy is no good unless you have the power to carry it out. A pattern is useless if you don't have the ability to follow it, if there's no power supplied to have that pattern be a reality in our own lives. and What good is it to show me the prize if I don't have the power to reach the goal?

So it would seem as though the Holy Spirit had yet 1 final emphasis to the believers through the letter to the Philippians and that is; now that I've exposed you to the philosophy, I've revealed to you the pattern, and I've shown you the prize. I want to talk to you about the power that I've supplied and made available to you, in order that each and every one of these things might become a practical working reality in your life. All of these things can be real to us through Christ Jesus who strengthens us, so many times we read the bible or hear a study and we consent for the need for these things to be real in our lives but that's where it ends (with the consent). When God would have these things be much more for us than divine ideals that we consent to the need for, He desires that these things make an impact on our lives such to the extent that they are worked out through us practically. This ch speaks about the source of that strength (or power), and the secret of our power, joy being the source, prayer being the secret.

Vs 1

Now this word "therefore" speaks of what was previously stated, anytime you see the word "therefore" in scripture it's always pointing to what was *there before* it. It's to say, in light of the things I just spoke to you about, this is the course of action you should take. Which in this case (though you could probably take this back significantly into the 3rd ch) we see the specific context even in light of vs 20-21.

Paul was speaking of those flesh bent, carnal individuals whose end is destruction because they are enemies of the cross of Christ, (the crucified life of denying the flesh). But rather they indulge the flesh, glory or boast in things they ought to be ashamed of, and place their priorities on the things of this world. But then he goes on in vs 20 and says that our priorities are to be heavenly, because this world isn't our home, we're just passing through. Our citizenship is in heaven. From which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Who will transform these bodies, conforming us into the image of His glorious body, when He is revealed (the bible says) we will be like Him for we will see Him as He is. And because of that hope that we have, that assured expectation.

Paul says let's not be of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Stand fast in the Lord, that's the exhortation since we are awaiting our Lord Jesus Christ who will conform us into His image at His appearing, let's not grow weary in our pursuit of God, but rather let's stand fast in the Lord. The words "stand fast" being those words that would be shouted in the battle when you felt like running. You would be fighting toe to toe with the enemy, the odds may've seemed overwhelming and you just wanted to give in, and you would hear "stand fast" persevere, it's almost over just hang in there, and don't back down, stand your ground and fight.

That's what Paul is in essence saying here, just hang in there, persevere, stand your ground, and be not moved. and This vs just drips with affection, he uses 6 terms of endearment in this 1 vs alone. He calls them his beloved twice, his brethren, longed for, his joy and his crown. and We've seen the love of Paul the apostle for these people consistently throughout this epistle, here it just bursts out of the page, term after term of love and affection, he calls them his joy. and He's spoken throughout this letter of the joy that he has in them, in ministering to them, in seeing them grow in Christ likeness. In Ch 2 vs 2 he says fulfill my *joy* by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and one mind.

That call to unity that is so prevalent in this book, and so like a parent with their children Paul says you are my joy, and my crown. Now there are 2 different crowns spoken of in scripture, the royal crown that is for the king the "diadema" (dee-ad'-ay-mah), and the stephanos (stef'-an-os), or the victors crown, that crown that is rewarded to the victor of a certain sport or game, and that's the crown that Paul is speaking of here. We would liken it to a trophy, what you receive when you win a race or a certain sport, that's what Paul is likening these believers to as it pertains to his life. He's saying stand fast in the Lord, don't give up the fight, and when I stand before the Lord, your very presence there will be my trophy, my crown, you are my reward, my glory. You are my joy, it's a Pastor's heart, it brings him joy to see his children, those whom he has begotten in the Lord walking standing fast in the Lord, walking in truth. The apostle John said the same thing, 3 John 4 we read, "*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*" That he hasn't labored in vain but that they are fighting the good fight, running the race so as to win, and anyone who has kids knows how good it makes you feel when they do the right thing when they had the opportunity to do the wrong thing.

It brings you great joy to know that they've opted for the path of integrity and truth and that's what's being said here, and because of that, because they are his joy and his crown it's his desire that there be no schism in the body, no ripple of divisiveness and so we have the exhortation in vs 2. But note the fact that before Paul gives the exhortation he (practically without exception) gives the commendation. Now he didn't do that with the Galatians but that was a rare thing with the apostle. and I believe that we would do well to learn from his example in our disciplinary tactics or when we need to approach a corrective issue.

Though there are times when I don't do this, there are other times when I do, and as often as the Lord reminds me, I try to heed his reminder. and I see this in the apostle Paul, he commends those whom he is dealing with before he corrects them, he lets them know what they're doing right, how he thanks God for them, how they mean so much to him, however there are a few things I need to speak to you about. I find that it helps alleviate the spirit of criticism and the thought by others that all you do is bag on them all the time, because then they can build up a calloused heart toward you and not receive anything you have to say to them no matter how beneficial it may be.

So before the exhortation comes the commendation, you're my longed for and beloved brethren, you're my joy, and my crown, I love and appreciate you emphatically and it's because I love you that I'm concerned for this issue.

Vs2

We've dealt with this on a # of occasions throughout this letter, Paul's continual plea for unity in the body of Christ. Paul brings it up at least once in every ch, in ch 1 we read in vs 27 *"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."* In other words when you and I stand fast in 1 spirit, with one mind and we're striving together for the faith of the gospel, or in short we are unified in Christ, our conduct, our behavior will be becoming of the gospel, it will beautify the gospel.

But when we're fighting, or spreading roomers on the gossip chain, or being divisive, that is not behavior that is becoming of a believer, it's not conduct worthy of the gospel, and it brings shame to the gospel message. We are one in Christ and I don't know about you but I've never sought to divide myself against myself, to get one part of my body to side with another part and the expense of the rest of it, and yet how often does that happen in the body of Christ? The Holy Spirit's plea through the apostle is for unity; we've been given (the bible says) the ministry of reconciliation, we read a minute ago vs 2 of ch 2 regarding the appeal for unity. In Ch 3 vs16 we read, *"Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind."*

Now here we are in ch 4 and what's the exhortation? That believers walk in unity, is God trying to tell us something here? It's like, what are you trying to say? and Do we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church this morning? There are bigger issues in life then me having to be right all the time, or than you having to get your way all the time (and he'll address that in a minute) there's a world that needs Jesus Christ because they're dying and going to hell, and we're letting the fact that we can't get along for whatever reason hinder God's plan to reach the lost.

Division comes when people are unwilling to die to self. and Since we've spent considerable time on the need for unity in past studies in this book I won't belabor the point this morning but I didn't want to let it slide by with out you seeing force *behind* it. The emphasis for the need *of* it, God finds it worthy to repeat the instruction for us over and over and over again, why, because we need it. We find ourselves lacking in it, not walking in the reality of it, and so God says again, be of the same mind in the Lord. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, that mind that does nothing through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind each esteeming others as better than himself. Looking out *not* for the things of himself, but for the things of others, that is the mind of Christ, that's the mindset that promotes unity.

We're not talking here of being carbon copies of one another and that everyone needs the same opinion concerning which football team is the best. But rather that we're of the same mind *in the Lord*, working for a common goal through the diverse gifts that God has given us that we might lead lives that are becoming of a believer, and worthy of the gospel bringing honor and glory to God.

Vs3

So here we find Paul urging this true companion of his, whoever that was that was there in Philippi at that time, the bible doesn't say who it was so I won't lead you down the many paths of conjecture because when it's all said and done they're still left saying, but we don't know. So since we don't know, I'll just leave it at that, but there was someone there to whom Paul was urging that he assist in bringing resolve to this issue, that he would help mediate this issue that they might be brought together having the same mind in the Lord. Because they had labored together with him in the gospel, you recall that when Paul 1st went to Philippi it was because he'd seen a vision of a man beckoning him to come to him Macedonia and so when he went to Philippi, which was the foremost city of Macedonia, Paul didn't find a man there. But instead he found a group of women who were meeting down by the river holding prayer meetings, and these women (you recall that Lydia was one of them) played key roles in the foundation of the church in Philippi. and So Paul has a burden for these women and says, hey, help these women who labored with me out with their problems. Which brings up a point, so many people seek to place Paul in the light of a male chauvinist because of the fact that he spoke out concerning a woman's role in life.

The fact that they are help meets to their husbands not to usurp authority over a man or to teach the men, but Paul knew the vital role that women play in ministry and never belittled that even for a minute. He was just clear regarding the various roles that God has ordained regarding various people, none better or worse, greater or lesser, they simply vary. You don't place square pegs in round holes an acoustic pickup on an electric guitar, it just don't function as effectively as it could or as it was designed to if you do that. and Body life is the same way, we're all different members with variant roles and we should seek to function outside the parameters of the role that we were created for, things won't function as effectively as they could or as they were designed to do if we do that.

I thank God for all the godly ladies that he has surrounded this ministry with, women who have co-labored with me in the gospel. and I hate to say it but many times the wives and the ladies lead a higher life of integrity and are more godly in their example of Christian living than are their husbands and the men. Do you realize how many areas of this ministry would take a crucial blow if all the women that serve here were to just suddenly quit? We'd be in a world of hurt, there would be some serious holes in the wall, so see the fact that women in the church play a vital role, they are co-laborers in the furtherance of the gospel, and Paul is acknowledging that here. Now right now these 2 particular women are laboring with him anymore, they're divided instead, and so he's dealing with that and he urges this companion of his to assist in the reconciliation of the problem. He brings up Clement here who is a fellow worker as well and I find the contrast in the mention of these people by name interesting. If you were going to have your name recorded for all history to learn from and it was to be summed up in one sentence, would you rather have it read like Euodia and Syntyche, or Clement? Divisive individuals, or fellow workers and co-laborers in the gospel whose names are written in the book of life? and That's really the emphasis that I want to draw out of this vs, the book of life and the importance of having your name written in it. The most imperative and absolutely essential aspect of your life is that your name be in the book of life.

We find in Luke ch 10 the report of the fact of when Jesus was sending out His disciples (70 of them 2x2) and they came back and they were all topped out. and They were all, "*Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.*" And He said to them, "*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.* (and He said to them) *Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*" In other words the things that God does through your life as significant as they may be aren't the most important thing, people will cast out demons and perform miracles in Jesus name and never make it to heaven, that's what the bible teaches.

If you want some news to rejoice over this morning brothers and sisters let it be in the fact that your name has been written in heaven, because you know Jesus Christ in a personal way, you've received Him into your heart and into your life, that's how your name gets there. Because God knew you would receive His Son He inserted your name in His book, but the trippy part is that He inserted it there from before the foundations of the world. Doesn't that blow you away? God knowing all things in His foreknowledge wrote your name in His book even though you only received Christ a year ago or 2 or 10 yrs ago, whenever it was. (and If you don't know Jesus Christ you can find out your name was put there to if you'll only open your heart and receive Him as well.) But the reason I emphasize the necessity of having your name there is because if it's not there as I said earlier you don't make it to heaven, you don't experience everlasting life because your name's not in the *book* of life.

You experience everlasting separation from God in the lake of fire, we read in Rev Ch 20 beginning in vs 11 that at the Great White Throne Judgment that the books will be opened, and

the book of life will be opened. And all the dead small and great will stand before God and be judged according to their works. and We read in vs 15, “*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*” Which is the 2nd death, physical death and spiritual death, but it’s interesting and exciting to know that God has a book in heaven and in it is the written record of all of those that have been ordained of God from before the foundations of the world to inherit the Kingdom and He’s inscribed their names there. and Mine is one of them, and you can find that yours is to by simply receiving Jesus Christ

Vs4

We’ve spoken on this in this letter as well, Paul says rejoice in the Lord, notice so far in vs 1, stand fast *in the Lord*, in vs 2, be of the same mind *in the Lord*. and Now in vs 4 rejoice, *in the Lord*. The bible teaches that we are to abide in Christ, and that it’s in Him that we move and we breathe and we have our being and we’re to rejoice in the Lord always and in case you didn’t get the 1st time he repeats it, again I say rejoice. He didn’t say rejoice in your circumstances always, because I can’t always rejoice in my circumstances, but in the Lord there is always room to rejoice, my name’s been written in the book of Life and that gives me cause to rejoice.

Again a sad and sour Christian isn’t a real becoming witness of the Lord, and I’m not speaking of grieving over tragedies, but bad attitudes, they just don’t appeal to people. But this speaks of the source of your strength as a believer, the bible says that the joy of the Lord is your strength, when you’re robbed of your joy you’re vulnerable prey, but when you’re full of the joy of the Lord and rejoicing in the Lord, it seems like nothing can touch you, so the command to rejoice in the Lord.

Vs5

This is to be the Christian disposition, gentleness, forbearance, maybe your bible translates it moderation, it speaks of not insisting on the letter of the law, being willing to give up your rights for the sake of another. Maybe in all fairness you beat that person to the parking spot, but hey I’ll walk the extra 200 yards, it’ll give me more time to talk with God and worship Him. This is what we were talking about earlier, not always having to have it the way that’s fair, but rather giving of yourself because there are bigger issues in the world than my parking place or my opinion on certain matters. I don’t have to always be right; you see this attitude promotes unity, not scriptural compromise that’s not what we’re talking about. But being willing to die to self for the sake of others, the joy of vs 4 is that inward quality, the gentleness of vs 5 being that outward quality that is the result of the inward quality. People might not always see the joy in my heart, but my gentleness or graciousness will be seen by all. and If I have the joy of the Lord and understand that the Lord’s coming soon anyway, that just really helps put things in their perspective, has a tendency to make mole hills out of what I previously considered a mountain.

Vs6-7

So if joy is the source of our strength, we see here that prayer is the secret of our strength, of our steadfastness, and ability to stand fast, or stand firm with out wavering. We see in vs 6 that we're to be anxious for nothing, and time will forbid us to get too far into this and so we'll kind of pick it up here, Lord willing next week, but we're speaking here of worry, this word that's been translated as "anxious" here means to be "pulled in different directions." (Wiersbe)

Your hopes pulling you one way, your fears pulling you another, the result being that you're being pulled apart, but the command is to be anxious for nothing, and the 2 words that I would have you take note of in this vs are the words of contrast, worry about nothing, pray about everything. You see if I've brought every detail of my life to the Lord in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving being my attitude, if I truly believe that He's in control and has heard my prayer and will respond according to my eternal best interest, than why worry? What does that profit, in reality worry is a sin because the bible tells us not to. and We see in this vs the 3 ingredients for peace, in vs 19 of ch 3 is the 3 ingredients for the destruction God, here in contrast we see the 3 ingredients for the peace of God. To let my requests be made known to God in prayer, and supplications, with thanksgiving, the result being the peace of God that passes all understanding guarding my heart and mind and we'll talk about that next week.

Before we can know the peace of God we have to make peace with God. You cannot have the peace of God with out having 1st made peace with God, how does one do that? Rom 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. You make peace with God by placing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and if you've never made that decision I want to give you that opportunity this morning. That you might know the joy of the fact that your name has been inserted into the Lambs book of Life from before the foundations of the world.