

PHILIPPIANS

LESSON TWELVE JOY IN WORKING TOGETHER (4:2-9)

4:2 **I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord**

- A. While Paul has been emphasizing the individual nature of the Christian race, he now reminds us of the fact that as we run this race we must work together.
- B. Thus, this is a second section on the unity we are to have in Christ – especially in working together.
- C. The opening example has to do with two Christian women in the church at Philippi.
 - 1. The name Euodia means, “fine traveling or prosperous journey.”
 - 2. The name Syntyche means, “happy chance or good luck.” *{The word is actually suntuche and expresses the idea “with fate.”}*
 - 3. It is worth noting that when the “s” is added to the name Euodia, it becomes masculine; and, the name Syntyche can be either masculine or feminine.
 - 4. However, it seems that these were two women (cf. 4:3).
- D. Paul exhorts them to be united in their thinking and in the Lord.
 - 1. The word for beseech is not the usual word meaning “to beg or implore.”
 - 2. This word means, “to call to one’s side; to exhort, admonish.”
 - 3. Notice that Paul repeated the word, emphasizing the responsibility of both parties.
- E. His exhortation was for them to be likeminded (cf. 2:2; Rom. 12:16).
- F. The key to their unity was that it existed (as did they) in the Lord.
 - 1. They were members of the same family.
 - 2. They were following the same path to the same goal.
 - 3. Thus, whatever their difference was, they should allow their fellowship in Christ to override their disagreement.

4:3 **And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlaborers, whose names are in the book of life**

- A. Paul also entreated others to unite and work together.
 - 1. This word for entreat means, “to ask, request, beg or desire.”
 - 2. These words remind us of Paul’s humility and his great love for this congregation.
- B. This request is made of one Paul calls a “true yokefellow.”
 - 1. The word “true” means, “legitimate, genuine, sincere” (cf. 2:20).
 - 2. The word “yokefellow” literally means “co-yoked” and refers to a “colleague, partner” or others united by a strong bond.
 - 3. This word is used of the relationship between husband and wife.
 - 4. It was also used to describe close, intimate friends.

5. We do not know who this person was.
- C. The name Clement was very common during Paul's day, so it is not possible to know the man to whom this verse refers.
- D. There were others who labored with Paul in the Gospel.
 1. The word "labored" indicates those who strive as in an athletic competition.
 2. It is possible and scriptural for women to labor in the Gospel.
 3. The first convert at Philippi was Lydia (Acts 16:13ff).
 4. One commentator wrote of the women converts at Philippi, "[they] would naturally take an active part in teaching other women called at a later period; of course not in public preaching, but in a less prominent sphere (1 Tim. 2:11-12)."
 5. Their labor also may have included support of Paul in his preaching.
- E. Paul's desire was for all of them to work together in unity and love, and to reconcile any differences between them.
- F. After all, they all would share the same reward – their names were in the book of life.
 1. Even those who are not mentioned by name have their names recorded by God Himself.
 2. Exodus 32:32; Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27

4:4 **Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice**

- A. David Lipscomb wrote: "When we surrender self and lose ourselves in Christ, the fountains of joy are at once opened."
- B. This verse states the theme and gets to the heart of this epistle.
- C. True joy and rejoicing is found only in the Lord.
- D. And, in the Lord, true joy and rejoicing is always found.
- E. In the immediate context, we are reminded that our labor together in the Lord is a cause for rejoicing.
- F. As we work together in the Lord, so all Christians rejoice in the Lord.
- G. This joy becomes foundational and motivational to our living the Christian life in whatever situation we find ourselves.

4:5 **Let your moderation be known unto all men**

- A. The word "moderation" refers to that which is suitable; it means "fairness, mildness, gentleness."
 1. Strong defines it as appropriate – in other words, Christians should live a life befitting the name of Christ (cf. 1:27).
 2. The ASV translates this word as "forbearance."
- B. Ultimately, this verse means that the Christian is to display a gentle and appropriate attitude as he faces the challenges of life.
- C. Thus, another reason we "rejoice in the Lord always" is to set an example before others.
- D. Again, David Lipscomb wrote: "He exhorts them not to become embittered and alarmed; but to let all see that they can be calm and moderate, and that they control themselves in the most trying ordeals...."

The Lord is at hand

- A. How can one have such a calm and joyful attitude?

B. By remembering that the Lord is near to His children (Psa. 145:18-19).

4:6 **Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God**

- A. The phrase “be careful” literally means “be troubled with cares.”
1. In Matthew 6:25-34, it is translated as “take thought.”
 - a. The context of this passage indicates that it is about worry.
 - b. It is the same in Matthew 10:19 (cf. Luke 10:41).
 2. In 1 Corinthians 7:32-34, it is translated as “careth.”
 - a. Here, it does not indicate worry or anxiety.
 - b. Instead, it refers to that which one focuses his or her mind upon – that which occupies the thoughts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:25; Phil. 2:20).
- B. Thus, the child of God is to live above worry and anxiety, yet to care for things spiritual.
- C. The reason for their lack of worry was twofold.
1. First, the Lord was near to them.
 2. Second, they could approach God through prayer.
- D. The importance of prayer in the life of a Christian cannot be overemphasized.
1. Prayer – *prayer addressed to God*
 2. Supplication – *petition, request; asking, entreating God*
 3. Thanksgiving – *grateful language; giving of thanks*
 4. Request – *a thing asked, petition*
- E. Christians are to pray “in everything” – that is, in every situation and circumstance of life.
- F. Because we may cast our cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7), we can live without anxiety or worry.

4:7 **And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus**

- A. When we pray and make our requests known to God, we are blessed with the peace of God.
1. The word “peace” means, “quietness, rest; a state of tranquility; harmony, security, safety.”
 2. It is the opposite of worry and “the antidote to anxiety.”
- B. Because this peace comes from God, it passes all understanding.
1. It may mean that it “passes all power of comprehension” (Eph. 3:20) [Vincent].
 2. Or, it “surpasses every (human) reason in its power to relieve anxiety” (John 14:27) [Vincent].
 3. The second definition seems to fit the Greek better than the first.
- C. This peace serves to guard both the heart (mind) and the thoughts (fruits) of it.
1. This brings freedom from worry and anxiety.
 2. Yet, it also protects from doubt and even temptation.
- D. As with all spiritual blessing, this peace from God is found only in and through Jesus.
1. Thus, where there is peace, there is joy.
 2. True joy can be found only in Christ.

4:8 **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**

- A. Building on the assurance of the previous verses, Paul now directs the Philippians to that on which their minds and lives must be focused.
- B. First, there are eight things upon which they must center their minds.
 1. Things **true** – *that which is not hidden; thus, in harmony with God's Word* (John 17:17; 7:18; Matthew 22:16)
 2. Things **honest** – *honorable, venerable, reverend; dignified* (cf. 1 Timothy 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2)
 3. Things **just** – *right, equitable, innocent; righteous, upright, virtuous; keeping the commands of God* (Mark 6:20; Luke 2:25; 23:50; Acts 10:22)
 4. Things **pure** – *clean, innocent, modest, chaste* (2 Cor. 11:2; 7:11)
 5. Things **lovely** – *literally, "friendly toward" or "toward friendship;" acceptable, pleasing, inciting love* (Matthew 7:12)
 6. Things of **good report** – *well spoken of, reputable; gracious* (Acts 6:3; John 6:68)
 7. Things **virtuous** – *literally, "manliness;" valor, excellence; moral goodness* (1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3, 5)
 8. Things **praiseworthy** – *commendable; joined with the idea of virtue* (1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 8:18)
- C. Paul's command is simple – think on these things.

4:9 **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**

- A. The second focus of their lives must be to find examples of those who manifest the previously listed attributes.
- B. Paul was one such example; thus, they should imitate what they had learned from him.
- C. Keep in mind that Paul was also an inspired apostle.
- D. If they would live in this manner, the God who provides peace would continue to be with them.