The Prize

Philippians 4:1-3

Sermon Outline

A. Stand Firm Under Pressure (vs. 1):

1. Therefore – Despite the fact there are those who are enemies of the gospel these believers must not take their minds off the mark.
2. My beloved – These are sincere believers that Paul chose to love and they truly loved Paul (1:3-8).
3. Brethren – Believers of Christ who are genuinely committed to the faith.
4. Brethren – These are believers who share willingly in the ministry God gave to Paul (Phil. 4:10-13).
5. My beloved brethren – Resolving conflict should be easier with people who have one spirit, one purpose and one Lord (Phil. 2:1-7).
6. My beloved brethren – This is why, since the scriptures say relationships will have trouble (1 Corinthians 7:28), we cannot marry or have relationships with individuals that are not saved.
7. Long to see – Being away from the Philippian believers was very painful for Paul.
8. Long to see you – Their deep commitment made opposition to their faith painful.
9. Long to see – Not being around people we love is painful.
10. My joy – Paul is saying that when he thinks of the believers in Philippi it brings excessive gladness that causes him to want to dance before God. This joy overwhelmed Paul so much it made him ecstatic and this radiated through his personality.
11. Crown of life – The crown represents victory after someone won in the Roman games. It was a victorious crown; same for the servants of Christ (Revelation 2:10). Despite all that Paul went through to get to Philippi and all he did to establish the church in Philippi the spiritual maturity that he sees manifested in them is his victory.
12. Crown of life – When Paul considers all the trials and painful experiences he went through to fulfill God’s call on his life; the believers in Philippi so lived out the principles he taught them that they became the evidence of the authenticity of God’s call on Paul’s life.
13. In this way stand firm – Paul challenges these believers that since they prove to be the fruit of his ministry they must continuously and habitually remain upright in their commitment to Christ. They must not live an average Christian life.
14. In this way stand firm – We cannot form lasting relationships without true faith and a steadfast commitment to God.
15. In the Lord – Their commitment and faithfulness must be based on a
consciousness of the power and authority of the Word of God.

16. In the Lord – The object of their faith is the Lordship of Christ.

17. Beloved – Paul repeats before charging them to manage conflict and division that they are believers whom he dearly loves.

B. Press to the Mark (vs. 2):

1. I urge; Exhortation – Paul could now continuously charge these believers because of their faith.

2. I urge; Exhortation – To urge is to plead earnestly so that those who listen feels an urgency to do what is being requested. Paul uses his influence and authority as an apostle to continuously challenge these believers to address the division and conflict that was among them (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Titus 3:9-11). He can do so again because of their steadfast commitment to the faith and the propagation of the gospel.

3. I urge Euodia and Syntyche – Paul continuously earnestly pleads with two committed believers who were submissive to the authority of scripture to address the conflict they were going through. Even though he is pleading with them he is also summoning them to respect his authority and function accordingly.

4. I urge Euodia and Syntyche – Their struggle must be addressed because it affects the spread of the gospel (2:14-16).

5. Live in harmony; Mind – Paul instructed Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind as he instructed them in chapter 2:1-5.

6. Live in harmony; Mind – To live in harmony is an action these women must devote themselves to (Romans 14-15) based on the fact that they are of one mind.

7. Live in harmony; Mind – These actions must be purposeful.

8. Live in harmony – Paul said live in harmony not fix the conflict (Romans 14-15).

9. Live in harmony – Living in harmony is a decision that is continuously not controlled by our feelings.

10. Live in harmony – Living in harmony is to purposefully decide to be loving to each other (Philippians 2:14-17; Colossians 3:12-17). Steps to living harmonious:

   a) Be committed to live in the Spirit and not in the flesh (Galatians 5:16-19).

   b) Bear with one another – Be respectful of each other’s differences that do not violate the Word of God (Romans 14-15).

   c) Practice forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15).

   d) Love is something we apply not feel (Colossians 3:14; 1 John 4:7-8).

   e) Must let the Holy Spirit control us (Colossians 3:15) because this leads to peace (John 14:26-27).

   f) The Word of God must be the authority (Colossians 3:16).

   g) Do let for ourselves live with a consciousness of God (Phil. 2:1-6; Colossians 3:17).
11. **Live in harmony** – To not function in harmony:

   a) Affects our financial blessings (Matthew 5:21-26).
   b) Can cause sickness and death (1 Corinthians 11:27-32; especially vs. 28).
   c) Stop prayers from being answered (1 Peter 5:7).
   d) God may reject our worship (Malachi 2:13-16).

12. **Lord** – The object of these women’s actions must be because their lives are under the authority of God whom they have allowed to dominate how they live their lives.

13. **Lord** – What they do must be in the sphere of all that is important to the kingdom of God as directed by His Word.

14. **In the Lord** – “Whatever we do in Word or in deed do it all” (Colossians 3:17) – ‘to live is Christ’ (2:21-26).

15. **In the Lord** – In the Lord creates common bond (Ephesians 4:4-7) and a glorious reward (3:12-15).

16. **True; Sincerity/Companion** – These believers were proven people of character.

17. **True; Sincerity/Companion** – These believers who were proven people of character were joined together like two oxen yoked together plowing a field. They were completed, directed the call of the Gospel as fellow workers, fellow laborers for Christ. It is these people Paul is calling on to assist.

18. **Ask also** – Along with the women being called to live in harmony Paul continuously pleads, as the person in authority, gently beseeching them to help resolve the problem.

19. **Help these women** – These fellow workers are commanded to seize the moment and give birth to actions that help lead to a resolution (Galatians 6:1-5).

20. **Who have shared my struggle** - **Verb, aorist, active, indicative, 3rd person, plural |finite verb** – Because Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16) was full of opposition and persecution, and these women never stop supporting him, these women prove true laborers of the Gospel. These women once and for all willingly and faithfully strived together with Paul to create progress for the purposes of Christ. These women are a part of the people Paul talked about in verse 1.

21. **Who have shared my struggle** - People who have conflict can be true saints of God, committed to ministry, loving the Lord but despite this they cannot forsake the need to live in harmony (Matthew 22:36-40).

22. **Rest of fellow workers** – Resolving this issue keeps the gospel moving forward.

23. **Rest of fellow workers** – Resolving this issue gets all the workers back together united (Phil. 2:1-6). When this takes place God powerfully works to strengthen and empower the church (Ephesians 4:1-7, 12-13, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-8).

24. **Rest of fellow workers** – Our personal struggles should never override the greater goal.
25. **Book of Life** – Resolving this issue allows us to share in Christ glory (Revelation 3:21-22).

26. **Gospel** – The direct purpose for everyone to work towards this end is because nothing must interfere in the development and propagation of God’s Word.

27. **Gospel** – The good news of Jesus Christ must not be hindered.

28. **And** - The word “and” is a translation of a Greek word which assumes the granting of the request just made, and pursues the matter further.\(^{[1]}\)

29. **The rest of my fellowship workers** - This effort to resolve this conflict involves all those who are dedicated, devoted to the propagation of the Gospel. All the committed believers are those who stand firm committed to one mind so they are the best to bring unity. Paul needs all hands-on deck.

30. **Whose name is written in Book of Life** – Paul has absolute certainty that his fellow workers were citizens of the kingdom of God. Paul saw their fruit and was therefore confident of their faith.

   a) The book of life records the names of the redeemed (cf. Exod. 32:32–33; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12).\(^{[2]}\)

   b) The Book of Life refers to a book in heaven where the names of believers are recorded (Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Rev. 21:27).\(^{[3]}\)

   c) The Old Testament sometimes refers to a record, kept by God, of those who belong to God’s people. Moses pleads with God to blot his own name from it rather than the names of the rebellious desert generation of Israelites (Ex. 32:32–33). David calls it “the book of life” (Ps. 69:28), and Isaiah carries the idea into the future when he speaks of the blessings that will come to those “who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem” at the time of the restoration of God’s people (Isa. 4:3). John frequently refers to a “book of life,” kept by Jesus himself, that contains the names of those who belong to God’s people and will be citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. Probably lying in the background of all these references is the civic practice of record-keeping; the names of citizens were commonly recorded on lists in antiquity.\(^{64}\) Thus, in the command of the Macedonian King Philip V referred to above (see comments on Phil. 3:20), Philip tells the city officials of Larisa to restore to the “community” the names that they have erased, apparently from some list of citizens. By using the phrase “book of life” here, Paul may be reminding his Philippian coworkers that although their status as good citizens of Philippi is in jeopardy, they are nevertheless enrolled on the citizen list of God’s heavenly society.\(^{66/[4]}\)

   d) The expression ‘the book of life’ (here βιβλίον ζωῆς) turns up in the OT to describe God’s covenant people who have survived some disaster and ‘enjoy a renewed spell of life on earth’. In later apocalyptic literature (Dn. 12:1; cf. 1QM 12:3) the imagery comes to be used of those who are admitted to eternal life, whose ‘names are written in heaven’ (Lk. 10:20; cf. Heb. 12:23). This figurative language is
employed several times in the book of Revelation to describe believers as conquerors (3:5), those who do not worship the beast (13:8), who have been predestined from the foundation of the world (17:8), and who will enter the presence of God after the last assize (20:15).[5]

e) Yet they did have names, and although time and space (and perhaps his very knowledge) did not permit Paul to list them, God had listed them all in the “book of life.” Just as Philippi and other cities like it must have had a civic register that included all the names of their citizens, so the heavenly commonwealth (cf. Phil 3:20; Fee [1995], 397, citing Caird) has its own roll, where God inscribes the names of those to whom he promises life. Thus, it is not important that succeeding generations know the names of Paul’s co-workers; it is important that “God knows them and knows they belong to Him” (Barth, 120). The expression “book of life,” often found in late apocalyptic literature (cf. Dan 12:1; 1 Enoch 47:3; Rev 3:5, 20; 15:1, 7; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27) and at Qumran (1QM XII, 3), is drawn from Exod 32:32; Pss 69:28; 139:16, where in the figurative language of the OT it refers to the register of God’s covenant people (Lightfoot; Martin [1976]).[6]

f) In the book of life—the register-book of those whose “citizenship is in heaven” (Lu 10:20; Php 3:20). Anciently, free cities had a roll book containing the names of all those having the right of citizenship (compare Ex 32:32; Ps 69:28; Ez 13:9; Da 12:1; Rev 20:12; 21:27).[7]