

Philippians 4:2-9

Wednesday
November 16, 2005

Philippians 4:2-3

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the Gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.

Philippians 4:4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:8-9

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:2a

- “urge”, “entreat”
 - παρακαλω
- from a word that means “call alongside”
- has a sense of begging, encouraging, consoling (Thurston)
- Paul wants this to happen, but is not giving a demanding order
- Paul uses this verb before each name in order to establish their equality; Paul is not taking sides in the dispute they are apparently having

Philippians 4:2a

- Women’s names
- roughly translated, Euodia is “good journey”
- Syntyche is “good luck”
 - the “tyche” in Syntyche is Greek for *Fortuna*, the Goddess of good luck
 - Syntyche, like Epaphrattus, may have been born a pagan

Euodia and Syntyche

- Who are these women?
- Are they leaders in the church?
 - Philippians seems to imply “yes”
 - In 1:1, Paul talks about “bishops” and “deacons” (επισκοποις and διακονοις)
 - bishops could have been leaders of local house churches
 - these women may have been among those leaders! (Osiek)

Philippians 4:2b

- “To think the same things/be of the same mind in the Lord”
 - same word as Phil. 2:5 (“let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus”)
 - the issue is unity; Paul wants these women to be united the same as he wants all of those at Philippi to be united
 - so what were they fighting about? “In the Lord” implies that it had something to do with their leadership role in the church
 - but we can’t be sure (does it matter?)

Philippians 4:3a

- The mediator figure
 - Paul’s “yokefellow” or “companion” (συζυγε)
 - this could be a person’s name (Mr. Yokefellow?) or he could be referring to Epaphroditus or Timothy
 - Why do some think that this is Paul’s wife? Could this be a woman?
 - “assist” or “help”
 - literally means “bring together”
 - used in Luke 5:7 to describe fishermen pulling nets in together

Philippians 4:3b

- “struggled”
 - also “labored”; this word has the sense of athletic competition and shows that these women worked as equals with Paul
- “Book of Life”
 - refer to Phil. 3:20; “our citizenship is in heaven”
 - Greek cities in this time had registers which kept a list of all the citizens
 - this could be a reminder that the true citizenship of the workers of Christ is in heaven

Philippians 4:4

- Rejoice!
 - Joy is a central theme of Philippians
 - Paul mentions joy or rejoicing in 1:18, 1:25, 2:2, 2:17, 2:18, 2:19, 2:28, 2:29, 3:1, 4:1, 4:4, and 4:10 (whew!), a total of 16 times
 - the point? Paul wants the church to have JOY!
 - Is this jarring after talking about an argument, or a logical progression?
 - “In the Lord” makes this possible
 - is this imperative or optative (an encouragement or a wish?)

Philippians 4:5

- “Gentleness”
 - also translated “forbearance”, “moderation”
 - could imply meeting someone halfway
 - Paul is very concerned with how outsiders view Christians and how what they do will be viewed.
 - This could be related to the dispute discussed earlier
- “The Lord is near” (The Lord= God or Jesus?)
 - possibly quoting from Psalm 145
 - is Paul referring to Christ’s return or the presence of the Lord amongst the Christians?
 - Or both?

Philippians 4:6

- “Be anxious in nothing”, but “in everything pray”
- How about Paul saying “don’t worry?” (See Phil. 2:20)
 - “be careful”, “do not be anxious”, “do not worry”
- So you have two choices:
 - worry about everything
 - Pray about everything
 - This goes hand-in-hand with the gentleness/forbearance discussed earlier

Philippians 4:7

- Verse 4:7 as a result of 4:6
 - peace “of God”, as in God as originator
 - receive peace through prayer
 - “which surpasses all understanding”
 - has a sense of rising above; being superior to
- “Guard your hearts and minds”
 - military language; God’s peace as garrison over whole person (Martin)
 - “In Christ Jesus”- again, an encompassing sense of Christian existence as in Christ

Philippians 4:8

- “Finally”
 - “oh, just one more thing” (Paul as Columbo) 🗣️
 - continues the thought of the “peace of God”
- List of virtues
 - these are things you should think about!
 - Virtues are important to the Greco-Roman worldview
 - By making a list of virtues, Paul is using rhetoric that the Philippians would understand

All About These Virtues...

- Are any of these virtues specifically Christian?
- If they are not, is there such a thing about Christian ethics, or are there just “ethics”?
 - This may be Paul saying “Think Good Thoughts”
 - So why be Christian if everyone has these virtues anyway?
 - If others act like Christians, what does that say of their inner character?
 - Do these people need to be brought to Christ?
 - What’s the point?

Philippians 4:9

- Revisits the idea of *imitatio Pauli*
- four different ways that Paul has taught them
 - learning
 - receiving; Paul passing on tradition
 - hearing, seeing (sensory)
 - “I’ll do what you say, if it’s what you do.”
- ends with God’s continuing presence
 - relates to theme of standing firm in the Lord and being united (God will be with all of you always)