

Lesson 9 Philippians 4:2-9

Verse 2

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

2. Notice that Paul is imploring them to be of the same mind “in the Lord”. Notice he repeats the word “implore” for each of them.

a. Paul treats Euodia and Syntyche with great respect and humility.

- “Implore” is parakaleō (par-ak-al-eh'-o): to call near, that is, invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation): - beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray.

Observe the humility and lovingkindness of the great apostle when he writes from his prison in Rome to these two women and says “please” to them, and begs them to become reconciled. He could have used his apostolic authority had he chosen to do so. Instead, in meekness and humility he beseeches. He begs them to be of the same mind in the Lord. However, this was no abrupt request. Paul had prepared these women for this exhortation in 1:27-30 where he exhorts the Philippian saints to stand fast in one spirit, and in 2:1-4, where he exhorts them all in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than themselves, and to be likeminded, in 2:5-8, where he brings to their attention the humility of the Lord Jesus, and in 2:19-30 where he speaks of the selflessness of both Timothy and Epaphroditus.-Wuest

b. Women were quite involved in ministry in Philippi (and all of Macedonia).

These were prominent women in the Church, possibly deaconesses. The position of women in Macedonia was exceptional. In Greece, generally, their standing was inferior. The Athenian law prescribed that everything that a man might do by the consent or request of a woman should be null in law. In Macedonia monuments were erected to women by public bodies, and in Macedonian inscriptions records of male proper names are found formed on the mother's name instead of the father's. Macedonian women were permitted to hold property.-Vincent Word Studies

To deny their role in the church in Philippi is to fly full in the face of the text. Here is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is “gender-blind,” that he gifts as he wills; our task is to recognize his gifting and to “assist” all such people, male and female, to “have the same mindset in the Lord,” so that together they will be effective in doing the gospel.-Fee

c. Mentioning these ladies by name is significant.

Paul rarely ever mentions anyone by name. But here he does, and not because Euodia and Syntyche are the “bad ones” who need to be singled out; precisely the opposite, here are long-time friends and co-workers, leaders in the believing community in Philippi, who have fallen on some bad times in terms of their “doing the gospel.” Fee

d. The cause of their conflict is unknown.

In light of the total letter, however, and the nature of Paul's exhortations, it seems most likely that their disagreements were not substantial, and had more to do with "how to do the gospel" in Philippi in the context of their present suffering, rather than over substantive matters as such. Fee

Verse 3

And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

3. Paul urges the others to help these women and Clement.

a. Who is the "true companion"? Some believe that his name was Syzygus, which is the Greek word for "true companion".

It was a practice among these first century Greeks at their Christian baptism, to discard their pagan name, and be given a new name descriptive of their new characters as moulded by their new Lord and Master... Syzygus, for that is the English spelling of our Greek word meaning "yokefellow," was truly born from above, as his character and name indicated. His name referred to one who pulled well in double harness. How we need such today in our churches. -Wuest

Of the others who are available, (to be the yokefellow) the most likely candidate is Luke. -Fee

b. The word help can be translated "aide".

The word "help" implies that Euodia and Syntyche were already trying to lay aside their difficulties. The word means "to take hold with another" in a task. -Wuest

c. Euodia and Syntyche labored together with Paul in the gospel. It is safe to understand this as these women were teaching and preaching the gospel with Paul.

The word "labored" is the translation of a Greek word used of a group of athletes who played on a team together, co-operating with one another in perfect harmony to attain a certain end, the word having in it also the ideas of strenuous and agonizing effort. -Wuest

Verse 4

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

4. This is not the first time in the letter that Paul has told the Philippians to rejoice.

- a. Paul mentions rejoicing 16 times**
- b. Repeating what he just said is a way of emphasizing the command.**

- c. They are not only told to rejoice, but to rejoice in the Lord. The Christian life should be a life of joy. If it isn't, we shouldn't feel guilty. We should ask ourselves, "Why?" Joy often leaves when law and service replace grace and faith.

"Joy," unmitigated, untrammelled joy, is – or at least should be – the distinctive mark of the believer in Christ Jesus. -Fee

- d. Always is “pantote” every when, that is, at all times: - always (-s), ever (-more).
Strong's

Verse 5

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

5. Here Paul instructs the Philippians how to behave toward all people, not only with fellow believers. The world could use some gentleness coming from Christians.

The word "moderation" is the translation of a Greek word having the following meanings: "not being unduly rigorous, being satisfied with less than one's due, sweet reasonableness, forbearance." -Wuest

The exhortation is therefore, "Do not keep this sweet reasonableness in your heart. Let it find expression in your conduct. Thus others will experience its blessings also." -Wuest

In the midst of their present adversity, the Lord, to whom they belong, has graciously set them free for joy – always. At the same time others should know them for their "gentle forbearance" toward one another and toward all, including those who are currently making life miserable. -Fee

- a. “The Lord is at hand”: Because of the nearness of Jesus' return, live gently and reasonably with others.

Verse 6

The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

6. How do we deal with situations that cause us to be anxious?
 - a. Recognize that the Lord is at hand. In the Greek this sentence could go with either the one before it or the one after.
 - b. Be anxious for NOTHING. Nothing means nothing. Not one thing.
 - c. Merimnaō to be anxious about: - (be, have) care (-ful), take thought. Strong's
 - d. To be anxious means to “take thought”, or to think continuously, or to meditate on our problems.

The Philippian saints were habitually worrying. Paul exhorts them to stop it. The word "nothing" is literally "not even one thing." Wuest

Jesus invites his followers to live "without anxiety" because their heavenly Father knows and cares for them; in Paul's case it is because their "Lord is near." Apprehension and fear mark

the life of the unbelieving, the untrusting, for whom the present is all there is, and for whom the present is so uncertain – or for many so filled with distress and suffering, as in the case of the Philippians. Fee

Matthew 6:25

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Matt. 6:31

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Luke 10:41 41

And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

- e. Many people/cultures associate “worry” with caring. Thus to worry about someone means you are showing that you care about them. The opposite would also “feel” true. If we don’t worry about something, then we think we don’t care. This idea of not worrying about ANYTHING is completely contrary to how most people think. It almost seems irresponsible to not worry. Yet worry implies you are without help, in essence, there is no God, or that you are god and thus must work out every wrong. It is right to care about people, of course, but when care slips into anxiety, we need to apply verse 6.
- f. But in everything...

“In everything” stands in contrast to “not about anything,” and means “in all the details and circumstances of life.” Fee

- g. By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

The three words for prayer are not significantly distinguishable; “requests” are “made known” before God “by prayer and petition.” In so doing one acknowledges utter dependence on God, while at the same time expressing complete trust in him. Fee

Lack of gratitude is the first step to idolatry (Rom 1: 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.). Thanksgiving is an explicit acknowledgment of creatureliness and dependence, a recognition that everything comes as gift, the verbalization before God of his goodness and generosity-Fee

Colossians 4:2

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Colossians 2:6-7

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

The preposition "unto" in the Greek text suggests the translation, "in the presence of God," and is a delicate and suggestive way of hinting that God's presence is always there, that it is the atmosphere surrounding the Christian.-Wuest

- h. Just as a young child might cry about something and you can't help him until he tells you what it is that is bothering him, so we sometimes forget to tell God what it is that we want. So, another way to simply state this verse would be:

John 16:24
Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may

Don't worry about a thing. Tell God what you want. Then thank Him.

- i. Or perhaps from God's perspective:

"Don't worry about a thing, child. Tell me what you want... You're welcome."

1 Peter 5:6-7
Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Verse 7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

7. What will be the result after doing verse 6?

- a. Some people never discover the joys of verse 7 because instead of doing what instructed to do in verse 6, they continue to be anxious about whatever it is they face. They pray about it, but don't take the recommended steps in order to find peace. So, they don't find peace. They just keep worrying. Only in the doing of verse 6 can you experience verse 7.
- b. You will not only have peace, but the peace of God.

Here it is called "the peace of God" because God is "the God of peace" (v. 9), the God who dwells in total shalom (wholeness, well-being) and who gives such shalom to his people. And it is the "peace of God" that "transcends all understanding." Fee

- c. You will not only have the peace of God, but a peace which surpasses all understanding. You will not be able to figure out how you went from being anxious to being at peace. You will be able to look at a situation that previously you felt you SHOULD worry about, and realize that you have peace, even though the situation might still be the same.

Such peace will therefore "guard" their "hearts and thoughts." In the Hebrew view the heart is the center of one's being, out of which flows all of life (e.g., Mark 7: 21). Fee

The words "shall keep," are from a military word, "shall mount guard." God's peace, like a sentinel, mounts guard and patrols before the heart's door, keeping worry out. Wuest

Proverbs 4:23-24

*Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life.*

²⁴*Put away from you a deceitful mouth
And put devious speech far from you.*

Since God's peace surpasses merely human understanding in any case, it will protect the mind from those very thoughts that lead to fear and distress and that keep one from trusting prayer. -Fee

Stop perpetually worrying about even one thing, but in everything, by prayer whose essence is that of worship and devotion, and by supplication which is a cry for your personal needs, let your requests with thanksgiving for the things asked for be made known in the presence of God, and the peace of God which surpasses all power of comprehension, shall mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. -Wuest

Verse 8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

8. Instead of meditating (thinking repeatedly) on our troubles, we are to meditate on (think repeatedly about) these things.

- It is important to note, that this is part of renewing our minds. When we meditate on these things (as opposed to their opposites), these types of virtues begin to grow in our lives.

a. What is true (as opposed to what is false)

So the first word in this virtue list calls them to give consideration to whatever conforms to the gospel. -Fee

b. What is noble (instead of that which is not sacred, that which is not honorable)

Although this word most often has a "sacred" sense ("revered" or "majestic"), here it probably denotes "honorable," "noble," or "worthy of respect." -Fee

c. What is just (not that which is unrighteous)

In Paul it carries the further sense of "righteousness," so that it is not defined by merely human understanding of what is "right" or "just," but by God and his relationship with his people. -Fee

d. What is pure (as opposed to that which is impure, unholy)

Thus, "whatever things are pure" has to do with whatever is not "besmirched" or "tainted" in some way by evil.-Fee

e. What is lovely (instead of that which is hated)

The NJB catches the sense well by translating, "everything that we love." Here is the word that throws the net broadly, so as to include conduct that has little to do with morality in itself, but is recognized as admirable by the world at large.-Fee

f. What is of good report; i.e. Joshua and Caleb who believed God, (as opposed to the other spies who gave an unbelieving report of the promised land)

g. What is virtuous (instead of thinking about what is immoral)

The word "virtue" in the Greek text was used in classical Greek for any mental excellence, moral quality, or physical power.-Wuest

h. What is praiseworthy (as opposed to meditating about what is worthy of rebuke)

i. Think ("thinking" is something we can choose to do)

The word "think" in the Greek speaks of the act of careful reflection.-Wuest

Verse 9

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

9. Paul is once again asking the Philippians to follow his example.

- a. What you learned from me**
- b. What you received from me**
- c. What you heard in me**
- d. What you saw in me**
- e. Do what I've taught you. Live like I've lived.**

Thus, even though the Spirit is not mentioned, in Paul's understanding this is how the "God of peace will be – and already is – with you." After all, the fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace.-Fee

If our interpretation is correct, three things happen simultaneously in these concluding and summarizing exhortations: (a) that they embrace what is good wherever they find it, including the culture with which they are most intimately familiar; (b) but that they do so in a discriminating way, (c) the key to which is the gospel Paul had long ago shared with them and lived before them – about a crucified Messiah, whose death on a cross served both to redeem them and to reveal the character of God into which they are continually being transformed. It is hard to imagine a more relevant word in our post-modern, media-saturated world, where "truth" is relative and morality is up for grabs. Fee