

# Philippians 4:2–9

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] let us let us pray father we sit under the sky that you fashion the trees that you planted the water that you brought and here we are in the midst your creatures in the midst of your creation and we ask lord that you would disclose yourself in your word for our help for your glory we ask these things say well stand firm firm our poles work for maintain your place your soldiers to maintain their post paul charges the philippians to stand firm in their faith at their station stay your post he is saying irrespective of the pressures that come up that will tempt you to abandon it don't be tempted to desert don't be tempted to go awol paul is forecasting for the philippians a difficulty forecasting the difficulty the philippians would continue to face they were surely undergoing suffering and persecution whether it be social relational economical or physical paul himself was writing from a roman jail cell attesting to the reality of the persecution you see for you and i following jesus will come at a high cost being a christian is hard and if it wasn't if it wasn't paul would be wouldn't be summoning them to stand firm following jesus is difficult and this is why the passage this morning will become immensely relevant if it is so hard paul what do we have at our disposal to stand well i invite you to stand as i read philippians chapter 4 verses 2 through 9 paul writes i entreat euodia and i entreat syntache to agree in the lord yes i ask you also true companion help these women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life rejoice in the lord always again i say rejoice let your reasonableness be known to everyone the lord is at hand do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to god and the peace of god which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in christ jesus finally brothers whatever is true whatever is honorable whatever is just whatever is pure whatever is lovely whatever is commendable if there is any excellence if there is anything worthy of praise think about these things would you have learned and received and heard and seen in me practice these things and the god of peace will be with you this is the word of the lord please be seated following jesus is difficult following jesus is hard the great charge is to stand firm

the great temptation is to surrender the great charge is to fight the great temptation is to fold the call is to faith but the temptation is to forfeit and this tension emerges and paul has already hinted at it in the end of chapter three why because we belong in heaven but here we are residing on earth we're citizens of heaven but residents of earth our rights privileges and securities are all there but all of our experiences are here to take the modern lingo the struggle is real the christian life is hard but we have help we are not left powerless weaponless with no strategy against foes or fears and paul knows that difficulty will continue for the philippians and so he wants to equip the philippians with an arsenal that will enable them to stand firm perhaps you're familiar with your bible he's done this elsewhere at the end of uh his letter to the church at ephesus he says put on the armor of god why so that you can stand firm and he breaks down the armor into pieces so that the christian would have uh protection against the difficulties of life and here he doesn't put on he doesn't encourage us to put on the armor rather he presents us what this equips us with exhortations exhortations but before he goes into these exhortations he has an issue he needs to resolve there is a tension in the church there's a disagreement that is going on at the church of philippi between two women euodia and syntache it's troubling to himself and it's certainly affecting the church he doesn't say what the problem is or what the issue is or the nature of the dispute i would think it's unlikely to be theological because if it were paul would have just settled it in the letter rather it seems to be personal he leaves the circumstance unspoken implying that the whole church knew what the issue was and he boldly calls out these two women and he summons them to agree in the lord bring their disagreement under the lord it's not something new he's already told them to do this in chapter two to agree in the lord is to have the same mind to be one a single mind to subject your dispute under

christ and he's urging them to move from being having selfish ambition to a humble selfless attitude it's so burdening to paul he actually calls another person to enter the conversation we don't know who this individual is but the text tells us it's a true companion and this true companion is to help it come in and mediate the situation move them to reconciliation paul understood that the great impediment to the health of the church would be the disunity of its members there would be no way to stand firm if they weren't able to stand together if dave and i were in contention or in disagreement which we are not but if we were inevitably reverberations throughout the congregation would emerge if we had competing personal agendas rival objectives it would shroud the objective of proclaiming christ it would create the cause amongst us i suppose to surrender to forfeit to give up to abandon and it's

necessary for us to be those who sit between you odias and syntochese and to implore them to agree in the lord or in so doing we're able to stand together and stand firm you and i have this position that when there is a disagreement among us to sit down and to mediate to help them agree in the lord over the past 18 months i've had hard conversations and i'll tell you from up front with people who have i love and we sit down and they disagree on what we're doing here and what we're about here and we have the conversations and they've resolved that the best way is to leave and i understand that there are times where you might have to leave but what i lament is it's actually in this context that we're able to wrestle through issues disputes disagreements bring them into submission under the lord and if we were to emerge from that we would not only stand together but to borrow paul's exhortation we would be able to stand firm well second part of my sermon moves to these exhortations paul is winding down his letter and you probably caught that he's moving to his final closing remarks and as it was read you may sense some of this the haste the pithy phrases it's terseness it's brevity there's no sophisticated development in his statements i envision it's a parent scrambling out to get to work and or maybe a set of parents scrambling out to go on a date and there the babysitter is and there the kids are and the parent says don't forget to brush your teeth don't forget to take a shower don't forget to no sugar no tv in bed by night it's a parent who's kind of like exiting but is shouting all these exhortations to say these don't forget to do all these things and in some sense i sense as he's winding down paul is now erupting with these exhortations and beginning in verse 4 he shares with the philippians what they must do to keep going what it would require to stand firm paul how are you able to stand firm behind bars haven't you how do you have such resolve when your circumstances are so dire how do you keep pressing on straining forward holding true and i believe he tells them this is what will keep you and hold you he's sharing how heavenly citizenship will actually manifest itself in earthly residence and really short i want to give them to you here rejoice in the lord all the time well life's not going and again i say rejoice!

rejoice to fellow sufferers he says rejoice to the hurting he says rejoice to those in need and the impoverished he says rejoice to the failure the left out the left behind rejoice there will be there will be sorrow there will be hurts and there will certainly be trials but you rejoice to you and i he says rejoice carl bart says of this verse it's the defiant nevertheless i don't care what happens i rejoice there is no earthly circumstance that will impede the flow of heavenly joy register that there is no earthly circumstance that will impede there is no wall that the devil can build there is no stubbornness you can have that says the joy is not coming my way heavenly joy rejoice be reasonable he says generously forgiving gracious and carries on the idea of not insisting on your own rights but willing to defer to others i'm going to make allowances i'm going to not exert my rights in these circumstances for the well-being of another be reasonable let it be known to everyone else this is probably one of the greatest needs of the north american church today be reasonable be reasonable pray through anxiety offer supplication petitions lift up thanksgiving make your request known in so doing the supernatural otherworldly peace of god would be the garrison do you see that will guard your heart and your mind it's a staggering image to consider because he's already told them you are kind of like soldiers you're an army hold ground stand firm and as the arrows come in and as the missiles are launched and as the grenades go off all of a sudden in your prayer emerges a garrison or a fortress or an infantry of divine peace it's crazy to think about we are to learn one writer puts it that the way to be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful about everything rejoice be reasonable pray think think about what what's true what's honorable what's just pure lovely commendable excellent praiseworthy god has not only promised a fortress of peace around you but you and i are to stock the shelves of our mind with a particular inventory we are so the saying goes get our minds out of the gutter and instead we are to feed our mind with what will

equip us to stand firm what we ingest what we feed our eyes what we fill our sense what we devour with our senses has direct correlation with our well-being as

Christians how are you stocking your mind how are you stocking your mind what is true what is lovely what is pure honorable commendable excellent praiseworthy are those things going on the shelves of your mind my mentor has a saying I'm pretty sure he he took from someone else sow a thought plan a thought you reap an action sow an action you reap a habit sow a character sow a character and that is your destiny what do you put in your mind think about these things and lastly practice these things I have to go from here to here to here Paul closes what you have learned received heard and seen from me this lie is brutal practice practice boldly he holds himself as the model to emulate he practiced what he preached and now he preaches to them to practice what they see in him and so here we are a congregation on the threshold of our parking lot and then into a building and into a new neighborhood and there we will be tested and there we will be tried and there we will undergo at times suffering and hurt and pain and hardship and what keeps us going how do we keep on standing

[ 16 : 55 ] Paul says rejoice be reasonable pray think practice do it this is the arsenal this is your artillery as a Christian as you and I progress through the Christian life and fall under various sorts of attack we are to go to the armory open the door equip ourselves in these ways most intriguingly as I close these are things we are called to do we are not a people who sit in passivity as if we simply await Jesus' return we are an army that is moving that is advancing we are active strainers pursuers doers these are the things that enable you and I to stand firm this is the life of heaven manifesting itself on earth this is the commendable life this is the life that we have been called to this is the

Christian life well this morning we will have an opportunity to hear of individuals who have made this their life and let me pray for us and they will come forward father we we look to you for help we hear the promises of your word you will keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because we trust in you and we aspire to be those people would you give us peace for you are the God of peace would you protect us with your peace would you enable us to stand having done all else continue to stand we ask these things for Christ's sake amen amen to