

# Philippians 4:1-9

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[ 0 : 00 ] 982, thank you, if you want to turn with me in the pew Bibles or you can look in your own Bible if you brought one. We're looking at chapter 4, verses 1 through 9. The translation we're looking at unhelpfully puts a break between verses 1 and 2, but we're going to preach it because we think verse 1 actually better goes with verses 2 and beyond.

It's kind of a bridge, so don't get too hung up on it, but that's how we're going to read it. So, let's read together. Philippians chapter 4. Therefore, my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

I entreat Iodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women who have labored by my side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

I ask you also, true companion, help these women who have labored by my side with me in the book of life. I ask you to read the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice. 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 requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[ 1 : 25 ] 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.

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you. Let's pray together.

Lord, help us as we study the Bible tonight. Open our hearts to understand and to receive what you have to say to us. Open our minds so that we'll have clarity about what you are saying to us.

Lord, we pray that you would move our hands and our feet, Lord, to not simply to hear and go away, but to do what you have called us to do. God, we thank you for your grace and your mercy.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. In most military battles, there is a critical point where some part of the defending force claims its spot and says, this is the place where we will make our stand.

[ 2 : 36 ] This is where we will stand firm and hold our ground no matter what. If you are fans of the Lord of the Rings, you may remember that in the kingdom of Rohan, there is a place where they go when this becomes necessary.

It is the fortress of the fortress of the Lord of the Rings, it is the fortress of the Lord of the Rings, and so as the forces of darkness under Lord Sauron rise around them, as they are threatened actually by the traitor Sauron and his new orc army, they retreat to Helm's deep to stand firm, to hold their ground in that place.

But if you've seen the movies, they sort of make this a bigger deal. In the books, it's a bit more subtle. But their ability to stand their ground in that moment is undermined.

It's undermined by external forces. The army was much greater than they thought. The army, orcs usually have weaknesses of being afraid of daylight. These were not.

They were bigger and stronger than they ever thought. Not only that, but there was division within. The fortress was well known by a traitor who had lived for many years in the kingdom.

[ 4 : 01 ] The king himself had in his own soul a cancer that had captured him for so many years that even now as he was trying to find the courage, he wavered.

And in the middle of that cancer as well, he had lost contact with his allies. So there was no help that would come. And so their ability to stand firm and to hold their ground was compromised.

Friends, I wonder if that's true as well in our spiritual lives as well. I wonder if in the midst of our desire to hold our ground. In faith, in believing God.

That we find ourselves beset by pressures from the outside that seem overwhelming. By weaknesses within our own heart and our own soul. That jeopardize our ability to stand firm and to hold our ground.

You may have been here being a Christian for a long time. Maybe you're here tonight exploring it for the first time. Whatever your situation is, I hope that as we look at our passage tonight, you will learn.

[ 5 : 21 ] You will learn some of the challenges of standing firm in the Christian faith. But also, some of the resources that God has given us to do that.

So let's look at our passage tonight together. Paul has just finished, in the last part of chapter 3, laying out these two ways to live. If you want, look back with me for just a second.

You can see there's sort of two ways to live. There's one pressing on towards the upward call. Following Jesus. Whatever it takes, no matter what the cost is. Because God has done a great thing in Jesus.

And this is one way to live. And then there's this other way in verses 18 and 19. Where it says, these people are actually walking as enemies of the cross.

Their God is their belly. Their minds are on the things of this world and not on the things of God.

They say, and he's encouraging this church. He's encouraging the believers in Philippi to press on.

[ 6 : 20 ] To keep going. And then in chapter 4, verse 1, he changes the metaphor. Rather than this race metaphor of continuing on and running and running. He actually switches to this metaphor of standing firm.

So in verse 1, he says, Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown, stand firm thus in the Lord. And from that, he then launches into a series of exhortations and instructions about how to do that.

About how to stand firm. And we're going to look at it in three sections. And each section shows an enemy to standing firm. A gospel command on how we're supposed to live in the light of that enemy.

And then a gospel promise that gives us a ground that will enable us to do that. So we're going to try and do this quick. So we have good time for Q&A; at the end. But we're going to move through and try and see these things.

So the first one, verses 2 and 3. Talk about this conflict between these two women. And Iodia and Syntyche. And Paul begs them to agree in the Lord. So what is the enemy of standing firm for these two and for the church?

[ 7 : 31 ] It is disunity. It is fighting with one another. It's fighting about non-important things. Because you see as they're described.

These women were partners with Paul in the gospel. They're not arguing about basic things like the nature of God. Or the trustworthiness of the scriptures.

Or the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. They're not arguing about central truths. Whatever the issue is. They're having a hard time getting along.

Even in the midst of being fellow workers in the work of the church. I don't know if you're aware of this. But the number one reason why missionaries leave the mission field.

Is relationships with their co-workers. I don't know if I could document this. But it's got to be in the top three reasons why people stop coming to church.

[ 8 : 29 ] Or why people stop coming and engaging in church life. Because they have some conflict with someone along the way. And you know maybe you like me.

My desire in the midst of that so often is to withdraw. I just want to run away. I don't want to deal with a conflict. I just want to make it go away by removing myself from the situation.

We don't know exactly what it was that caused these women to have this conflict. But. But I know.

I know in my own life. I know in every group of people I've ever been a part of. In every church I've been a part of. That conflict happens. And when it happens it threatens our ability to stand firm.

Often we want to excuse ourselves and our conflict. And say well you don't know what they did.

Sometimes we want to just overlook it. Oh no no no it wasn't good. But still in our hearts we've lost that sense of being in it together.

[ 9 : 45 ] Paul says. I encourage you women. To agree in the Lord. Oh and by the way I encourage all of you. Help them. Come alongside of them. There's this mysterious true companion.

Who's never identified. But he's saying all of you help them to agree in the Lord. So a conflict between two people is not an isolated thing. Oh they just have to work it out themselves. In God's conception of his people. It's a communal thing. And so we are called to actually help one another. To resolve conflict. To overcome these challenges.

How do we do this? Well. I think because of the gospel promise that you see at the end of verse 3. Look with me at that. He's talked about these partners. He says. All of these people are those whose names are written in the book of life.

[ 10 : 46 ] And this is shorthand for saying. Each one of these people. Have been bought by the blood of Christ. And in Revelation there will be a day when the book of life will be opened.

And the names of all who have trusted in Jesus Christ. Will be read. And all of those are the sons and daughters of God. Who will live forever in a family together.

Because Jesus has won them. And brought them in. And caused them to stand. And so Paul says. If that's our goal. If our citizenship is in heaven. If we are part of one family. Let us not overlook the conflict. And allow that to divide us. Because in fact God has called us to run this race together. And to stand firm together. And we can only do it when we stand firm together. When the Roman phalanx was formed. It required each man to hold his shield in just the right way.

[ 11 : 49 ] So they would stand together. If one man was in conflict with the one next to. And there was a breach. Suddenly vulnerability happened.

Friends this is what Paul warns us of. And he exhorts us. Work out. Work out your conflicts. Because God has called you to eternally be together.

In unity. As a part of his family. So that's the first. Enemy. Conflict. The second one.

Verses 4 through 7. He gives a staccato list of. Of commands here. But I think at its core. The enemy that he's addressing here.

Is what we see in verse 6. Do not be anxious about anything. It's a remarkable thing that Paul says. Hey don't be anxious. I'm sitting here in jail.

[ 12 : 45 ] There are people running around the countryside. Saying incredibly damaging things about me. That are keeping me here. And making me and my ministry.

And my life investment. In the gospel look really terrible. And Paul says. Don't be anxious. About anything. Don't be anxious about.

Whether you're in prison or not. Don't be anxious about. Whether people say bad things about you or not. Don't be anxious about. Whether your life work is about to crumble. Before your eyes or not. It seems pretty remarkable. That Paul says. Don't be anxious. And of course he says this. And Jesus said it in Matthew 6 too. Because. This is one of the things we all struggle with.

Don't we? If I just. Ask the question. What are you anxious about? You could all give me an answer. Couldn't you? Your relationships. Your finances.

[ 13 : 43 ] Your future. Something. I don't know what it is. But I'm sure each of you could. Know what it is. And as we. Find ourselves.

Facing difficult circumstances. Or things that are outside of our control. What do we do? We so easily. Start to grasp. And we so desperately. Want to control.

The situation. So that we get the right outcome. In the thing. The very thing. That we are worried about. And when we face things. That are out of control.

We feel helpless. And we. And we despair. Paul says. There is a gospel. Command for you. When you are anxious.

Look with me. In verse 6. Do not be anxious. About anything. But in everything. He uses three words. To say it. Over and over again. Just to repeat it.

[ 14 : 38 ] Right? By prayer. And supplication. With thanksgiving. The gospel command is to pray. What does that mean? It means go. And take your concerns.

And take them to the very one. Who actually has control. The one who is actually. Able to help you. In every. And any circumstance. And that is the creator of the world.

And the Lord of heaven and earth. So pray. To God. When you. Are anxious. Pray persistently. Pray fervently. Pray.

Under your breath. As you're walking. From meeting to meeting. In your office room. Pray. As you're. About to pull your hair out. Because your kids have done. The same thing. Again.

Pray. Pray. As you're walking. Into that exam. That you feel like. Your whole future. Is going to rest on. Pray. In the middle. Of the fight. That you're having.

[15:35] With your good friend. Pray. In all the things. That you are anxious about. And ask God. To be sovereignly.

In control. Ask God. To be the one. Who will take care. Of your life. And the things. That you desperately. Want. To take care of. And the gospel promise.

Here is so sweet. Verse seven. And the peace of God. Which surpasses. All understanding. Will guard your heart. Lots of.

Commentators translate. Will garrison your heart. Do you know what a garrison does? A garrison comes. And lives. In a town. In order to protect it. Right.

And so. When need be. They muster themselves out. And put themselves up. In defense. Around a town. So that it will be protected. And you see what Paul.

[16:32] Says here. Paul says. When you pray. The peace of God. Will create this protective barrier. Around your heart.

So that it won't be overwhelmed. With anxiety. So you won't be eaten up. With worry. So that you won't spend. All your time. Thinking about. How can I solve this problem. And how can I get in control.

Of the situation. How can I get ahead of this thing. That's gotten away from me. But instead. It will keep your heart. And mind. Trusting. In Christ Jesus.

Trusting in God. And what he's done for you. In Christ Jesus. Now we need to unpack this phrase. The peace of God. Just for a minute. Because what is it that he's saying.

He's not saying the angels. Will guard your heart and mind. In Christ Jesus. He's not even saying the spirit. Will do this. He's saying. The peace of God. What does that mean?

[17:30] Well. As we look at more broadly. Paul describes. This in his letters. In the New Testament. The peace of God. Is actually the work. That God has done.

To make us. At peace with him. Friends. This is the very core. Of the gospel. This is the very core. Of Christianity. Isn't it? That we.

In our sin. Rebel against God. And tell God. No thank you. I'm going to try. And do this on my own. We reject him. We do not worship him. As he deserves.

We put ourselves. In the center. Of our lives. And this. Sin. Creates. A rift. In our relationship. With God. We are enemies.

Of God. According to the Bible. Because of our rebellion. Against him. And we have no peace. But God.

[18:25] So loved the world. That he sent his son. Jesus Christ. And Jesus lived. A perfect life. Of obedience. And fellowship. With the father. And then. At the end of his life.

Offered himself up. Offered himself up. To say. I will be the peace offering. So that you now. Can make peace. Again. The punishment.

That. We deserve. Because of our rejection. Of God. Goes upon Jesus. And we are then. Called. By faith. To return. To a relationship.

With God. The creator of the universe. The Lord of heaven and earth. Now becomes. Our heavenly father. Father again. And we are brought. Into his family. And so.

When Paul says. The peace of God. Will guard your heart. And mind. In Christ Jesus. What he's saying is. The peace that has been. Bought by the blood of Christ. The peace that you now.

[19:21] Have with God. The father. This is the thing. That now enables you. In the face of all. The other anxieties. Of life. To. To go to him.

To pray to him. And trust. That he will take care. Of these things. And as we do this. Remarkably. We find. That we have joy. And we can rejoice.

In the Lord always. Even in the worst circumstances. We can rejoice. Not in those circumstances. But in the Lord. And in fact. We can.

Verse five. Is an interesting one. Let your reasonableness. Nobody knows. How to translate. This word. Different translations. Have forbearance. Gentleness. Moderation.

One of the best translations. I think it is. It is. Let your dignity. Under pressure. Be known. Because the Lord. Is near to you. Rather than being.

[20:17] A stressed out. Kurt. Sometimes harsh. Person. In the middle of. The anxieties. That control you. Which is what I can be. So often. When I get consumed.

With anxiety. I lose that. Paul says. No. When you trust. These things to God. There is actually. This ability. To be calm. And to be gentle. And have dignity.

With one another. In the midst. Of stressful situations. So conflict. Erodes our ability. To stand firm. Anxiety.

Certainly. Erodes our ability. To stand firm. What is the third thing? Verses eight and nine. Look with me briefly. It's not actually. In there. We have to kind of.

Mirror read. What might be the thing. He's concerned about. The enemy. Seems to be. An overwhelming. Concern.

[ 21 : 13 ] With things. That are not. Of concern. To God. So. It is. Somewhere between. Distraction. And impurity. That.

That we. So easily. Capture. Our hearts. And Paul. Wants us. To fight. Against that. And friends. Let me just. Ask you. Is your life.

Distracted? Do you. Find your heart. Being drawn. Towards things. That. If. It came up. In casual. Conversation. Say. Here at church.

You might be embarrassed. To talk about. Are there things. I just think. We are so bombarded. Whether it be through. The visual media.

Of advertisement. Whether it be through. The internet. That we are all. Slavishly. Connected to. We are bombarded. All the time. With things that. At best.

[ 22 : 06 ] Distract us. And at least. Capture our hearts. With things. That are not. Of God. The modern world.

We live in. Promises. You can have it all now. If you will just. Sell yourself. To. Apple. Or. Microsoft. Whatever.

Or. Internet pornography. Or. Whatever it is. You can have. The pleasure. You can have. Everything you want.

Now. Is part of the promise. Of this world. I think. Part of what's.

In picture here. Is what Paul. Described. In verses. 18 and 19. Of chapter 3. When he talks about. Their God.

[ 22 : 58 ] Is their belly. They glory. In their shame. And their minds. Are set. On earthly things. How easily. That can be true. Of us. And how easily.

When we do that. We lose our ability. To stand firm. In the truths. Of the gospel. And in the hope. Of the gospel. So Paul gives us.

Verses 8 and 9. As a gospel command. Instead. Devote yourself. Devote yourself. To these things. You look at. You see it. The. The.

The verbs. Are at the end. Of chapter 8. Think about these things. And then in verse 9. Practice these things. What are these things?

Things that are good. Things that are intrinsically. Virtuous. Things that are. Corresponding to the nature. And goodness of God.

[ 23 : 52 ] In his common grace. And in his special grace. How intentional are you.

With your entertainment? Entertainment. Do you think about. Whether your entertainment. Is helping you think. Thoughts about God. And his goodness.

And his glory. Or not. What is it. That dominates. Your conversation. At the dining hall.

I know people. Don't gather around. The water cooler anymore. But in your workplace. In the casual. Conversations. What is it.

That. That fills. These things. What do you think about. When you set your budget. Your money. Paul is saying. There are better things.

[ 24 : 49 ] To invest your life. In. Probably. Than what you are doing. Right now. And this is not. An exhortation. Towards some sort of. Stoic. There's no pleasure.

In this world. Monastic. I'm going to try. To escape from it. It's not that at all. What Paul is saying. Is that. Whenever we. Whatever we do.

Whether we eat. Or drink. In whatever we do. Let us do it. To the glory of God. Let us do it. In a way. That leads us. To appreciate. And value.

The character. And the goodness of God. More and more. That's the gospel command. Here. Is to invest our lives.

To be intentional. To pursue those things. And the gospel promise. Is at the end of verse nine. When we do these things.

[ 25 : 44 ] The God of peace. Will be with us. The God who has made peace. The God who. Is able to cause.

All peace to happen. Because he holds everything. In his hand. The God who is able to bring. By reconciling. People in conflict. The God of peace.

Will bring. Will be with you. In the midst. Of all of these. External forces. And pressures. All of these. Internal. Weaknesses.

That you see. In your own heart. The God of peace. Will be with you. And in being with you. He will help you. To stand.

Firm. He will help you. To stand firm. Because. As we've learned. Back in chapter three. Verse twelve. Christ Jesus.

[ 26 : 40 ] Christ Jesus. Has already taken hold of us. For all who are in Christ Jesus. This hope is real. That he has taken hold of us. And so in the face of all these things.

We can stand firm. Because he has already made the ground. For us to stand on. In Christ. If you're here. And you're exploring Christianity.

Christianity. I want you to see. That. Whatever you might think. Christianity is about. At the core of it. It's about God. Calling us.

Back into this relationship. With him. So that. We might know. All of the richness. Of the blessings. Of what we've seen here. We have our names.

Written in the book of life. The peace of God. Is now ours. And the God of peace. Is now with us. Because of what Jesus has done.

[ 27 : 38 ] Let's pray. God we thank you. We thank you for your word. We thank you that. You have given it to us. God we pray.

That you would help us. To understand it. Lord not only to understand it. Lord but take it to heart. Lord may we. Think about these things. And may we put them into practice.

God that we might know you. The God of peace. More and more. We pray this. In Jesus name. Amen. As praise team comes up.

We're going to respond. In worship. And then. I'll be back up. In just a minute. For a few minutes. Of Q&A.; So you can. Be thinking about questions. Let's stand together.

Andrew. What is a good litmus test.

[ 28 : 43 ] For what is commendable. And what is not. So sir. What fits into that category. Of. In verse 8. That. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. No. Those. I mean. That's a really good question. It's actually fascinating. All the words in there. Are not common. New Testament words. They're actually. Words from general. Moral philosophy.

In the Greek world. And so. They're sort of. Another word for them is. They're things that are virtuous. In the old. You know. It's not a word we talk about very much. But. Things that have intrinsic virtue.

Or goodness to them. I think. When I think about your particular question. About how. How do I do this litmus. One of the questions that I would. You know. Some of the questions that I ask.

To filter. One is. Would I be ashamed. If I. If. A particular person knew. I was. Thinking about these things. Or focusing. Like. That's not a perfect test.

[ 29 : 46 ] But it's one of the ones that I use. One of the other things is. Does it actually help me. Think about the Lord. Now. Not everything is going to do that consciously.

But. Again. A litmus test. If I'm telling my best friend. The next day. What did you do yesterday. Oh. I did this. Can I connect that. Somehow. To the Lord's goodness in my life.

Or does it just seem like. Yeah. I watched. I watched. Eight episodes. Of CSI. And. It's really hard for me.

To tell you. How that's been. Like. Beneficial. From. For the Lord. From my walk with the Lord. So. Yeah. Dan. Yep.

Yep. Is there a difference. Between anxiety. And being burdened. And. So. I found myself recently. Very burdened. By the same. The world.

[ 30 : 41 ] Yep. Those things I can't control. Yep. Is that just. A flow of anxiety. Or is it. Like. Should we care about stuff. We can't control. We care about our. We can't control. Right.

So the question is. Is there a. A burden. That's different. From anxiety. About things. That are out of our control. Things that are. Concern in the world. I. I think there is.

Part of the reason. I would say that. Is when Paul talks about. His sufferings. In Corinthians. He talks about. The burden that he has. For the church. Or his concern. For the church. And. And this is the same.

Paul who's saying. Don't be anxious. About things. So. I'm assuming. That he's not. At one. In one place. Extolling his. Anxiety. I think he's saying. So I think.

There is a place. And there is a distinction. I think. Um. The difference. Would be. That things that are. Burden to you. About the fallen state. Of the world.

[ 31 : 35 ] About the. The hard things. That are going on. In your life. Is that. They're. They're actually. To have a godly burden. Is actually going to draw you. Into fellowship. With God.

Who cares more about. Those things. Than you do. And there's going to. It's going to result. In a kind of trust. Um. In the midst. Of that burden. Being burdensome.

Um. That I think. We'll. We'll see that. Only God. Can really. Renew the world. And make it right again. You know. And he's accomplished that. At the cross.

But he. He hasn't. In the resurrection. But he hasn't yet. Fully. You know. Manifested it. He will one day. And so to know. That only God. Has the ability. To. To do these things. And to recognize.

That if anyone. Is grieved over sin. And pain. And suffering. In the world. God is. More than any of us. And so. So I think. A healthy burden. Draws us into fellowship.

[ 32 : 28 ] With God. Like that. Whereas anxiety. Tends to make us. You know. Step back from God. Or to. You know. At worst. It makes us think. God. Why can't you. Why aren't you fixing this for me? And we actually get into.

A more adversarial. Uh. Or we just think. This is my ball. I've got to run with it. God has nothing to do with this. And. And then we. And so rather than drawing. Near to God.

In it. We actually. Find ourselves. Distance from God. So. What else? Jonathan.

Jonathan. I would. At the end of verse 3. You mentioned. It's my covenant. And the rest of my followers. Whose names are in the. Of life. No different.

He doesn't mention this. In other. Why he mentions. Clement and the other workers.

[ 33 : 24 ] Or the names are written. In the book of life. I think. I think. That what he's trying to do. Is he's trying to help. As he's writing.

Very particularly. To these two. Prominent women. Who are in conflict. In Philippi. He's trying to say. Okay. You two. And then. Oh by the way. You yoke. True companion.

Help them. Because they have labored together. On the same team. With Clement. Who is. I'm assuming. Either. Someone in the church. Or someone who's well known.

To. To all. And then other fellow workers. But what he's saying is. Look. We're all on the same team. And we're all on the same team. Missionally. Because God has given us this mission.

To make known the good news of Jesus Christ. To everyone. So this conflict. Is. Is. Is. Out of step. With that. Unified mission. But it's also. Out of step. With this unified identity.

[ 34 : 19 ] And I think that's why he talks about it. He's saying. This conflict. You should. And you ought to. Doggedly. Pursue it. Rather than just try to overlook it.

Or pretend it's not there. Or feel like. Awkward. Distant silence. Is okay. You actually want to pursue it. To work through it. To reconciliation. Because. Your names are written together.

In the book of life. You guys are going to be. In the family of God forever. Don't live with this rift.

Now. I think that's why he puts it in there. So. Anyone else?

It was crystal clear. Well. If you have any other questions. Please feel free to come up.

And talk with me. Let me just. Point you to your bulletin. For a few quick announcements. As we.

As. As. As. What?

[ 35 : 24 ] As. Here. As. As. As.