



Stand Firm In In The Lord

Turning to the fourth and final chapter of his letter to the Philippians, Paul again shared his affection and love with this church, and offers a pastoral exhortation to remain strong in the faith.

Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. Philippians 4:1 NASB

As always when reading Scripture, we have to read verses in context, so when a paragraph begins with ***“therefore”*** we know the author is continuing a previous thought. Looking back a few verses, we see how Paul just told the church to mimic his walk of faith, warned them to be careful of those who are enemies of the cross, and encouraged them by saying they were citizens of heaven and that one day the Lord Jesus will transform their human bodies into glorified, heavenly bodies like His own.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see.” As we see repeated throughout Scripture, the genuine love of fellow believers is a key trait found in those who are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. The Father said in Leviticus 19:18 ***“you shall love your neighbor as yourself”***, which was repeated by Christ in Matthew 22, and reinforced by Paul in Galatians 5. And the apostle John spoke quite a bit on love in his epistles, saying things such as, ***“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love”*** and ***“if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another,”*** (Ref: 1 John 4:7-8, 11). Paul, being imprisoned at the time he wrote this letter, deeply loved and cared for the believers in this church and could not wait to be with them again.

He goes on to say that the Philippians were his ***joy and crown***. This reminds me of the elation parents experience when their child believes in Christ. There is perhaps no greater earthly joy than to see your child stand for and live out their faith, so in this way we can relate to Paul’s statement here. Paul used the same expression of believers being his ***crown*** in the letter Thessalonians, saying ***“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.”*** These strongly rooted believers brought him great ***joy*** and were his ***crown*** in ministry, eternal fruit of the investment he poured into them as their founding pastor.

Paul then encouraged the church to ***in this way stand firm in the Lord***. What way was that? Leading by example, the apostle is referring to all the previous examples (basically most of



chapter 3) of how he lived out these truths, and reminded readers to be of the same mind by doing these things *in this way*. And in all these same ways, he calls the church to ***stand firm in the Lord***.

Paul used the phrase ***stand firm*** in seven times his epistles to the churches, often to contrast believers' behavior against the world's. For example, to the church in Galatia he said to stand firm and not to submit to the yoke of slavery – e.g.: obedience to the Old Testament law as a means to gain salvation. And to the Thessalonians he insisted they stand firm in the truths they were taught and be on guard against deception and false teaching. Other times, such as in his letters to the Ephesians and Corinthians, Paul told believers to stand firm and be strong in their faith (ref: Gal. 5:1; 2 Thes. 2:15; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:11).

Standing firm has the imagery of a tree or tall building withstanding a ferocious wind. Spiritually speaking, we stand firm in the Lord when we do not allow worry, fear or the deceitfulness of lusts and riches to pull us off the foundation of Christ and His gospel. We must stand firm in our faith. We must stand firm in the Lord's truth. We must stand firm in His love. We must stand firm in His assurance of our salvation. We must stand firm knowing that we are the Lord's possession, bought and paid for with His blood, and that He is the Good Shepherd who not only laid down His life for us, but will always protect our souls no matter how fiercely the enemy comes after us.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece

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