



## In the Book of Life

After an urging to stand firm in the Lord (Phil. 4:1), and immediately before one of the most memorable exhortations about rejoicing in the circumstances God has placed us (Phil. 4:4-9), the Apostle Paul drops in a brief appeal for help addressing an issue between two women in the church, but wraps it with an incredible promise of eternal hope.

***I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*** Philippians 4:2-3 NASB

The two women Paul mentions here, Euodia and Syntyche, are not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Everything we know of them can be found in these two verses. These were women who shared in Paul's difficult work to further the gospel, and based on their names, they were likely Greek converts to the faith. They were part of the church family in Philippi, and were having some kind of dispute or argument which was big enough that news of it made it to Paul. Just like we experience today, no church is perfect and when you get a group of people together, even in missional work, differences materialize.

Paul asked his ***true companion*** to help these women ***be of the same mind*** (the literal translation of "***live in harmony***"). It is difficult to tell if ***true companion***, which in the Greek means more of a *yokefellow*, as in one of two yoked oxen pulling a cart together, is singular or plural. Since Philippians opens with a general address to "***all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons,***" it is safe to assume that this request is directed at one of the latter or a senior leader of the church, and not at the whole body of believers.

The request for help then expands as Paul mentioned another believer, ***Clement, and the rest of [Paul's] fellow workers.*** This again gives some credence to the idea that this call for assistance is directed to a specific elder or leader(s) of the church since it is broad scoped in nature.

But more importantly, Paul reminds readers that all these saints have their ***names written in the book of life.***

Except for a single reference in Psalm 69:28, this is the only other time we see an allusion to the ***book of life*** outside of Revelation, where it is mentioned seven times. The bible closes with the Apostle John being given an astonishingly detailed vision of heavenly events spanning millennia.



One was of the great and final judgement, which will happen at the end of Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth, where every person, great and small, will stand before God the Father and He will search this book for names. If a person's name is found written in the book of life, they will be saved from His wrath and ushered into the new heaven and earth that He has prepared as an eternal dwelling place with His saints and their Savior. But for those whose name is not found written in this book, they are judged according to their sins and sent away into eternal damnation and separation from God. (Ref: Rev. 20:12-21:9)

The bible doesn't tell us why or on what basis God chose to write believers' names in this mysterious book, but it does say He did so long before we were born. Paul said in Ephesians 1:4 that God the Father **chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world**, and this is echoed by John in Revelation 13:8, where he wrote, "**All who dwell on the earth will worship him** [the antichrist], **everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.**"

This is yet another stunning reminder Scripture offers of our eternal security and the hope and assurance we have with Christ! God has written the name of every true Christian in this heavenly book, and since before the earth was formed and even a thousand years from now, those who abide in Christ are perfectly sheltered in the Savior.

With this in mind, how should we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ? How are we to act when our differences bubble to the surface? We mustn't allow minor disputes, personal frustrations, or our own pride to prevent us from being truly yoked together in the work of the gospel. As we've learned many times before, and as we see again here today, we must **stand firm in the Lord**, united as the single body of Christ, being **of the same mind**, just as God the Father and Christ the Son stand unequivocally unified in all they do. After all, if we believe what the word says here, all our names are written together in the book of life. In light of this, small disagreements or riffs with fellow believers should now seem totally inconsequential.

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