

**Philippians 4:1-3**  
**Life “in the Lord”**

“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche 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.”

I. Stand Firm: Persevere in Resurrection Life

- A. A love for the brothers/sisters
- B. Persevere in the calling in Christ
- C. Connected to resurrection (I Cor 15)

II. Agree: Pursue Unity in the Lord

- A. Euodia and Synteche: Not doctrinal or moral, but application/relational
- B. Unity in the Lord
- C. Union with Christ leads to humility

III. Help: Cultivate Kingdom Labor with Eternity in Mind

- A. True companion/Clement/Fellow Workers
- B. Call to come “along side of” in the church
- C. Rooted NOT in current union, but in eternal union as we are in the book of life.

Last week we talked about how the Apostle Paul, because of his union with Christ, came to love the people of God in Philippi and how being a Christian caused him to value the people of God in a supernatural way. A mark of being a Christian, one who is in union with Christ, is that you will love the brethren.

And if you remember last week, I told you that in verse 1, the main application of the text was not all of the loving words that Paul used to describe the church but verse 1's point was "stand firm" in the Lord. Do you see that? And because of this call to stand firm, we are able to stand back and look at verses 1-3 and see that Paul is giving application that deals with all of the Christian life. We see this applied to us and to all who love Jesus. Today we will look at this theme, "Life in the LORD" and we will look at verses 1-3.

Listen to our text again, *"Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche 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."*

So in our text this morning, we see "Life in the Lord" and we begin in verse 1 as we see a call from the Apostle Paul to "Stand Firm" to stand firm. What this call is is a call to persevere in the resurrection life. This is our first point: A to Stand Firm. Notice what the Apostle does here. He says, "My brothers whom I love and long for and, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord my beloved."

What can we draw from this concerning Life in the Lord?

We begin as we focused last week, and we must see the loving way in which the Apostle speaks about the church of Jesus Christ. Here is a congregation that is having some sort of disagreement as we read about and Paul doesn't just shake the dust off his feet or wipe his hands clean and say, "Good riddance, I am out of here — deal with your own problems."

No, the Apostle is was filled with love for this people as a result of his union with Christ and as a reflection of their union with Christ. Paul has a love for the Church of Jesus Christ and that love is not merely because Paul's a 'lovey' guy, but it results from the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and that resurrection made it possible for Paul to be in union with Christ and to become a Christian.

There is no Christianity without the resurrection and there is no union with Christ without a physical, historical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, which we will see. I will show you the connection later on.

But what Paul is calling on the church of Philippi to do here and by extension what he is calling on us to do is to persevere. To persevere in the high calling which is the Christian life. Stand firm in the Lord.

Jesus Christ encourages those who put their hand to the plow to not look back, to never look back. You see the whole point of Jesus Christ going to the cross and dying for sinners like you and me was so that he could pay a ransom for their sins — for our sins — and because of that ransom being paid. All who are his are called to persevere. By faith we trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, and we continue in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

Our perseverance is not connected to our goodness or our works or our righteousness. Rather, it is connected to the finished work of Jesus Christ and it is connected to the fact that if he has begun a good work in one's life, he will continue that work.

And you might say, "Well pastor, I think I've fallen into some pretty heavy sin. How is this connected to my perseverance?"

That's a good question, listen to the Westminster Confession on this, (17.3), "Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and

comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.”

You see it is possible to fall into sin and it is possible to harm our relationship with God by breaking fellowship over our sin. But if we are in Christ, we will eventually continue. Some will continue the Christian life with bruises and battered, but if you are Christ's, he will see you through.

And this is why Paul gives this call to stand firm. He encourages us to persevere and he knows that in order to do that we must be clinging to Christ and trusting in Christ and falling upon the grace given in Christ.

And where is this grace found? It's found in Christ — we stand firm in this life because we are united to Christ in eternity. We persevere. We stand firm... And in Paul's mind that perseverance is connected to the resurrection. In I Corinthians 15 the Apostle gives the longest chapter on the resurrection of Christ in the Bible. And then he applies that resurrection in verse 59 of chapter 15. His application is “therefore my brothers, stand firm.”

You see we ought to be encouraged to persevere because Christ has been raised from the dead. We are encouraged to persevere because we are in Christ and the only reason that we are in Christ is because Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures.

We stand firm as we persevere in this resurrection life. Christian, stand firm.

But there is more in this life in the Lord for the Apostle Paul than perseverance. We also see that this life in the Lord, in union with Christ ought to lead to our second heading.

In the second place, we see a call to “Agree.” A call to agree. Paul encourages the church, and especially these women who are not getting along to agree in the Lord to pursue unity in the Lord.

See that in verse 2, “I entreat Euodia and Synteche to agree in the Lord.” Here again Paul is stressing this life “in the Lord.” See that at the end of the

verse? These ladies are to agree IN THE LORD. This is so central to Paul's thinking and it is so central to his understanding of the person and work of Christ.

Paul wants all things to be reflective of the work that Jesus does as He unites sinners to Himself through the work of the Spirit making our calling to salvation effectual. So that is what he wants us to see: 'Ladies, if you are in Christ, if you have clung to Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and if you have trusted in Christ's merits for your salvation, then please understand that you have a responsibility.'

Union is to lead to to unity. That is what Paul is applying in this section concerning the resurrection life. He says Euodia and Synteché, you are in Christ, now act as though you are in Christ.

So who are these ladies and what is going on here in our text? We do not know too much about who they are, but what we do know is that they are listed among those who labor along with Paul in the Lord.

Now this is really important as it relates to the role of women in the ministry. These ladies are not ordained, because we do not see multiple pastors in each congregation, and that would not align with what Paul has told us elsewhere about male leadership in the church. But even with that said, it is important to see that Paul highly values the role that these women play or have played in the life of the church. He said they have labored side by side with him.

Last week, while I was in Pittsburgh, I was speaking to a Christian woman who thought that one of the rancid side effects of holding to positions of male headship and male ordination for leadership positions in the church is that sometimes women can think that they have no value or no part to play in kingdom building other than babies and casseroles.

This lady said that she knows a lot of Christian women who take very little responsibility for their spiritual lives because they see it all resting on their husbands.

Friends, this is not a biblical position. We don't see women being ordained to the ruling or teaching offices of the church in the New Testament, but that does not mean that women did not have a part in the kingdom building that goes on in the early church.

Paul says these women served by his side. This shows that whatever work they were doing was of great value for Paul and he saw it as a partnering in the gospel.

But something has happened here. Euodia and Synteche had some sort of falling out and it has led to some problems in the church. They are not getting along and their falling out was something which was so disruptive to the unity of the church that it was severe enough for the Apostle Paul to get word of it all the way in Rome.

Now friends, we must be clear about something here. This is not a doctrinal difference. And this cannot be a moral difference.

It is not as though one is holding to an error or teaching an error on the side and Paul is telling them to get along, to agree doctrinally. If one was teaching something unbiblical or if one was promoting some sort of heresy, Paul would not deal lightly with that. Remember how he deals with false teachers: elsewhere he calls them dogs. The New Testament calls them "wolves" and "workers of iniquity." This is not a doctrinal issue.

And at the same time this is not a moral difference either. It is not as though one of the women is living a sinful lifestyle and having some outwardly known violation of God's moral law and the other is not and it is causing conflict. If it was a moral issue, the Apostle would have stopped that as well and would have called them out to live in conformity to the gospel. He does that in Corinth. He does that in Galatia. He does that with Peter publicly. He would not hold back if there was sin involved.

Most likely what is happening here is that there is a difference in application of the gospel and a difference of application in the realm that we call adiaphora or "things indifferent."

Often in the life of a church the issues that cause conflict are those in the realm of application. One person puts their application of a certain principle higher than another's application and it leads to strife.

We can name these things: homeschool vs. day school. Drinking alcohol or not drinking alcohol. Family worship in the morning or at evening. Whether to wear pants or whether to wear skirts. Hair styles. Piercings. All sorts of things can cause division in the church of Christ — things that essentially are matters of private opinion. And Paul says, "Ladies, agree in the Lord."

That phrase, "in the Lord," tells us that Paul wants them to reflect on the fact that they are living lives that are in union with Christ (resurrection lives). And as a result they need to agree on the principles, doctrines, and morals of the Christian life, but realize that not all Christian homes and not all Christian people are going to do the same things in the realm of things that are matters of private judgment.

And when he tells them to agree, in the Greek, he is saying, "have the same mind." What does that mean? Paul has already told us what that means: it means that we are live in the humility that Christ had as he lived in the world putting off that which he was entitled to, and instead being a servant (Philippians 2).

Friends, what does the resurrection mean to you if you are in Christ? It means that you will live humbly among the brethren because Christ has humbled Himself to save you from your sins.

This is a great application of the gospel: if you have believed in Christ's sacrifice alone for the forgiveness of your sins, then you ought to live a life of humility within the body of Christ because of that union with Christ that you enjoy.

We are called to pursue unity in the Lord. And that unity is not optional in the Christian church. We are a body. We are family. We are a building. We are a vine. We are a city. We are a people called unto the glory of Christ that we may pour forth His praises and sing forth His greatness to the nations around us as light and as salt and as a testimony of His grace. And if the world looks on and sees a people who cannot get along in things that

may have no eternal significance in comparison to another application, then we are misrepresenting the Lord Jesus Christ.

Euodia and Synteché, even as laborers alongside of the Apostle Paul, had a falling out, and Paul says, 'You are in Christ. Agree. Have the same mind because you are united to the same head, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

So we have seen "stand firm" which is a call to persevere in the resurrection life. And we have seen "agree" which is a call to pursue unity in the Lord. And lastly, we see, "help" which is a call to cultivate kingdom labor with eternity in mind. Help. A call to cultivate kingdom labor with eternity in mind.

Look at verse 3, "Yes, I also ask you 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."

What we see in this verse is a list of workers who are laborers in the kingdom along with the Apostle Paul. We have already mentioned Euodia and Synteché as laborers along side of Paul and he goes on to mention others in the church as well.

He begins with an unnamed person, who he calls "true companion." We do not know who this is and we do not know what the relationship between Paul and this true companion is, but we do know that it was someone who was very valuable to Paul's ministry and someone who invested deeply into the work of the gospel in Macedonia.

"True companion" could also be translated as a "yokefellow." This is someone who has come alongside of the Apostle Paul and has invested into the work of the gospel ministry and has proven to be of great value to Paul and of great value for the advancement of the gospel in this city.

The term "yokefellow" causes us to think of oxen that are yoked together and together plow and work the land that belongs to the farmer. Do you see the value in coming alongside of the ministry and working in this way? Do you see a need for this even in this congregation? How are your gifts being

used within the life of the congregation as you work alongside of one another and the session to advance the gospel from this place?

This is an important application. The true companion of Paul is one who comes alongside of and labors, even humbly, without his name being mentioned.

The next name that is mentioned is Clement. Again, we do not know who Clement was, but we know that Clement is a Latin name, which points to the nature of this congregation. We have Greeks and we have Romans who labor together for the gospel ministry and they do so as a great value to the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Paul calls on these servants to help these ladies and to help them to agree in the Lord and to not be sidetracked by whatever secondary matter is causing conflict. And he calls on all those who care about the building of the kingdom to the same. He says in verse 3, “and the rest of my fellow workers.”

Friends, this is not a mega-church with a multi-staffed pastoral team. This is all who care about kingdom building called to participate in helping these ladies so that they would not be sidetracked and the gospel work be undone because of their disagreement. These are laborers from the pew so-to-speak who are called to be yokefellows along with Paul to see the kingdom cultivated unto the glory of Christ.

Now remember, this sermon title is “Life in the Lord.” We have seen how union with Christ, which is the Holy Spirit uniting us by faith to Jesus Christ as a result of the faith that the Spirit has worked in us. And we have seen that union be the foundation of our standing firm. And we have seen that union with Christ is the foundation for our unity, as Paul calls Euodia and Synteche to agree “in the Lord” or to agree because of their union with Christ.

But where is the “in the Lord” in this section? Where is the “help” which is kingdom cultivation connected to union?

Notice what Paul does here. He says, "...whose names are written in the book of life." Paul connects this kingdom cultivation with the registry that belongs to Jesus Christ which is the eternal accounting of all that belong to Him. Paul is reminding the church that the resurrection of Christ has secured eternally the names of those who would put their faith and their trust in Jesus Christ. And that has eternal consequences.

All who trust in the resurrection of Christ following His atoning sacrifice, will spend eternity with him in glory, and they will spend eternity with each other as well. Paul says, 'think about that, ladies, as you are sidetracked. Eternity together. Think about that yokefellows, you will spend eternity with one another. Settle matters now. Help them to agree in the Lord.'

Think about our kingdom cultivation. It will lead to eternity because we are in Christ. Our names are secured in the Book of Life, which should cause us to labor for Christ's glory and honor.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ stands as the foundation of being "in the Lord." And because of that resurrection and our union with Christ we are called to persevere, to stand firm. We are called to promote unity within the church, and even to settle secondary matters, and we are called to help as we see the kingdom built in our regions of Christ's kingdom.

Congregation, stand firm. Agree. And help. Be united to Jesus Christ by faith. Amen.