

## Philippians 4:1

Beloved ...

*My brothers and sisters ...*

### I. Brotherly Bond

- A. Filial Union
- B. Genuine Affection

### II. Pastoral “Pride”

- A. Joy
- B. Crown

### III. Earnest Exhortation

- A. In the Lord
- B. Against Threats

*... whom I love.*

### **Children, Listen ...**

1. Why do Christians call each other “brother” and “sister?”
2. How does Paul feel about the people in the church at Philippi?
3. How did Jesus show His love for us?
4. What does it mean to “stand firm in the Lord?”

## A Peculiarly Sacred Bond

A pastor’s relationship with the people of the church is hard to define. Many factors contribute to the dynamic between the minister and individuals in the congregation. Pastors are in the unique position of being one among brothers and sisters in the household of God and at the same time have the responsibility of leading and overseeing the flock as an “under-shepherd” of Christ. The apostle Paul was not the pastor of the church at Philippi or any of the other churches he wrote to, but he does provide an excellent example of what the pastor/people relationship looks like. While there are plenty of instances in which he was frustrated, angry and even disrespected by some in the body there are consistently at least three admirable pastoral sentiments noticeable in his communication with the churches that stand out in our text. First, he understood himself as a spiritual sibling to other believers. There was a bond in the blood of Christ that was thicker than that of natural birth-lines. That bond in Christ was a bond in the love of Christ which manifested itself in deep affection for the people. It also meant that he was in no way above anyone else in the church – they were all children of God by grace alone. Second he saw his work among them as vital and profitable. When he saw them grow and prosper in the Lord he found true joy because, not only were his labors worthwhile, they were growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord through his ministry among them. Third he was gravely concerned that they stay firmly on the foundation they had in Christ Jesus. He had full confidence that the Lord called them and would keep them – but he also knew that they would constantly face attacks on their faith and challenges to their perseverance in the ways of the Lord. The intimacy, investment, and interest in the spiritual well-being of the people (among many other pastoral attributes) that Paul displayed for those under his care are exemplary and inspirational. They are things for which your pastors (and elders and deacons) continually stand in need of God’s grace and your prayers!