

Principles for Stability in Your Christian Life

Philippians 4:1-4

4 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Introduction:

It seems to me the more I observe and read of what is going on in this world that we should refer to this time as the “Jello Era” of human history. In the last twenty or thirty years we have seen many things shake and tremble before our eyes. These are things we used to trust in, like banks, jobs, companies, governments, family values, etc. In all

these areas, and in many more, our world is beginning to look about as stable as a big bowl of Jello.

Indeed, the prophets and biblical writers speak a great deal about these times. Isaiah describes this era for us. He says: *“The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion....”* (Isa. 24:20). The Bible says in Hebrews 12:26-27: *“...now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.”* And then the beloved John assures us: *“The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”* (1 Jn. 2:17).

Satan is like a giant low pressure center on a weather map. His negative force creates storms and disturbances in all of nature and in our lives. We might simply say that Satan equals instability. We can also say the same thing about sin, whether the sin be great or small. We may think that a tiny sin like a “little white lie” is of small consequence. However, we know today that even a little lie creates enough instability in our bodies that the changes can be scientifically measured with a lie detector.

The Word of God warns us constantly of the instability of the World and the Constant desire of the Devil to consume

us and create instability in our lives. It warns how sin can ruin and and reign in our lives and create a double minded man who is unstable in all his ways.

To counter all of this The Word says to.....

Stand Fast in the Lord

[1 Corinthians 15:58](#) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be you steadfast, unmovable, always ...

[1 Corinthians 16:13](#) Watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

[Galatians 5:1](#) Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us ...

[Ephesians 6:10-18](#) Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might...

[1 Thessalonians 3:8,13](#) For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord...

[2 Thessalonians 2:15](#) Therefore, brothers, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you ...

[2 Timothy 2:1](#) You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

[Hebrews 10:23,35,36](#) Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for ...

Stand firm (4739) (**steko**) can mean to stand literally

The **present imperative** in the present passage is a command calling for the saints to continue to persevere and remain firm in their faith in the Lord,

Early Paul had declared **I press on toward the goal for the prize...** ([Php 3:14-note](#)) which presents an interesting paradox. Believers can only **stand firm in the Lord** by **pressing on** to become more like the Lord. A Christian who is not moving forward is falling backward whether he or she realizes it or not!

Paul begins by addressing the believers has his Joy and Crown who he longed to see.

Long (1973) (**epipothetos** from **epi** = intensifies + **pothéō** = to yearn) (Click for study of related word **epipotheo**) is an adjective which describes a strong desire, an intense craving of possession, a great affection for, a deep desire, an earnest yearning for something with implication of need. Here it describes the natural yearning of personal affection. Paul loved the saints at Philippi and had a longing for the joy of renewed fellowship with them face to face.

Joy (5479) (**chara**) (Click for word study of **chara**) is like a golden thread Paul interweaves throughout this letter

Crown (4735) (**stephanos** [**word study**] from **stepho** = to encircle, twine or wreath) refers to the crown of victory (often a laurel wreath) in the Greek athletic games, to the runner who crossed the goal first, to the disc thrower with the longest toss,

Principles for Stability HOW TO STAND FAST

- I. Pursue Harmony and Peace.
 - A. The Situation

² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

This introduces one of the most destructive weapons the devil can use in a local church.

Division, Disunity,

We all have heard stories of it, or worse have been involved in a division in a church and even worse, been used by the devil to cause one.

Church Splits Down The Middle Over Issues Regarding Piano Bench.



Above: The church piano bench rests safely in an inconspicuous setting. It will be moved back and forth between services.

100 years of Christian fellowship, spiritual love, Godly unity, and community growth ended last Tuesday in a fit of congregational discord not to be rivaled in this century. Holy Creek Baptist Church was split down the middle like the tabernacle cloth that tore at the point of our Lord's crucifixion. It is said that one could hear that rip a hundred miles

away. Holy Creek Baptist was severed from the once stalwart cord of unity that bound them together. The fist of discord has pounded an army of Christian soldiers into two disheveled, unorganized factions of estranged members.

The source of dissension in this once Holy house of God, is a piano bench which still sits behind the 1923 Steinburg to the left of the pulpit. Landover Baptist members who have friends or relatives at Holy Creek Baptist, say that the old bench was always a source of hostility. People should have seen this coming. "That congregation was getting ready to break for the last 10 years," some said. "It's just a shame that it had to be over a piano bench." One outside pastor commented, "However ridiculous it might sound, I'm sure the Lord is using this whole thing in some way that none of us can see or make any sense of at all or ever hope to comprehend."

At present, Holy Creek Congregation will be having four services a day. There has been an unspoken agreement mediated by Pastor Deacon Fred of the Landover Baptist Church. Each faction will have it's own separate service with it's own separate pastor. Since the head pastor is not speaking to the associate pastor, each will have their own service, which will be attended by factioned members. We are told that the services are far enough apart that neither group will come into contact with the other. An outside party will be moving the piano bench to different locations and appropriate positions, between services, so as to please both sides, and avoid any further conflict that could result in violence.

This discord and disunity was apparently a problem raising its ugly head in Philippi

1. Philippians 1:27

²⁷ Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

2. Philippians 2:2-4

² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³ *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

3. Philippians 3:16

¹⁶ Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind

Paul had dealt with this before in other Churches

I Cor 1:10

¹⁰ Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined

together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

I Cor 3:1

3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? ⁴ For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal?

What was the problem here

1. It was not doctrinal or Paul would have corrected on spot
2. These two women were members of the local church they were disagreeing about some opinion of some matter that was not doctrinal.

3. Paul was greatly concerned about this. Its potential is devastating. The fact that he mentions their name and it is put down in holy writ for all to read, means that he was serious about this.

B. The Solution

Urge (3870) (**parakaleo** [word study] from **para** = side of + **kaléo** = call) conveys the basic idea of calling one alongside to help or give aid. Because a person can be called alongside for many purposes, the word has a wide range of meanings including to entreat, appeal to, summon, comfort, exhort, or encourage. Note that the **present tense** points to Paul's continuous urging regarding this matter.

Literally the Greek reads **Euodia I exhort, and Syntyche I exhort** - Paul uses "**urge**" (exhort) (**parakaleo**) twice implying that he went to **Euodia** and urged her and then went to **Syntyche** and urged her, which in turn suggests that they were not exactly seeing "eye to eye" as the saying goes.

The Living Bible renders this verse...

And now I want to plead with those two dear women, Euodia and Syntyche. Please, please, with the Lord's help, quarrel no more—be friends again.

1. Be of the same mind

Live in harmony (**present tense** = continually) - Is more literally "continually be of the same mind" something that is possible only **in the Lord**. If the Lord is in control, there cannot (assuming the

parts of the body on in submission to the Head, Christ Jesus) be division. The only way genuine harmony can exist is when the Lord is in control. When the Head is in control, the parts of the body function as they should.

Live in harmony (5426) (**phroneo [word study]**) refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of one's mind, rather than to the intellect per se.

PHILIPPIANS 2

Arranging Your Mind - Several years ago I read a story about a 92-year-old Christian woman who was legally blind. In spite of her limitation, she was always neatly dressed, with her hair carefully brushed and her makeup tastefully applied. Each morning she would meet the new day with eagerness.

After her husband of 70 years died, it became necessary for her to go to a nursing home where she could receive proper care. On the day of the move, a helpful neighbor drove her there and guided her into the lobby. Her room wasn't ready, so she waited patiently in the lobby for several hours.

When an attendant finally came for her, she smiled sweetly as she maneuvered her walker to the elevator. The staff member described her room to her, including the new curtains that had been hung on the windows. "I love it," she declared. "But Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen your room yet," the attendant replied. "That doesn't have anything to do with it," she said. "Happiness is something you choose. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how it's arranged. It's how I arrange my mind."

David extols the virtues of harmony writing

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers
to dwell together in unity! | (Ps 133:1-3)

2. in the Lord

3. Get a Fellow believer to Help

There's several possibilities. One, he's referring to somebody we don't know, somebody that was known as Paul's yoke fellow. We don't know who it is but it's somebody unnamed. That would seem a little strange to me since he just named the two women so explicitly, since he names Clement so explicitly in a moment, why would he not name this person? And since he was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and had perfect recall of everything, it wasn't that he forgot the guy's name. So why wouldn't he put his name in here? So it wouldn't seem to me to make any sense that this is the name of somebody whose name isn't here but who knew who he was and would know that this was him.

The other option is that he's using this singular term in a collective sense and he refers to the church. Indeed as a church entity, you are my yoke fellow so I ask you...it's a singular but it's a collective noun involving the whole church...I ask all of you to help those women. That's a possibility.

But I think there's a better explanation. Let's say we don't translate the word at all and we just leave it in the Greek. It would say, "Indeed, genuine suzugos, I ask you also to help these women." And I prefer that we leave it untranslated and that he's really talking to a guy named Syzygus. You say, "Well who is Syzygus?" We don't know, but it's very likely that he is one of the overseers or elders mentioned in verse 1 of chapter 1. Remember Paul was writing to the Philippians including the overseers and deacons. Syzygus must have been one of the elders in the church, one of the pastors who hadn't really fulfilled his duty, who hadn't solved this problem. And so Paul taking apostolic authority from God says I want you, Syzygus, to get on this case and help these women.

Now somebody says, "Well if you take the term suzugos as a proper name, then why the word true or genuine? Why would he say true suzugos, or genuine suzugos? It doesn't seem to make any sense." But it does...but it does if you understand it this way. Syzygus was named Syzygus and his name meant yoke fellow. When he calls him true Syzygus, he is simply saying...hey, you are a genuine Syzygus in that you are a yoke fellow. It was a way to sort of identify the man as true to his name.

To help (4815) (sullambano from **sún** = an intensifier or together with + **lambáno** = take, receive) means to take hold of together with, to take or seize all together. It has the idea of clasping together or grasping with the hands, seizing and holding fast to someone. The **present imperative** calls for this to be their continual endeavor.

3. Their Significance

1. These Women Labored in the Gospel.

Shared (my) struggle (4866) (sunathleo from **sún** = together or together with + **athléo** = to strive, contend for a prize, compete in the games = English "athletic") means to strive together with. In secular Greek it referred to an athletic contest in which a group of athletes co-operated as a team against another team (the world, the flesh and the devil),

2. Clement and fellow workers

3. The Book of Life

Rev 13:8

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *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

Rev. 21:27

27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life

II. Maintain a spirit of JOY v. 4

Rejoice in the LORD

This is a command

Let me suggest a few things that should give us JOY

Well first of all you can just rejoice in who He is, right?

That He is sovereign over everything.

To me that is...that's the ultimate. You can't really steal my joy when I realize that God is in charge of everything. He is in charge of every circumstance. The single greatest truth I know about God as a Christian is His sovereignty. He is in charge of everything. Nothing happens out of His control, He controls it all, absolutely all of it. What comfort is in that. Furthermore, He controls it all...get this one...for my good.

We read Psalm 139, we saw how God knows your sitting down, your rising up, He knows the words you speak before you speak them, He knows the way you're going to walk and He holds every part of your life in absolute and total control. What a tremendous truth it is. And when you realize that God is loving, that God is wise, that God has an infinite understanding of every vicissitude, every aspect of life. It's a whole different approach to understand that. It's one thing to know it, to read it, it's something else to believe it with the fiber of your being and that's what holds you in the environment of joy.

Think about it this way. Why do I have joy unspeakable and full of glory? First of all, because everything in my life is controlled by God.

Secondly, **because God saved me and made me His own child** and promised me to give me an inheritance in Jesus Christ. I'm His child, I belong to Him. I rejoice because Jesus Christ is coming some day to take me to be with Himself. And He is right now there preparing a place for me that where He is I may come. I rejoice in that. Furthermore I rejoice because my God is able to supply all my...what?...needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. Furthermore I rejoice because I am being used by God to serve the one I love the most. What a privilege.

I rejoice because God is using my life so that other people can hear the gospel and be saved and God is using my life so that other Christians can be encouraged to love God more and serve Him more faithfully.

I rejoice because I enjoy instant access to God. Do you know that any time I want to, I can talk to God and He listens? I don't even get that in my own house. But I get that from the God of the universe. The God of the universe listens to everything I have to say, even if it's a long conversation.

You know why I have joy? Because death is gain.

Death is gain. That's why I have joy. And the more I understand my God and the stronger my faith in Him and His inviolable plan, the greater the depth of my joy and the deeper my joy the more untouchable it is. You can't get to my joy very easily. On the outside you're not going to touch it, circumstances and all of that, because it's buried deep in my confidence in who God is and in His eternal promises to me. That's spiritual stability.

Why would I compromise? God's in control. Why would I waver in my faith? God is in control. Why would I doubt? How can I doubt a God who is so clearly revealed in Scripture? I can tell you, dear friends, spiritual stability is directly related to these two things to start with...spiritual stability is the product of a person whose life is filled with the love of Christ shed abroad by the Spirit within him and spiritual stability belongs to the person who is so deeply in understanding of the character of God and whose understanding has been translated into a real faith and he believes God to be the God He is revealed to be and in those things he finds his stability.