



ADVANCING
THE
GOSPEL

Philippians 4:1-9

Introduction

- This section begins the last chapter of the letter to the Philippians and therefore, Paul's concluding exhortations to them.
- This passage is more of a series of several points rather than one cohesive thought. Paul gave them several exhortations, all shaped by the situation in Philippi.
- In verses 2-7, he urged two particular women to be reconciled, show reasonableness, and to give their worries to God.
- Then in verses 8-9, he urged them to dwell on the things of God.

Introduction

- They are various points, but they also are connected.
- If they live in this way, they will not only be able to rejoice in the Lord and be at peace for themselves.
- They will also be a shining example to the world of the joy and peace of Christ, which is the very definition of the kingdom of God (Romans 14:17).
- The Philippians can advance the Gospel through their example of reasonableness, peace, and joy to the world.

Philippians 4:1

Stand firm

- Because of all that Paul has said so far in this letter, now therefore, the Philippians can stand firm.
- Because Christ uses their suffering for good, because to live is Christ and to die is gain. Because Christ came in humility.
- Because they have righteousness through Christ and Christ alone.
- Because Christ gives them the strength to press on.
- Because of Christ, they can stand firm.

Stand firm

- Paul used the phrase “stand firm” three times in Ephesians, when he talked about the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).
- It’s a military term. They are fighting a spiritual battle with the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).
- Paul had used the same phrase in chapter 1 of Philippians about their fear of their opponents (1:27).

Stand firm

- It's a sense of standing firm in the face of danger—not retreating, not backing down, not being afraid, but standing firm, confident in the Lord and His grace and His power.
- No matter what comes against you, how big the enemy.
- It is the same thing God told His people in the Old Testament, at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh's army was approaching and they were “in great fear.”
- The Lord will fight for you. And you only have to be still (Exodus 14:14).

Stand firm

- The Philippians can stand firm because of Christ's strength.
- Because He is the One fighting for them.
- They can be strong "in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).
- Not their own strength, not their own power, but the Lord's.
- This is what he is encouraging them, imploring them to do in general: to stand firm. And each section that follows is a different way to stand firm.

Stand firm

- He continues his theme of joy and rejoicing that runs throughout the whole letter by calling them his joy.
- He pairs joy with crown, which conjures up the end-time imagery from 3:14, which is the crown that Paul will receive when he finishes his race. They, and his other churches, are his life's work, his ministry, his crown.
- He uses the same concept when writing to the Thessalonians. What is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

Philippians 4:2-3

Body of Christ

- Paul has spent a lot of time in the book of Philippians so far talking about unity in the body of Christ (1:27-30; 2:1-3; 2:14).
- The Church should be unified in all things so they can be more effective in advancing the Gospel.
- A kingdom divided against itself will not stand (Mark 3:24).
- Paul applies that broad imperative to a particular situation that was happening in Philippi.

Body of Christ

- First he entreated two women to “agree in the Lord” (4:2).
- These verses tell us they were well-known Greek women and central to the Philippian church. They had been coworkers with Paul in the Gospel, working side by side with him and other leaders in the past.
- He said their names were written in the Book of Life, a reference back to that heavenly citizenship from earlier in the letter (1:27).
- These were mature believers, leaders in the church, who had had some sort of disagreement.

Body of Christ

- Paul did not take sides on the disagreement, but simply called them to unity.
- It was most likely not a significant theological issue where one person was in error, or Paul would have been compelled to correct that, as he did in other letters.
- He doesn't tell one of the two to give in to the other side. He doesn't tell them to compromise.
- He tells them to "agree in the Lord." To come to an agreement. To be unified. Not just agree, but agree "in the Lord." (4:2).

Body of Christ

- We learned in chapter 2 that the key to unity is humility, seeking the good of the other first (2:3). For some of us, especially in conflict or disagreement, this may feel like weakness or losing or giving in.
- But when Christ humbled Himself, it wasn't weakness. It was strength. When it looked as though He were losing on the Cross, He was actually winning. He humbled Himself and God lifted Him up.
- To choose to be humble takes great strength. It takes supernatural strength. It is really only possible through the Holy Spirit.

Body of Christ

- Paul also encouraged his “true companion” to help them agree in the Lord. We are not sure who this true companion was.
- There are many theories about who this “true companion” was (Timothy, Luke), none of which are conclusive.
- This true companion may have prayed with them, discussed the issue, mediated between their two views.
- We don't exactly know the process, but in some way he was to help them reach unity. An example of the value of Christian mediation.

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord

- Rejoice: Paul said it twice, just in case they didn't hear it the first time. And rejoice always (4:4). There is no situation which does not warrant rejoicing. Because all of it can be used to advance the Gospel.
- In chapter 1, Paul even rejoiced in his own suffering (1:12-18). He says "rejoice always" because of his perspective on the purpose of life.
- To live is Christ and to die is gain (1:21). So, good or bad, life or death, suffering or not, plenty or hunger, abundance or need, it was all joy (4:13).

Reasonableness

- Make known your reasonableness: Many versions translate it gentleness.
- The word translated as reasonableness was generally used by the Greeks to refer to the gods or the nobles who were characterized by their “gentle forbearance toward others.” Wise restraint, equity and justice.
- Paul exhorted them to make this known to all.
- The “to all” particularly reminds us of the Philippians’ fear of those who opposed them from chapter 1 (verses 27-28).

Do Not Be Anxious

- Do not be anxious: We must keep in mind the Philippians' suffering when we read this passage. Just as Paul called them to rejoice in their suffering, he also exhorted them not to worry, but bring their requests to God (4:6).
- Though they are two separate imperatives, they are intimately connected. The way not to worry is to make your requests known before God.
- Trusting that you don't need to worry about them, because He will take care of them. In the right way, in His timing, in a way that is better for us than we could ever imagine for ourselves.

Make Known Your Requests

- Make known your requests: This is the cure for worry. Bring it to God in prayer. Whatever you're dealing with, whatever you're anxious about, whatever keeps you up at night or runs through your head in traffic, pray about it. Make it known to God, with thanksgiving.
- Thanking God for the good gifts He has given us opens our eyes to see His gifts more and more.
- Instead of anxiety about what may come, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving for what God has done.

Peace of God

- When you do that, your hearts and your minds will be filled with peace.
- It's a supernatural peace that only comes from God, a peace beyond human understanding.
- When we let go of the worry, we have peace.
- Psalm 46:10 says "Cease striving and know that I am God."
- We don't just let go and leave things to chance or cross our fingers and hope that it works out OK. We let go and let God handle it.

Philippians 4:8-9

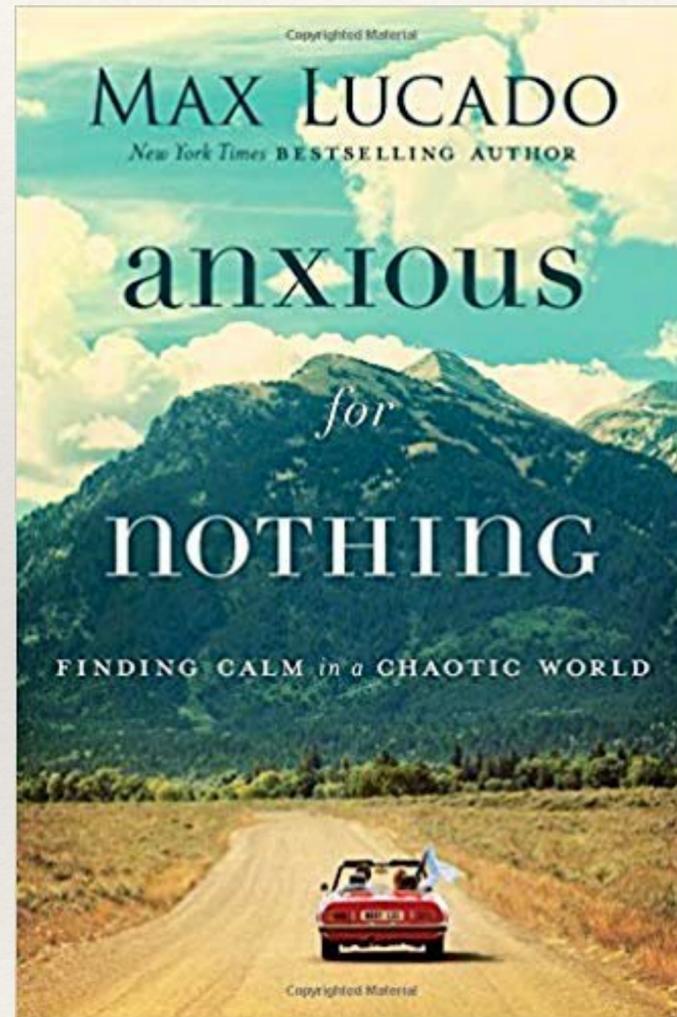
Think About These Things

- Paul commands them to “think about” these godly things.
- It means counting, reckoning, or taking into account. It’s an accounting term.
- It’s used in Romans 4 to talk about God’s crediting righteousness to Abraham, based on his faith. It’s used in Luke 22:37 to talk about Christ being numbered with the transgressors.
- In this context, it sounds a lot like the saying, “count your blessings.”
- Paul is saying that we should count all the good things in life. Whatever is good, noble, excellent, etc., we should add it up, and remember those things.

Think About These Things

- If our citizenship is really in heaven (3:20), we should set our minds on heavenly things. Live with an eternal perspective.
- Those who set their mind on earthly things will live with an earthly perspective. Their god is their stomach, meaning their own pleasure (3:19).
- Paul's life was all about Christ: To live is Christ and to die is gain (1:21).
- For our lives to be about about Christ, to advance the Gospel, it starts with our minds. And our actions flow from there.

Resources



A graphic design for Palm Sunday. The background is a dense pattern of palm fronds in various shades of green and yellow. A large, semi-transparent yellow rectangle is centered over the image. Inside this rectangle, the words "PALM SUNDAY" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a white, stylized frame that consists of a top horizontal bar, a bottom horizontal bar, and two vertical bars on the left and right sides, forming a rectangular shape with open corners.

**PALM
SUNDAY**

Matthew 21:1-3

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.”



The Rightful King

- The people of Israel understood Zechariah's prophecy to refer to the Messiah.
- Zechariah 9:9 —“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”
- Jesus mounted the donkey, but not just any donkey. It was a pure-bred colt.
- The Jewish people knew the prophecy and remembered the words of Zechariah and shouted out, “Hosanna to the Son of David” (Matthew 21:9).

The Victorious King

- The coming King doesn't need to be saved from His sins.
- The rightful King is the righteous King (Zechariah 9:9).
- 1 Peter 2:22 - "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth."
- Palm branches were an ancient symbol of victory. Coins during the Maccabean revolt had the image of a palm on them.
- But Jesus did not win the victory on Palm Sunday. That took place days later when the people no longer welcomed him but called for His crucifixion.

The Humble King

- Zechariah 9:9 - “Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, **humble** and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”
- In ancient times, when a king rode into the city, it was as a show of power.
- The Jewish people would likely have expected Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on a horse with a mighty army following Him.
- We also see His gentleness and humility by referring to Israel as “the Daughter of Zion.”

The Humble King

- This King's humility and gentleness is not a sign of weakness.
- The preceding verses (Zechariah 9:1-8) described how God will destroy Israel's enemies (Syrians and Philistines).
- The following verse (Zechariah 9:10) proclaims that His peace will come to the nations. His rule "shall be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends or the earth."
- Jesus came as the rightful, victorious, and humble King.