

## Practical Application of Knowing Christ Philippians 4:1-3

### All Stand and Read Scripture

Philippians 4:1-3 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

<sup>2</sup> I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> 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.

### Prayer

#### INTRODUCTION:

I have entitled today's message the Practical Application of Knowing Christ.

Paul starts this chapter with the word "Therefore". Therefore suggests that we consider what we have just read in the previous chapters when we read the rest of this letter.

Let's review what Paul has taught us that is relevant to today's scripture.

We have already talked about the **Priceless Privilege of Knowing Christ**. This is in chapter 3:8 where Paul says

Philippians 3:8 (NASB)

<sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,

What an incredible privilege it is to know Christ to the point that everything else in our earthly life is counted as loss.

Remember that "Knowing Christ" is not a word that refers to an "intellectual" or "book" knowledge of Christ.

It is a knowledge that is based upon a personal relationship with Christ. It is an intimate knowledge.

We are to be “**more like Christ**”. We achieve this by being passionate about “**knowing Jesus Christ**”. The better we intimately know Christ by following what He teaches us through the scriptures, the more we will be like Him.

In light of that priceless privilege, we consider, starting in chapter 3, verses 12-21, the **Passionate Pursuit of Knowing Christ**. That passion is that those who already know Christ and have the joy of Christ will be passionate about knowing Him even more in their lives.

As an example, Paul tells us in verse 12:

**Philippians 3:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.**

Paul was not content with his Christian life. He did not just sit back and say, “I know Christ and it’s surpassing value”. He said, “I know the surpassing value of knowing Christ and I press on to grab hold of the very thing for which I was grabbed hold of by Christ Jesus.

How was he grabbed hold of by Christ Jesus?

It is through salvation. It is Christ reaching out and grabbing us and pulling us out of our sin. It is a free gift from God, by His grace, because of our belief in Christ and willing obedience to His Word.

So, what is Paul pressing on to grab hold of? It is to **KNOW** Christ.

When a group of people meet together, it is because they have something in common that they want to share with each other.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

June and I collected antique fruit jars. We travelled all over the US to bottle and jar shows. People that we did not know, even people who did not share the same moral standards or political persuasion as us were thought of as best friends. We were willing to set aside our differences, because we both shared a common love of collecting antique bottles and jars. We had jars for sale that they wanted to add to their collection and they had jars for sale that we wanted.

Why are we together this morning? It is because we share something in common.

**Philippians 3:20 (NASB)**

**<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven,**

We share a common citizenship. Our true citizenship is not in this country, it is in heaven.

How did that take place? It was Christ.

Philippians 3:9a (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law,

Those of us here today who have placed a faith in Christ are citizens of heaven because we have acknowledged the fact that we do not have a righteousness of our own. We have confessed our sins and we have cried out to God to give us what we cannot give ourselves. That is the righteousness in verse 9

Philippians 3:9b (NASB)

which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

That is what we have in common. Every one of us admitted publicly that we are sinners and there was nothing that we could do to earn favor with Almighty God. We cried out for forgiveness and we have found through faith by grace righteousness through Christ which is imputed to our account. This makes us citizens of heaven.

We also share a common expectation of Christ's return. The world looks at that and rolls their eyes. We anxiously await His return!

Philippians 3:2 (NASB)

<sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

When Christ returns we will all be transformed into a new spiritual body and we will sin no more. We will be like Christ. This is why we have so much in common. This is why we should have such a sense of love for one another. Just as Paul had for the brethren in the Philippian church.

## **BODY:**

### **I. Love One Another.**

Philippians 4:1a (NASB)

4 Therefore, my beloved brethren

Paul did not only call them "beloved", he also called them "brethren". Why did Paul call them brethren?

In my case, it may be because I can't remember your name! That may be a good reason too, I guess.

It is a wonderful thing when we meet other people who know Christ and we greet him as “brother”. Actually, if they know Christ, we may have more in common than our own genetic siblings. We will be worshipping Christ together forever. We actually have more in common in the body of Christ that we do with our own families. You know what I am talking about. We all have family members that do not know Christ. We love them and reach out to them and try to show Christ to them, yet when you get together with them there is something missing. That is because the most important person in your life is not in their lives! But, as believers we are brethren in Christ.

Paul goes on in verse 1:

**Philippians 4:1b (NASB)**

**whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.**

This is a passionate longing. Paraphrasing it in our language today he would be saying: **“Dear Philippians, I love you and I miss you.”**

He continues and says **“my joy”**. Paul found it a great joy to find them growing in grace. Paul had the joy of planting this church and seeing them serving the Lord.

Then he says **“my joy and my crown”**. This was not a golden king’s crown with jewels. This is a word of loyalty. It is a wreath that is put on one’s head for their loyalty.

This sense of loyal affection that Paul had for the church is the same that we must have for one another.

We don’t just come here to go to church. Too many times coming to church is not affectionate or intimate. **Going to church is like going to Wal Mart, we go in, do what we need to do, and leave.** It was not anything affection or intimate. That is not what we are supposed to do. We are here as the body of Christ. We are here as brothers and sisters. We are all openly confessing that we do not deserve to be here. We openly acknowledge that all we deserve is the wrath of God because all of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. But, we are rejoicing that Christ would **grab hold of us** in salvation. Jesus Christ paid the penalty of our sin. That is what we are as a body of Christ, a group of believers. We are to be affectionate and loving and kind to one another.

We don’t just come here to sing, **do church**, and go home. We **ARE a church**.

What does Paul command that we should do as brothers?

What does it mean to stand firm? We should be standing firm in the faith of Jesus Christ as a group of believers who are related to one another in Christ. Paul spoke of it earlier in chapter 1.

Philippians 4:1c (NASB)

in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

What does Paul mean “in this way”? He is referring again to the instruction and exhortations in the previous chapters. We are to “Know Christ” and be like Him.

We become more like Christ by putting him first in our life through

- Prayer
- Hearing God’s Word
- Reading God’s Word
- Meditating on God’s Word
- Applying God’s Word in Our Lives

By doing these things we can have the wisdom of knowing God’s will in our life and be able to “stand firm in the Lord”. This is what Paul was telling us in:

Philippians 1:27 (NASB)

<sup>27</sup> Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

When we are of the same mind and spirit, we will love one another and be able to stand firm in the Lord.

How can we be of the same mind and spirit?

## II. Pursue Peace with One Another.

Philippians 4:2 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

From Acts 16 we learn that women were important in the church of Philippi. In fact, the first European convert in Philippi was Lydia, a seller of purple. Euodia and Syntyche were women who had served Christ faithfully as seen in verse 3.

Philippians 4:3b (NASB)

help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of the gospel*,

The word “struggle” indicates that they labored in the church. It is like fighting side by side.

They weren’t just troublemakers messing up a church.

We don’t know what the conflict was between them. But, we can surmise that it was rooted in selfishness. Look back at Philippians chapter 2:

### **Philippians 2:3-8 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; (Euodia and Syntyche)  
<sup>4</sup> do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, (Euodia and Syntyche) but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (Euodia and Syntyche) <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (Christ in His preincarnation was willing to **let go**) <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. (Christ in His incarnation was willing to **step down**. He became a man. Not becoming any less God, but He became a man.) <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (In His humiliation, Christ **submitted**).

Why did Paul touch on this? Because of verse 5.

### **Philippians 2:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Why did Paul remind these believers on how wonderful Christ was?

So they would follow Christ's example of humility. This is something that Euodia and Syntyche were not doing. There was a conflict between them.

**Interpersonal conflict within the body of Christ is unacceptable and it must not be tolerated!**

We must be of the **same mind** or **thinking the same thing** in the Lord. It does not mean that everyone must agree with me. **What matters is that Jesus Christ is glorified. That's all that matters!**

Let us review the meaning of humility. Humility is the concept of having a low opinion of my opinion.

Why were Euodia and Syntyche fighting? It was no doubt that one or both of them lacked humility and had a high opinion of their own opinion.

This gives us a better perspective on why Paul wrote this to the Philippians.

## **III. Help Others Pursue Peace When Necessary.**

### **Philippians 4:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> 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.

This was a real letter. Euodia and Syntyche were in the very church where this was read. Can you imagine that? Someone in Philippi would say, “Hey, we got a letter from the apostle Paul.” Everyone is sitting there and saying, “Wow! This is great, what does he write?” And here in the hearing of every believer, Paul is read publicly to urge Euodia and to urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

This was probably also a rebuke to the church that they had not resolved this problem among them. He asks a “true companion” whom we do not know, Clement, and the rest of the church leaders to help them resolve their conflict.

Whenever there is interpersonal conflict, it affects the entire body. That is why we have leaders in the church.

**Hebrews 13:17 (NASB)**

***17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.***

If Euodia and Syntyche cannot resolve the issue between them, then it is time for other people to get involved.

The leaders of the church will have to answer to Jesus Christ for everyone one of us. God holds the leaders responsible for your spiritual well being.

As leaders we must be able to say that every time an interpersonal conflict arose, we tried to get the two parties together and resolve the problem. It doesn't mean that we were always successful, because it takes humility on their part, but we always tried. If we do not do that, we will have to answer to Christ. The Bible clearly teaches that we MUST be at peace with one another.

## **CONCLUSION:**

**Philippians 4:1b (NASB)**

***in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.***

How do you stand firm?

We must pursue peace with one another. God's Word for all of us today is this.

Is there a brother or sister that you are in conflict with?

God's Word for you today is “I urge you to seek out reconciliation.”

If anyone here has a conflict with another believer and they have tried, hopefully multiple times to reconcile the problem, take it to the church leaders.

Standing firm demands interpersonal PEACE!

If you know that you have a problem with another believer. Ask God to help you to resolve it!

All of you know that I have been working through Philippians and I do not pick and choose which scriptures the message comes from. I am systematically working through Philippians. I want to make it clear that I do not have any specific person that I had in mind or any specific intent. I am just preaching the scriptures that God has given to us to obey.

Paul was an example for us on how to be Christ. He bore fruit through his life and through the life of others that he led to Christ.

The best way to tell if we are an example of Christ is to ask ourselves:

“Does my life prompt others to follow Christ?” If we “KNOW” Christ, we will bear fruit for Him. The scriptures tell us that we will know a true follower of Christ by their fruit. We will be a light to a dark world and the world will see Christ in us.

If you have never turned your life over to Christ, today could be your day of salvation. Christ wants you to start living your life for Him and passionately pursue knowing Him. Christ died for all of your sins. Sin separates us from a perfect and Holy God and prevents us from knowing Christ. Christ has promised to take away your sins.

If you have not turned your life over to Christ, I want to give you that opportunity this morning.

If you are need of prayer, or want to become recognized as a member of Greenwood Christian church, please come forward this morning as we sing the invitation hymn.

### **He is Lord.**

He is Lord. He is Lord.  
He has risen from the grave and He is Lord.  
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess  
That Jesus Christ is Lord.