



CAPITOL COMMISSION

TO: *LEGISLATORS / SPOUSES/STAFF*
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WYOMING

Phil. 4:1 STANDING FIRM IN THE CAPITOL

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Paul counted all things as loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ. It showed in his life as he changed his direction and goals. The pattern he walked was now different. The goal he pressed on for was clear. Indeed, to Paul, there was nothing compared to the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ! And as a result of knowing Jesus Christ, he looked forward to His eminent return!! If our lives as believers are now dedicated towards pursuing Jesus Christ, then what a certain hope and joy to know that He will return for us and we shall see Him face to face. We shall live with the One we have pursued eternally in heaven! Therefore, the believer has a heavenly focus. Paul encourages us not to be so imbedded in this present world with what it has to offer because it is temporary and passing away. Our focus is to be on Christ eagerly looking and waiting for His return! With that perspective, we will desire to be found faithful when He returns, living a life that is pleasing to Him. And remember, we are not anxiously looking forward to an event, but rather a Person; our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I. "THEREFORE"- PHILIPPIANS 4:1A

"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved." Philippians 4:1

Paul begins the fourth chapter of Philippians by exhorting believers to stand firm. That exhortation extends from what Paul has said in the previous three chapters. "Therefore" always refers back to what has previously been written.

A. GOAL FOR LIFE: CHRISTLIKENESS- PHILIPPIANS 3

"Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14

Once we are saved there is a growing process and a pursuit for the rest of our lives. In salvation, our *position* before God is righteous because of Jesus Christ. And yet, we know that we are not righteous in our *practice*. So the goal for the rest of our life is becoming in *practice* what we are in *position* before God. The goal is being like Christ. The purpose for which Christ saved me becomes the purpose for which I live!! In other words, Christ's purpose in pursuing us becomes our pursuit in living. And that purpose is to become like Jesus Christ, conformed to His image and thereby glorifying God with my life. (Romans 8:28-29)

B. PRIZE FOR LIFE: CHRISTLIKENESS- PHILIPPIANS 3

Our race is becoming like Christ and it culminates in the prize of the "imperishable wreath" as 1 Corinthians 9:25 says. The prize is being Christ like! What is the prize we are pursuing continuously to the finish?? What is this goal that continually motivated Paul to run the race to the finish? Paul writes, "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14b) The "upward call of God" refers to the time when God finally calls us home and we are ushered into His presence. What is the prize of "the upward call of God"? It is to finally be made like Christ when God calls me home.

In light of our Lord's eminent return; our pursuit, goal and prize in life is to be like Christ. We are to live now as citizens of a heavenly city with the hope and certainty of our coming Savior. Bearing these truths in mind, Paul exhorts us to stand firm in this world that will test our faith.

II. PAUL'S LOVE FOR THE PHILIPPIANS- PHIL. 4:1

"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved." Philippians 4:1

A. "BELOVED BRETHREN"- PHILIPPIANS 4:1

Paul again reveals his deep love for the Philippian believers. His love has no ulterior motive nor is it contrived. But the Greek word expresses a self sacrificial love for others. Paul had a genuine care and concern for them and he desired them to be totally faithful to God and His call on their lives. He knew they were suffering for their faith and he wanted to encourage them to continue pursuing the prize... even with all the consequences that may bring. When believers suffer for the gospel and continue in their faith, we can expect God to use that suffering to spread the gospel. And so Paul begins by reminding them of his love for them. And out of that deep and sacrificial love for them, Paul must exhort them to stand firm in spite of hardship.

B. "WHOM I LONG TO SEE"- PHILIPPIANS 4:1

In Philippians 1:8, 23-25, it is clear that Paul would rather go to heaven, but is willing to stay if that is the Lord's will because these believers needed him. Now that is true love. Paul's love fills all the pages and verses of this entire book. Even though Paul was separated from them and in prison himself, he longed to see these faithful ones and encourage them in person.

C. "MY JOY, MY CROWN"— PHILIPPIANS 4:1

Paul obviously did not receive his joy from circumstances but rather through the people God had placed in his life. They were his joy! Not only were they his joy, but his "crown". That seems like a strange word to use here. But the crown referred to a victor's garland or wreath that was placed on the head of the victor. To Paul, his garland of victory in Christian service was the Philippian believers whom he had won to the Lord Jesus Christ. These believers were his reward, his prize, the result and fruit of his ministry, the validation of his life seen through their faithfulness and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul was concerned for their spiritual welfare and desiring for them not to be shaken in any way by the hardships they faced, Paul commands them to stand firm and continue in their faith.

III. "STAND FIRM"— PHILIPPIANS 4:1

"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved." Philippians 4:1

A. "IN THIS WAY"— PHILIPPIANS 4:1

"in this way, or so" Greek word "**houtos**," means in this way, like this, referring to what precedes or follows.

Paul desires for these believers to be stable in Christ and stand firm in the Lord in a certain manner. God doesn't leave us without direction but reveals in His Word how we must live. So Paul writes in Philippians 4:2-9 to explain how to stand firm in the Lord. We will spend ample time in these verses for they are so appropriate for our lives as well. God reveals exactly how He wants you to stand firm in the Capitol!

B. "STAND FIRM"— PHILIPPIANS 4:1

"stand firm" Greek word "**steko**," is a military term meaning to stand your ground, be immovable, hold your position on the front line. All this is to be done while under a heavy assault or attack during battle.

Paul chose this term because he knew the Philippians were and would be under heavy attack. The same is true for us as well as we live this life in service to our Lord. Paul knew that Jesus Christ is all-sufficient to meet our needs not just in His provision for salvation, but also in His provision for life. Paul was imprisoned at the time of writing this book. His life was an example of having to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. And he was an example to the Philippians of standing firm and immovable through those hardships *because* of God's faithfulness and constant provision.

Philippians 2 reminds us of Christ's example as He suffered. There Paul examined the life of total humility that Jesus Christ exemplified and now calls us to. In spite of the suffering our Lord endured for us and in our place, even to the point of death on the cross, He remained steadfast and obedient. Hebrews 12:1 reveals that it was for the "*joy set before Him*". In spite of the heavy assault our Lord endured, He did not waiver, compromise, sin, fall or crumble. He did not look to the world for help, but remained firm and fixed on doing the Father's will. It is Christ's life that has transformed our lives! It is because of His work in our lives that we are enabled to stand firm. We are able to stand against heavy assault and not waiver in Biblical principles and practices because of His sanctifying and strengthening work in our life. "*Stand firm*" is the cry which resounds through the entire New Testament.

➤ 2 Thessalonians 2:15 "*Stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught.*"

➤ 1 Corinthians 15:58 "*Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...*"

Paul was so concerned about this issue of standing firm that he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 3:8, "*Now we really live if you stand firm in the Lord.*" We can be encouraged to stand firm for in John 16:33 Jesus says, "*In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*" In adversity, we look to Christ for His strength in our weakness and struggle. He is the all-sufficient One Who meets our every need. And we must remember that everything that comes our way serves only to clarify and purify our love for Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul exhorts us to stand firm, pressing on for Him!

How will you stand firm and endure today's trials as you serve in the Capitol? Philippians 4 continues to expound on this imperative. We must submit our life to God, finding our joy and life in Him alone. We dare not compromise with this world as we are tested or assaulted. We cannot give in under the testing or yield to temptation to sin. We must stand firm in our faith knowing that beyond this life and all the trials that come, there awaits a crown and life forever with Jesus Christ. May God give us a deep joy in the certainty of this hope He has set before us! Therefore, may the habit of our lives be to **stand firm!**

More passages encouraging you to stand firm through testing:

Acts 14:22, 2 Timothy 3:12, Acts 4:1-31, Acts 5:17-41, 1 Peter 5:8,

1 Corinthians 16:13, Galatians 5:1, Ephesians 6:11-14,

Colossians 2:5, James 1:8, 1 Peter 5:12, 2 Peter 3:16-17, Jude 24.