



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

STANDING FIRM WITH JOY & GENTLENESS PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5
TO: WYOMING LEGISLATORS, SPOUSES AND THE GOVERNOR
FEBRUARY 9, 2011

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Throughout Philippians, Jesus Christ shines through as our all sufficient Lord. Because Christ meets our every need through His saving and sanctifying work in our lives, we can stand firm! "Joy" and "rejoice" are frequently repeated throughout this text encouraging believers in adverse circumstances to look to Christ and experience His strength in weakness. He strengthens and satisfies us and the key to Christian living is finding joy in God Himself and God alone. And remember, as we serve our sovereign Lord, nothing surprises Him! Everything that comes our way serves only to purify and clarify our love and commitment to Jesus Christ...and thus our purpose in life!

I. STAND FIRM WITH JOY- PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Paul exhorts the Philippian believers to "stand firm". From our previous study we saw this was a military term used when under heavy attack. Paul devotes the next few verses to help us understand how to stand firm. He begins first by addressing unity in the church as we saw in our last study. Paul desired the church to be strong and withstand hardships from the outside and remain intact on the inside, not crumbling from disunity. As believers, we are called to the same common goal of proclaiming the gospel and glorifying God, intent on that sole purpose alone. There is no room for selfish intent or selfish pursuits. Paul strongly admonishes the two women as individuals to be obedient and live in unity, but also calls on the church as a whole to hold these women accountable to the church's purpose of being of the same mind intent on one purpose. Then, Paul continues his exhortation of "standing firm" in the next two verses.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." Philippians 4:4-5

In Philippians, the word "joy" or "rejoice" is mentioned 16 times. Jesus Christ is mentioned over 50 times. This is not by chance for real joy is found in Jesus Christ alone. No matter what the circumstances are or what hardship you might be facing, a believer in Jesus Christ can have true, deep abiding joy through life. That's the message of Philippians. Paul sees this attribute as an absolute requirement for standing firm. Simply stated, Paul is saying to stand firm in the Lord in this way: by rejoicing in the Lord always. Believers can always be in a state of rejoicing no matter what is going on in our lives. How do we do this?

A. JOY... A CONFIDENCE- PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Joy is not a feeling or emotion. If it were, then Paul would command us to have a certain feeling or emotion. It doesn't work that way. Joy is not a feeling that comes and goes. It is not an emotion that is with us one moment and gone the next. Joy is a continuous practice that becomes a habit because of our deep relationship with Jesus Christ. Joy results from a

secure relationship with our Lord, one in which we submit our lives to God and are tuned to His pitch, God's Word.

Adversity and troubles in life give us no reason to be happy. But joy is a fruit that is present in our lives because its' source is found in our Lord Jesus Christ. Joy is found only in the Lord and no source outside of God Himself, therefore, "rejoice in the Lord!"

"rejoice" Greek word "**chairo**," meaning "joy" is a direct result of God's grace. It gives a sense of being in continual, habitual practice of rejoicing.

"in" the Lord" Greek word "**en**," meaning a primary place or idea of resting in any place or thing. It gives the sense of in or remaining in. It is placing oneself in a place of rest in the Lord.

These Greek words show us that this joy we possess is a direct result of God's grace. Joy is associated with a relationship and is produced by the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-26) Joy is eternal and doesn't come or go because it is found in the secure, eternal relationship with Jesus Christ that never changes. Therefore, it characterizes the life of a true believer and is present regardless of life's events that can test the foundation of one's faith. Paul wants us to understand the joy we have because of our relationship with God. And joy is found in Christ alone. Because our joy is in Christ, it is limitless regardless of what comes our way. So Paul exhorts us to rejoice...emphasizing it twice! Stand firm and rejoice!

As you serve in the Capitol, it will be hard. There will be one obstacle after another. Will your joy remain in the toil? It can! Will you be known by others as one having a joy in spite of circumstances? You possess a joy that need not be shaken through life's challenging tests. It endures because of your secure relationship in Christ. Remember that Paul's whole focus in life was Jesus Christ and sharing the Gospel and because of that, if the cause of Christ was furthered by his circumstances, if the Gospel was preached, then there was joy! His life was Christ's. Oh that we might have this perspective! Are you willing to see the Gospel furthered knowing there will be a cost, suffering opposition as Paul did, with joy? Christ is all sufficient to meet your needs, even in the Capitol. So stand firm in your faith as you serve and rejoice!

BIBLE STUDY

LEGISLATORS/SPOUSES/GOVERNOR & STAFF/LSO: WEDNESDAY @ 6:30 AM, WYOMING STATE CAPITOL
HERSCHLER BUILDING, COMMONS AREA, BREAKFAST SERVED

CAPITOL COMMISSION WYOMING

STANDING FIRM WITH JOY & GENTLENESS PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5

2 Peter 4:12-13 says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.”

II. STAND FIRM WITH GENTLENESS- PHILIPPIANS 4:5

“Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.” Philippians 4:5

“**gentleness**” Greek word “*epielkes*,” gives the sense of patience, gentleness, moderation, contentment, mild, settled, sweet reasonableness, big heartedness, very generous, over generousness, charity towards faults of others, mercy towards failures of others, patience when submitted to injustice, mistreatment without malice, bitterness or vengeance, indulging personal failings of others and not be personally offended or bitter. Submits to dishonor, disgrace, mistreatment and persecution with an attitude of courteousness, with an attitude of patience, kindness and consideration. All of this without hatred, malice or revenge. It is being peaceable and gentle. This word knows no revenge. It is the charity towards the faults of others, mercy towards the failures of others. It carries with it patience and the ability to submit to injustice, disgrace, mistreatment without hatred, without malice, without bitterness and without vengeance. It says, when you have offended me, misjudged me, maltreated me, misrepresented me, you have not given me what I deserve, in fact you have given me what I do not deserve, you have ruined my reputation with some but I humbly graciously accept it and **I still reach out in love to you.**

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This is quite a word. We are to stand firm through harsh or unfair circumstances and rejoice always in the Lord with gentleness that endures mistreatment without any malice or bitterness towards others. And all of this is done without compromising on the truth in absolute humility. Is Paul serious?? Can this really be done??

It is important to spend some time contemplating the full meaning of this word before continuing on. We will focus our study next week on Paul’s exhortation to gentleness as defined above. In the meantime, evaluate your life in light of this Scripture. Are you known for your forbearance to other individuals who have wronged you? Are you patient when you are submitted to injustice at the hand of others? Can you endure mistreatment from others without malice, bitterness, hatred or vengeance? This is a hard and difficult way of life that Paul is exhorting us to... in fact it seems impossible. But this is critical to standing firm!! If we succumb to unfair treatment from others with sin, anger and vengeance, then we give way to sin in our lives and do not stand firm. We must remember Paul’s words from 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, “And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you,

for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Will the testimony of your life bear witness to your submission to God’s Word, especially in the hard areas of your life? How will you stand firm and endure today’s trials if not by submitting everything to Him? Will your gentle and forbearing ways with others reflect the maturing work of the Holy Spirit in your life? Will you follow our Lord’s example? Will you model Paul? Throughout the week, give serious consideration regarding our calling to love, gentleness and forbearing to all men. One who can live this way will stand firm!

¹ MacArthur, John, MacArthur Commentary on Philippians. Moody Press: Chicago, 2001. Pg. 276. Tape series, Grace To You, 1989, 50-39.