

Philippians 3:17–4:1 (NASB 2020)

¹⁷ Brothers *and sisters*, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even as I weep, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who have their minds on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our lowly condition into conformity with His glorious body, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

¹ Therefore, my beloved brothers *and sisters*, whom I long *to see*, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

- 1) We covered the first three verses of this passage last time.
 - a) Paul is the example and all that he has done becomes the pattern that is shown now in others.
- 2) As Paul continues from verse 20, he definitely spells out the great hope we have for our future.
 - a) Not just a move to a better place but a physical change for us all – a new physical body and existence without all the pain and suffering we have in this current body.
 - b) Not to mention not having to deal with the emotional pain of this existence – as the old song says, “no more tears up there.”
- 3) Then, he concludes with the statement “stand firm in the Lord in this way”.
 - a) “in this way” most likely refers to verses 16 and 17.
 - b) Meaning of course to follow his example and the pattern of being like Christ and the other Christian brothers who are faithful believers.
 - c) And, to live by the standard we have attained.

Who can you think of in the past that you have had in your life that you would want to follow their example and pattern?

- 4) I can think of two such individuals – J.R. Stone, and Bill Young.
 - a) J.R. because he was very faithful to his beliefs and the word but he never to my knowledge became over wrought in stating his views. He was a very gentle man.
 - b) Bill Young was as kind and loving a person as I think I have ever known. He was able to continue even in the face of trials without becoming bitter or resentful when in truth, he and Ann had every right to be just that. He was also, in my opinion, a great preacher and expositor of the word.

Philippians 4:2–3 (NASB 2020)

Think of Excellence

²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. ³Indeed, true companion, I ask you also, help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement as well as the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- 1) We begin here with Paul's concern for the relationship of two women who were very important to him and the church.
 - a) They were two women who had worked alongside Paul in his ministry at some point.
 - b) It might have been in Philippi at the time he was there and founding the church – we really don't know.
 - c) What we can infer here is that they shared with him in his promoting of the gospel and probably were instrumental in bringing some of these folks to the Lord.
- 2) This broken relationship is no small matter.
 - a) If we are to get anything from these few verses it would be that these women were important to the well being of the church and their broken relationship if it continues will cause problems.
- 3) He is careful to show his concern that they work together toward this harmony.
 - a) He could have said I urge Euodia and Syntyche – instead, he deliberately repeated the verb I urge to each of them.
 - i) To me, this is an obvious stressing of the point and also, showing a total equality in the responsibility of each.
 - ii) The range of meanings here is very emphatic – to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage
 - b) Again, a serious request.
- 4) We now have two mysteries.
 - a) First, the “true companion” who Paul asks directly to help with this situation.
 - i) We have no knowledge of who this person is at all.
 - ii) There are a few footnotes and even a few translations that take the Greek word translated companion as a proper noun.
 - iii) The translation would then read true child in the faith Syzyge (SU ZU A).
 - iv) The caveat here is that that name has not been found in any external Greek literature so though it makes sense, there is no basis in the assumption.
 - v) The Greek word is legitimately translated companion but in truth, I see where the proper noun would make more sense.

- vi) Without this being a proper noun and without any other mention of the person involved in the body of the epistle, this would have to be someone that Epaphroditus singles out when the letter was read.
- vii) Remember – in the original Greek as it was written there were no small letters – only caps so there is no way to rule this out from the original even if we had it in our hands.
- b) Second, Clement, this is the only mention of Clement in the new testament.
 - i) There was a Clement who was a bishop and considered by the Catholic church to be the 4th Pope at Rome.
 - ii) He was also known as Clement of Rome.
 - (1) Considered to be the first of the Apostolic Fathers of the Church.
 - (2) He died in 99 CE so it is possible that this might indeed be the Clement Paul is referring to.
 - (3) In fact, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius identified him as such.
 - (4) He wrote one epistle to Corinth which we have in its entirety.
 - (a) Also wrote a homily which some consider a second letter to Corinth which we also have in its entirety.
 - (5) I should add however that there is some debate among scholars as to whether this was the Clement Paul mentions here – interesting, nonetheless.
 - c) You may have also heard of a Clement of Alexandria – not really considered as a possible person in this letter.
- 5) One way or the other, we can rest assured that the folks in Philippi knew exactly who both of these folks were and that is the important thing here.
- 6) Paul has already addressed the issue between these two ladies back in chapter 2 when he said:
¹⁴Do all things without complaining or arguments; ¹⁵so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,
- 7) As we discussed before, the way we act, the way we live our lives has a direct effect on not only those who are not Christians but also on those who are part of the church.
- 8) Our goal must be to always appear as “lights in the world” – our whole world.
- 9) Paul brings this idea out again in these next verses...

Philippians 4:4–7 (NASB 2020)

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all people. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made

known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

What are things that define a gentle spirit?

- 1) Not boisterous.
- 2) Being able to disagree without quarreling or arguing.
- 3) Caring about others and their feelings.
- 4) Contending for the faith without harshness.