

Study Group 5 (Philippians 3:17-4:3)

"STAND FAST IN THE LORD"

- 3:17** 'followers together' (4831) Diag. "joint imitators". Paul was a follower or joint imitator of Christ and was asking the Philippians to be followers together with him. We might think that Paul is being egotistical, but the Philippians knew Paul's strong conviction and his great commitment to the truth. The example he was setting before them was really Christ's, not his own. (1 Cor. 11:1). Not only did the apostle hold out his own example for them to follow but also that of brethren like Timothy and Epaphroditus (ch 2). He asks them to look at and follow these brethren for they with Paul are a pattern to all believers.
- 3:19** Paul emphasises the wickedness of their ways by showing how Yahweh views it. He sees it as worthy of destruction. Used of the womb and the belly – symbol of all the lusts of the flesh. Used of Judaisers in Rom. 16:18, who serve their own belly. Those whose consciences are dull to the Word of God through sin end up glorifying in shameful things.
- 3:20** conversation (4175) Gk: 'politeuma' = citizenship (Roth). Philippi, as a colony of Rome, was bound to follow the laws and customs of Rome. We also are bound to follow the laws of Heaven to which we are related as citizens of Zion. Our thinking now should be on heavenly things (Col. 3:1-2; Eph. 2:5-6). Rather than being caught up by this life we should be of those "who love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8, Heb. 9:28). Like the ambassadors of Rome, he will come to test us, to inspect whether we are living in the heavenlies or have changed citizenship to be of this world.
- 3:21** Whether our humbled body will be changed depends on our attitude in submitting to the will of the Father now. Fashioned like (4832) from same Greek word as "made conformable" (v.10). They too will, at his return, be made "like him" in glorious immortality, for they "shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:29-30).
- Paul contrasts Christ's 'glorious body' with those who glory in their shame. Even as Christ glorified his Father in his life in a moral sense so he was given the physical glory of His Father (cp. John 1:14; Acts 3:13; John 7:39). God promised dominion to the Son of Man over all things, excluding Himself (Gen. 1:23-26; 1 Cor 15:24).
- 4:1** Note the connection with previous verses. Paul exhorts them to stand fast because: 1.Christ is coming to bring a reward to the faithful (3:20-21). 2.There is a bad example being introduced by those who fulfil the lusts of their flesh (3:18 19) crown (4735) – Gk: 'stephanos' = "coronal wreath". At the time when Paul receives a glorious body (3:21).
- 4:2** Paul now attempts to resolve a specific problem – the division between sisters Euodias and Syntyche. The fact that these sisters are named in public shows that the problem was well known in the ecclesia, and could have caused serious division. Paul does not attempt to arbitrate between these two sisters. He simply asks them to be like-minded in the Lord. It didn't matter who was right or wrong. The mind which Paul wanted them to have, was that same mind which was in Christ Jesus (2:5). If we try to assert our own will and personality, problems will inevitably arise.
- Paul uses this theme of "like-mindedness" often in the epistle as the key to overcoming all our difficulties in life. Our Lord showed the perfect example of not standing up for one's rights when he died, the just for the unjust (2 Cor 5:14:17). Christ never sought his own justification, but humbled himself to bring the salvation of many. (Matt. 6:12, 14-15). cp (Matt 18:23-35).



Study Group 6 (Philippians 4:4-23)

"STRENGTHENED THROUGH CHRIST"

- 4:6** Jesus exhorted his disciples and ourselves not to worry about the things of this life (Matt. 6:25-34), but to put our faith in God. "the first word is used of prayer in general, the second stresses the sense of need" (Vine). The two words are used together in Eph. 6:18 and 1 Tim. 2:1; 5:5.
- John says, "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). Our prayers should not be selfish, but should show a spirit of thankfulness, recognising present blessings and past deliverance. Yahweh knows our needs before we ask Him but He still desires us to make our requests to Him (Psa. 50:15). Not only does our prayer need to be sincere, but our action also needs to be consistent with our requests if they are to be heard (Matt. 6:9-15).
- 4:7** Paul appears to be drawing this idea from Isa.26:3 where Isaiah shows that trust in God (v.6) is the way to peace of mind. Jesus promised us peace, not as the world gives, but a peace of mind based on our knowledge that God is with us in all circumstances however difficult they might be (John 14:27; 16:33)cp Eph. 5:26, James 5:3, 1 John 3:3).
- 4:8** A mind at peace is a mind rightly occupied. Paul counsels the brethren to think upon wholesome things in order to develop spiritual minds which could be at peace with God. Truth is the basis of all spiritual qualities
- As Paul showed in Ch. 3:9 that righteousness only comes from receiving God's righteousness, yet we are called upon to elevate our thoughts to the righteousness of God. One of the essential qualities of the Father is His moral purity. Development of His purity will only come from keeping our minds purified by the Word (Eph. 5:26, James 5:3, 1 John 3:3).
- 4:10** Paul saw their act as a response to Christ's love. Our sacrifices for our brethren and sisters should be a response to Christ's love (1 John 4:9-11; John 15:9-17). They had not forgotten Paul but had lacked opportunity to show their concern to the apostle. Now they had shown it through a gift taken by Epaphroditus (2:25; 4:18).
- 4:13** Paul is not so much saying that he can do all things but rather that he can endure all things. What is the secret to his success? He is motivated by the spirit of Christ – to crucify the flesh and seek the furtherance of the Gospel at whatever personal cost (Lk. 9:58-59).
- 4:16** Even before Paul went to Corinth the Philippians had sent a gift to the very next town Paul had stopped at after leaving Philippi, which was Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). In addition they had been more than generous to the Jerusalem poor fund (2 Cor. 8:1-5).

