Can’t We All Just Get Along? - Stand Firm in the Lord
Philippians 4:1-5

Where have we been & where are we going? Ch 4 is all about “Spiritual” Resolutions – It’s about making a firm decision to act/engage/to do!

There comes a point in time when belief must result in action! “So also faith, if it does not have works is dead” – James 2:17

Jesus said “Every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit... Thus you will recognize them by their fruits!

Philippians 4 - “Therefore...” – In light of all Paul has been advocating theologically, he turns to the very practical implications of those teachings!

If believing the gospel results in Christlikeness & if that Christlikeness is both the goal & the prize of the faith, then there should be visible evidence to it.

Paul desires to see in the Philippian church the continued bearing of this fruit of the gospel, for his own sake, but even more for the sake of the Philippians.

They are his “brothers & sisters, those he loves & longs for, his joy & crown” Paul has a strong connection with & commitment to them - his beloved!

This is the kind of relationship the church is called too have with each other – pastor to parishioner, parishioner to pastor, parishioner to parishioner!

When this love does not exist in a church, the church loses its credibility! Jesus said that his disciples would be recognized by their love for one another!

Paul has been establishing throughout this letter the need for such love, love that inevitably results in changed lives & unity among it’s members!

Paul knows that a loveless & divided church will not stand! It not only won’t stand, a divided church results in a terrible witness to the work of Christ!

It is true that a church will never be void of conflict b/c the church is full of sinners, but a church is called to “stand firm in the Lord” together – out of love for Christ & out of love for one another!

“Our squabbles lose their significance when we together rejoice in the Lord!” Paul contends that to resist division we must rejoicing in the Lord always!

Therefore Paul asks for the whole church to help see reconciliation happen!

In pursuing this & seeing the fruit that comes forth from it – joy is the result!

Paul then solicits the help of what Scripture calls Paul’s “true companion.” Who is this “true companion?” I believe it is the church collectively!

The church is called to be united, one in Christ, a singular body of believers! Paul has advocated for this & has expressed it’s reality in this church!

If the Church is to be the manifestation of Christ in this world then it needs to be both an agent of grace and an agent of truth!

“The church is to hold out truth that is so grace soaked that it’s hard to resist & grace that is so truth soaked that it’s hard to accept!”

Truth tells us that we are called to be one just as Christ & the Father are one

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This is the backdrop to Paul’s abrupt turning in Ch. 4 from belief to practice!

Euodia and Syntyche, two prominent women in the church, are in conflict!

This conflict, like all conflict between believers runs the risk of wreaking havoc in the church, b/c conflict leads to division, & a house divided will fall!

The reputation of Christ and the whole Body of believers is at stake!

So Paul here in Ch. 4 addresses this division directly, with both grace & truth

- Paul declares the names of the offenders! Why?
- Paul addresses them separately! Why?
- Paul addresses the issue but does not name the issue! Why?
- Paul does not take a side! Why?
- Paul declares quickly & clearly the proper response!

The proper response is “agreeing in the Lord!” But is that truly possible in all things? What unites us is stronger than what divides us!

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Paul contends that to resist division we must rejoicing in the Lord always!

Our squabbles lose their significance when we together rejoice in Christ!

And finally, b/c the Lord is at hand, let your reasonableness, your willingness to yield your personal rights for the sake of the unity in Christ be known!
Sermon Based Transformation Group Questions

1) Did you make any New Year’s resolutions? What are they? Did you make any “Spiritual resolutions” for the New Year?
2) Why is action required to substantiate belief? Why is belief not enough according to James 2 and Matthew 7?
3) What kind of relationships do you have in the church? Do you see the people of BRC as Paul saw the people of Philippi relationally?
4) Why does the absence of love and unity in the church result in the loss of it’s credibility? And why is it a terrible witness to Christ?
5) How is Paul’s command to “Stand firm in the Lord” result in a greater love for Christ and for one another?
6) Why is both grace & truth required for unity to exist in the church?
7) Of all the bullet points in the sermon under Paul’s response to the conflict between Euodia & Syntyche which one(s) stuck out to you?
8) How is “agreeing in the Lord” a possibility in almost all circumstances? What would the exceptions be?
9) How is the whole church collectively responsible to help bring unity in the church by being agents of reconciliation?

Verses of the Week

Philippians 1:27 - 27 Only let your manner of life be worthy[a] of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

Philippians 2:2 - 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

James 2:17 - So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Matthew 7:17-18 - 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

John 17:21 - 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

1 Peter 3:8-9 - 8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

Sermon Based Transformation Group Questions

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13) Why does the absence of love and unity in the church result in the loss of it’s credibility? And why is it a terrible witness to Christ?
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