

站立得稳（中）：主里的喜乐、谦和的见证、感恩的祷告——腓立比书 4:4-7

Stand Firm – Part 2 – Philippians 4:4-7

Introduction, Outlines

- Scripture reading: Isaiah 26:1-12; Philippians 4:1-9
- The threats the Philippian church faces: persecution by enemies, legalistic false teachers, and licentious false Christians. These issues can harm the spiritual lives of true Christians and they need to know how to stand firm in the Lord! This is the main theme of Philippians 4:1-9. Christians today must also stand firm in the Lord in this way.
- Outlines:
 - Title: Stand Firm – Part 2
 - 1. Joy in the Lord (v4)
 - 2. Reputation of Gentle Humility (v5)
 - 3. Prayer with Thanksgiving (vv6-7)

Joy in the Lord (v4)

- “again I will say”: It’s so important it must be repeated. Paul seldom repeats and emphasizes like this, which means this is very important.
- “Rejoice”: Not a suggestion, but a command. Rejoice is an important command. It’s what a Christian must do! Many people don’t know why rejoicing can be commanded. They think joy is an emotion that just happens and they have no control over it, so how can it be commanded? But the Bible teaches us to guide our emotions by our minds, so we must cultivate joy intentionally.
- “always”: not just often, but at all times, continually, unceasingly. It implies this joy shouldn't be affected by any external factors. To some degree, circumstances can have a reasonable influence on joy (cf 2:2; 2:27; 4:10), but not this kind of joy as commanded here.
- “in the Lord”: This is why this joy cannot be affected by circumstances. The fundamental joy of Christians is not based on specific blessings our Lord gives, but on the Lord Himself. It comes from the intimate fellowship with the Lord. Under any circumstance, you can have that intimate fellowship and the joy from it by being spiritually alert, striving to love the Lord, serve the Lord, seek the Lord's will, and do the things pleasing to the Lord.

Application suggestion: How to cultivate an intimate fellowship with the Lord? Ponder the following eight ways of love Christ practically as Ryle summarized. If you love a person, (1) you like to think about him; (2) you like to hear about him; (3) you like to read

about him; (4) you like to please him; (5) you like his friends; (6) you are jealous about his name and honor; (7) you like to talk to him; (8) you like to be always with him.

Discern: What rejoicing in the Lord is not? It's not merely comforting yourself when you're sad by telling yourself that the Lord loves me and has saved me and He has a good purpose in all things without the daily pursuit really to obey Him. This is rejoicing *in your self-comforting effort, not in the Lord!*

Examine yourself: Are you able to receive the command to rejoice? For some, God does not command rejoicing, but to “be miserable, mourn and weep” (James 4:9-10)! Only those who serve the Lord with obedience and humility can receive the command to rejoice in the Lord.

Reputation of Gentle Humility (v5)

- “gentle spirit”: The original word has a rich meaning. One scholar says it can be defined as an attitude or manner that is reasonable, fair, gentle, not extreme, and not insisting on its own rights. After studying many commentaries and the context of the passage, one pastor summarizes its meaning as “the shocking graciousness of an untamed humility.” A simpler summary: It is the outward expression of gentleness that comes from the inward attitude of humility.

Humility is the product of a right view of God and man, knowing that everything outside of hell is grace. The world doesn't have gentle humility because they believe they deserve respect and have their rights. If their rights are violated, they immediately become indignant fighters. In order to have gentle humility, you must understand that everything outside of hell is grace!

Gentle humility is a characteristic of Christ. Paul says he “urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:1) Christ could rightly end the life of all sinners in an instant. Instead, He endures sinners' continuous offense gently with humility. In a real sense, every evil in this world is a testimony of God's gentle humility.

- “be known to all men”: Live your lives of gentle humility to all men and let them see. This is talking about the church's testimony before the world. Let the world see your gentle humility, not the kind of arrogant harshness as Euodia and Syntyche were in 4:2.

The testimony of gentle humility affects your spiritual stability. Because if your life is no different from unbelievers that they think you're the same as them, you won't have assurance whether you are really in the Lord.

- “The Lord is near”: This can express the nearness of both time and space. The time of the Lord's second coming is near, but the Lord is near in spirit to those who seek Him all the time. Both are the comfort and source of strength for believers.

Romans 13:11 “for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.” (time)

Psalms 145:18 “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”
(space)

Prayer with Thanksgiving (vv6-7)

- “Be anxious for nothing”: Don’t be anxious for anything. Anything? That’s right, anything! Nothing is a legitimate reason for anxiety, since you know the Lord is near. (cf Matthew 6:25-34)
- “by prayer, supplication with thanksgiving”: The way to overcome anxiety is thankful prayer. Without thankful prayer, you will often fall into anxiety which results in an unstable spiritual life.

Contrast: How does the world deal with anxiety? Talking to friends, working like crazy, filling life with entertainment, smoking, drinking, using drugs..... What about you? When anxiety attacks, who do you turn to first?

- “in everything.....be made known to God”: Everything? That’s right, everything! There is nothing too small to “bother” God with! Everything includes bad results from the doctor, includes your unbelieving husband, your disobedient child, it includes difficulties at work, and yes, it even includes the brother/sister you want to pursue! That’s how much God cares for His children.

1 Peter 5:7 “casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Comparison: Parents want their children to come to them for help in everything. When your children stop coming to you and try to solve every problem on their own, you’re in big trouble. God wants us to be childlike and bring all problems to Him!

- “of God”: The prayer effect is the peace of God, which is the work of God and not your own doing.

Discern: A common wrong view of prayer is to see it as a kind of self-help where you help yourself through difficult times by the power of your own positive thinking, and so prayer brings peace. This is totally upside down! The right prayer is dependence on God. This kind of prayer is dependence on yourself.

- “surpasses all comprehension”: The peace of God is supernatural, and it is not something the human mind can come up with!

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; *My peace* I give to you; *not as the world gives* do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

- “peace”: Three aspects——**vertical peace** (Relationship with God reconciled from enmity, this is the *foundation*, so the peace of God is “*in Christ*”); **horizontal peace** (Christians love one another in unity); and **internal peace** (this is the aspect in view here, it “*will guard your hearts and your minds*” against various anxiety and fear, which is the key for spiritual stability!)

Don't underestimate the power of the peace of God. The peace of God empowered Paul to sing loud praises in prison; the peace of God empowered Stephen to pray for his murderers when they stoned him to death; the peace of God empowered Peter to declare “We must obey God rather than men” before the council. Do you have this kind of peace?

Summary

Isaiah 26:3 “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You.”