

17 | PHILIPPIANS 4:1-5

DISARMING DISHARMONY

Fighting for God, not with each other

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“...that he [Christ] might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

Introduction: The Brawling Bride

Open your Bible if you will to Philippians 4:1-5. The title of our message is “Disarming Disharmony.”

In a parable she entitles “A Brawling Bride,” Karen Mains paints a vivid scene, describing a suspenseful moment in a wedding ceremony. Down front stands the groom in a spotless tuxedo—handsome, smiling, full of anticipation, shoes shined, every hair in place, anxiously awaiting the presence of his bride. All attendants are in place, looking joyful and attractive. The magical moment finally arrives as the pipe organ reaches full crescendo and the stately wedding march begins. Everyone rises and looks toward the door for their first glimpse of the bride.

Suddenly there is a **horrified gasp**. The wedding party is shocked. The groom stares in embarrassed disbelief. Instead of a lovely woman dressed in elegant white, smiling behind a lacey veil, the bride is **limping down the aisle**. Her dress is soiled and torn. Her leg seems twisted. Ugly cuts and bruises cover her bare arms. Her nose is bleeding, one eye is purple and swollen, and her hair is disheveled. “Does not this handsome groom deserve better than this?” asks the author. And then the clincher: “Alas, his bride, *the church*, has been fighting again!”¹

Calling them (and us, the church) Christ’s Bride, the apostle Paul writes to the Ephesians:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:25-27).

Wonderful plan... but hardly a realistic portrayal. I mean, can you imagine what the wedding pictures would look like if Christ claimed his bride, the church, today? Try to picture him standing next to his brawling bride. It is one thing for us to survive the blows of a world that is hostile to the things of Christ, but to be in disharmony with one another, fighting and arguing among ourselves. It’s just unthinkable.² Unthinkable and unnatural though it may seem, the bride has been brawling for centuries. We get along for a little while and then we are back at each others’ throats. After a bit we make up, walk in wonderful harmony for a few days, then we turn on one another. We can switch from friend to fiend in a matter of moments.

It’s not what God planned. He has something better for us. But we have to realize what love is. Love means we’re family. It means we’re committed to each other. Sometimes a children’s comic strip can bring it down to earth so we can understand.

In a “Peanuts” cartoon, Lucy says to Snoopy: “There are times when you really bug me, but I must admit there are also times when I feel like giving you a big hug.” Snoopy replies: “That’s the way I am... huggable and buggable.”³

Scripture Reading

Let’s stand and read Philippians 4:1-5,

¹ Karen Mains. *The Key to a Loving Heart* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1979), 143–44.

² Charles R. Swindoll. *Laugh Again* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 175.

³ Swindoll, 176.

4:1-5 | Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. ²I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

This is God's Word.

How can you disarm the disunity and division that so easily disrupts us in our homes, in our church, and in our community? What are the tools that protect us from getting distracted from the wrong fight?

1. A **Big Heart** (4:1).
2. A **Warm Embrace** (4:2-3).
3. A **Lasting Joy** (4:4-5).

God wants to carry us forward in this community. He wants to fill this place with people who love him. He wants to bear fruit through us. Now we can say: it's not about numbers. And you are right. But it is about people: people with souls. They are dying and going to hell. The Father in heaven has sent his Spirit into our hearts to pour out his love to this lost and dying world.

Do you want a church that moves when God moves? Then we can't be blocked from blessing by interpersonal conflict.

We need to learn to **fight for God** and **not with each other**. In Philippi, you have two women who were once warriors for Christ who are now warring with each other. And the first thing Paul says is: you have to have a **big heart**.

1. A BIG HEART (4:1).

Listen to Paul talk about how he personally thinks about the church at Philippi. Paul's a man who's been hurt a lot. He's been stoned. He's been falsely accused by churches. He's been hurt in so many ways by the churches. But he's a man with a gigantic heart. This is a major mark of how the world knows that we belong to Jesus. "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35).

Paul loves his fellow believers in Philippi. Listen to him.

A BIG HEART BECAUSE OF OUR FAMILY

4:1a | Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for...

The love is genuine because this is Paul's forever family. Part of our **justification** is not only that we've been counted as righteous in God's law court. It's more than that. The result of justification is an **adoption** proceeding. We have been adopted in to God's forever family. That'll make your heart grow big!

My Brothers and Sisters

He calls them family: my brothers (and sisters). Is there a more intimate term than calling each other family. Ten billion years from now, we will be family. Let's treat each other as family.

Family means vulnerability. I usually lock my front door. Actually, we have several locks, how about you? But you: my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, you are welcome into my house. No locks for you. You are my family. I love you. I esteem you.

Whom I Love and Long for

God has adopted us into his family. He has given us a love far greater than anything in this selfish world. I not only **love** you my brothers and sisters, I **long for** you. Your fellowship enriches me and builds my faith up. I grow closer to Christ when I am with you. I learn more about his beauty and riches in your fellowship. We are family: forever and ever we will always be God's children. That makes my heart grow big for you.

Application

Now if we really are brothers and sisters, you can't close your heart to me. I cannot close my heart to you, amen? Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (**Mt 25:40**). Instead of gossip or hurt or simply ignoring one another, we are called to fellowship and work together. Let's bring heaven down to earth. We can't live according to earth's rules. When disharmony comes, let's be bold and forgive. Let's be strong and move on. Let's be family and build each other up. We can't just pick and choose which part of the body of Christ we will fellowship with. Think through the congregation here at Living Hope. Who are you not treating as a brother or a sister? Is your heart growing smaller and smaller when it comes to one person or another?

I challenge you, if the Holy Spirit truly lives in you, stop resisting his conviction. Stop resisting his movement on your heart to love that person who hurt you in this church. They hurt your feelings. They gossiped about you. They have ignored you. In the name of Jesus forgive them. By the power of the resurrection, go to them today. Love on them today with Calvary love. You may need to tell them: "I forgive you." You may have some reconciliation that needs to happen. Do it.

As you do it to them, Jesus says, "You do it unto me." Are you ignoring Jesus? Are you putting off Jesus? If that person who hurt your feelings is family with Jesus then they are family with you. Stop living in disharmony. Stop living with a small heart. Get it right, child of God. Stop cherishing that sin of bitterness.

Husbands and wives, are you living in harmony at home? Stop cherishing hurt. If Jesus loves your spouse, you should too. If Jesus laid down his life for your spouse, you should do the same. If Jesus has tender emotions toward your spouse, you should also ask God to make your heart tender.

You can't just ignore a brother or sister in Christ. You are commanded to love them and long for them.

A BIG HEART BECAUSE OF OUR FUTURE

4:1b | Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown...

When he calls them his “joy and crown”, he’s thinking of the tribunal of Christ, when we all see Jesus. Paul had planted and watered, but God gave the increase (1 Cor 3:6). Paul will receive a **crown** just for planting and watering, like all of us. Here the “**crown**” is the *stephanos*, the wreath awarded to the victor in the games (not the *diadēma*, the symbol of sovereignty).⁴ As we invest our lives in those around us and we see God work, we will receive a reward.

Don’t miss this: the reward is not something that will pass away. Paul is saying that the Philippians themselves are his reward. On the day Jesus returns, their lives will be totally healed and restored. That will be reward enough for Paul. And that is our reward together: to see each one of us perfect in his sight when he comes again! If that doesn’t grow your heart to be so big, I don’t know what will. That means your neighbor sitting next to you is your crown and your reward. **Turn to your neighbor and say: you are my crown.**

A BIG HEART BECAUSE OF OUR FOCUS: STAND FIRM!

Our focus is standing firm in Christ so that he can carry us forward. Standing firm never means standing still. As Christians, we don’t want to be stagnant. God is never stagnant. He carries us forward when we focus on him. He wants us to find healing and power in our focus on him.

4:1c | Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

What does it mean to “stand firm...in the Lord”? In one sense it means it’s in the power of **the Lord**, not in myself. This is very similar language to Ephesians 6. We are to put on the whole armor of God. Ephesians 6:13-14, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”¹⁴ Stand therefore...” and put on the...

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Gospel Shoes (Boots)
- Shield of Faith
- Helmet of Salvation
- Sword of the Spirit (Word of God)

The imagery of **standing firm** is **gaining ground in victory**. We stand firm in the Lord who gives us the victory. He’s already won!

So many Christians don’t realize everything we need for victory in this life is something you already possess in Christ, you just need to learn how to use it.

⁴ F. F. Bruce, *Philippians*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Peabody, MA: Baker Books, 2011), 137.

Sweet Spot for a Clutch

It's like the sweet spot for the clutch of a manual transmission for a car. It's hard at first. But you need to get habituated to it. It's hard to go from neutral to first gear. And then learn all the gears. But once you do, you get used to it.

Christians love holiness like race car drivers love speed!

God is on the move. He wants you to be happy in him. He never changes. If you want to be happy, you have to submit and stand firm in the sovereign Savior who loves you and gave his life for you. Surrender to wherever he is taking you. He's working it all out for your good and his glory.

We can never compromise with the enemy. He wants to get you off that "sweet spot" of holiness. He wants to strip you of your Holy Spirit power. We can't use his tools of bitterness and hate and grudge holding. Our enemy is the world, the flesh and the devil. This is war. The enemy doesn't want to play nice. He wants to destroy you. You cannot negotiate with a terrorist because he wants to devote you to destruction. We must devote our enemies to destruction. So Paul says in Ephesians – "Stand Firm". We might say today: "Don't retreat!"

We Christians are like soldiers who refuse to turn back. We cannot retreat. We have an enemy that God wants to win over to himself. We can't have friendly fire if we are going to convert the enemy. The Spirit says: stand firm.

I want you to understand that **standing firm does not mean standing still**. We need to stand firm in the Lord because indeed, he is carrying us forward. A focus on the Lord gives us spiritual stability.

Stuck in your Spiritual Life?

Are you stuck in your walk with God?

Some people are stuck because they are **lost and dead in their sins**. They have no real walk with God because they have never been born again. The Spirit says, "stand firm in the Lord." You can't stand firm unless you are first in Christ. Remember this: there's no meaningful change without Christ in your life.

- So you **know Christ**. What are some things that slow you down spiritually? You may be stuck or spiritually unstable for a number of reasons.
- You know Christ but you have a **sin** in your life that is holding you hostage.
- You've **tried** everything but you don't know what to do.
- There's an important **relationship** in your life that brings you constant hurt.
- Perhaps you have **isolated** yourself from others, and you have little to no **fellowship**.
- Maybe you have **distorted thinking** like a bad record that plays over and over again.
- Perhaps you have **impaired hearing**, and the Word no longer has its impact because you are overwhelmed with the **background noise of fear, or anger**. You've lost your focus.

The Solution to Get Unstuck: Christ

Whatever the reason your stuck, **right now is your moment** to get unstuck. You don't have to be stuck anymore. Whatever your problem, Jesus is the answer. "Stand firm in the Lord!" Stop trying to change yourself. You say: *that's too simple*. Nope. It's not. That's your problem. You think you need to jump through hoops. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Mt 6:33).

Seek Christ through all the means of grace.

If it's **isolation**: experience Christ in Christian fellowship.

If it's a **sin** in your life: experience Christ in heartfelt repentance in prayer. Christ has set you free. Experience Christ as the good Shepherd in Christian counsel and accountability.

If it's a **hurtful relationship**, bring Christ there. You may need a counselor or a pastor. Get Christ in that relationship. That's actually what Paul is about to say.

He brings up two women in the church who can't seem to get along: **Euodia** and **Syntyche**, otherwise affectionately known as: "You Odious" and "Soon Touchy." These are actually two very honored, very godly women in the congregation, but they've gotten their eyes off of Christ.

Transition: That brings us to a second mark of spiritual stability: not only do we need a **big heart**, we need a **warm embrace**.

2. A WARM EMBRACE (4:2-3).

Most of the time, spiritual instability comes because of the inability to get along with other saints. We need to learn to **fight for God** and **not with each other**. We need to have thick skin and a very big heart. With that big heart, we need to embrace each other as family, and in union with Jesus Christ.

Marks of True Disciples: Love, Unity

In the last point, we noticed it was **love** by which the world would know we are Jesus' disciples. That's what Paul is saying in Philippians 4:1. But now he gives another mark of a healthy vibrant church that reaches the world: **unity**. At the bare minimum, it means that when the general calls us to fight for him, we will miss the call if we are fighting against ourselves.

4:2-3 | I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

EMBRACE IN THE LORD

4:2 | I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

Unity in the church comes because of our union with Jesus Christ. One of the main themes of the New Testament is that we are in union with Christ. We are in Christ. That

happens because God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are dwelling in me. We are indwelt by the Triune God.

Jesus Prayer for Unity

Jesus said, it is not only our love that will show his glory to the world, but also our unity will show the glory of God to the world. Jesus said, “...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” (Jn 17:21).

Fighting for the Fun of It

You can have love without unity, but you cannot have real unity without love. I loved my friends when I was a kid, but there were times **we did not get along with each other.**

When I was a kid, my friends and I would go to the **wrestling mats** at the Oak Forest Park District and fight it out. When I moved down south, it seemed like we boys fought for the fun of it. We’d hit each other and wrestle, and then we’d be best of friends. That’s kinda how boys are.

But you know, we fight in the church sometimes. This little church in Philippi was graced by two magnificent women, **Euodia** and **Syntyche**, whom Paul memorably described here as having “labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life” (3:3). These two were no weak sisters by any means because Paul’s description employed a gladiatorial term, better rendered as “**fought side by side with me.**”⁵ These women had been in the same conflict with Paul against the evil one, and now they were fighting with one another, so much so they need **an apostolic rebuke.**

Their fighting was holding back the forward progress of the Gospel. These women have done fantastic work with Paul and Clement, but they seem to be willing to halt the work of the Lord by their disunity. They’re thinking of themselves.

Look at the history of **Euodia** and **Syntyche**, they worked together in spreading the Gospel. Most of all their “names are written in the book of life.” Yet conflict is now defining the relationship.

Moving Mountains

Sometimes our conflicts can be mountains that get in the way of what God wants to do in our lives. When I was in Spain we would have to drive through the Pyrenees Mountains on the border of Spain and France. Anytime there was an accident, traffic came to a standstill. This happened quite often. Finally they built a superhighway above the mountains, and this never happened again. God says there is a way to drive on the superhighway.

I love the verse in Matthew 17...

⁵ Markus Bockmuehl. *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: A & C Black Limited, 1998), 258.

MATTHEW 17:20 | If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will **say to this mountain**, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

Can I ask you a serious question?

WHAT DISAGREEMENT IS HOLDING YOU BACK FROM GOD'S KINGDOM PURPOSES?

Are you willing to walk by faith to remove those mountains of strife and disunity in your life? Do you just say you believe the Bible or do you really live by it? Well here are a few steps of obedience when there is spiritual instability in your life between you and another brother or sister in the Body.

How do we remove these mountains of disunity?

1. Go straight to Jesus.

When we are offended, the first thing we need to do is to go straight to the Lord. "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil" (Eph 4:26-27). "When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psa 61:2, KJV). You've got to get your heart right with the Lord or you are just going to pour gasoline on the fire. Let the Lord give you a love for the one who has offended you. At the very least, you are to love your enemies.

2. Deal with your own heart: repent & forgive

And while you are with Jesus, get your heart right. Deal with your heart. There is probably a very big log in your eye. That's how Jesus describes it.

"How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Mt 7:4-5).

My own heart is the problem (Jer 17:9). I cannot lean to my own understanding (Pro 3:5-6). Where does conflict come from? James 4:1, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your **passions** are at war within you?" You do what you do because you want what you want.

"What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person..." (Mt 15:18-20). Sinful desires come from the heart. We do what we do because we want what we want. The only thing that can change our heart (and the desire therein) is the Word of God.

When you are offended, go to the Lord right away. Repent first of your own sin.

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mt 6:14-15).

3. If you need to talk, have the right attitude.

Often we are willing to talk, but we end up making the matter worse. "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Pro 18:19, NKJV).

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3).

4. *If you know someone is offended, fix it.*

If you suspect you may have offended someone, it’s a good idea to find out – and fix it! In fact, Jesus thinks you need to tend to that before you worship him. “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:23-24).

5. *If you need help, get it.*

Get help when you need it. If you’ve tried to reconcile and it hasn’t worked, don’t give up. In fact we are commanded to bring another person into it if things aren’t working. Look over at Matthew 18:15.

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Mt 18:15-17).

You may have to get a mentor, elder, or biblical counselor involved, but work at it until it is resolved. This is not just a suggestion, but a command.

EMBRACE HELP

I want you to see that Paul specifically says we all need help. These godly women need help. As disciples of Christ we should embrace help. **You can’t live the Christian life alone.**

We all need help in the realm of conflict. He himself is helping them. Look how he helps them: he points their gaze to the cosmic realm: “they labored (literally fought) side by side with me in the Gospel...whose names are written in the book of life.”

4:3 | Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

They need to stop fighting on earth so they can fight for the cosmic, Kingdom realm. These women need help. They need a reminder to set their minds on things above (Col 3:1).

Paul is saying: There’s a place. There’s a Person in whose presence things don’t just stay the same. There’s a place where someone sits on a throne who says, “Behold I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). Do you know what that means? In the Lord’s presence, things don’t just stay the same. They get **stronger**. They get **newer**. They get fresher. They get brighter every second. Forever. Triple every second, and on it goes.⁶ We need to get into

⁶ Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

God's presence and see where he moves us. Let go of these "lesser things." Why are you so worried about these lesser things? Do you have hurt? Get into God's presence. Be renewed. Be strengthened.

Transition: That's actually how Paul closes this section in Philippians 4:4-5. He says whatever you do: rejoice in the Lord! I love that command. God wants your happiness.

3. A LASTING JOY (4:4-5).

4:4-5 | Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

Paul basically says in verse 4: stop your pity party. Get your eyes off yourself and get your eyes on Christ. It's a flesh defeating focus!

JOY IN CHRIST ENRICHES MY OWN HEART

Look at this command:

4:4 | Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

We've got to get our focus off of self and onto the Lord. Joy does not come by focusing on personal hurts. Bitterness never brought anyone closer to Jesus.

I want a **Psalm 115:1** kind of heart. It reads, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to *your* name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." You can be sure when ministry or anything becomes about our **personal hurts**, we are seeking our own glory when we need to be seeking God's greatness and power.

When we start **focusing on the Lord**, something amazing begins to happen in our hearts: we begin to rejoice! Focus on his love for you. Isn't it amazing "there is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1)?

Testimony: I'm so glad he saved my soul. He's the Lord of creation, the God of beauty and majesty, the Savior of humanity. He is awesome in power and glory. He used all that power to pour out his love for me. I've got so much to rejoice about, I don't have time for pity parties.

JOY IN CHRIST ENRICHES THE HEARTS OF OTHERS

Paul then moves from our *walk with God (rejoice)* to *our walk with other people* where he says: "be reasonable."

You can tell who is really rejoicing in the Lord by our personal relationships. That's what Paul says in verse 5. A person who really walks with the Lord has a reasonableness, a gentleness, a meek disposition that is unaffected by the drama and chaos of human interpersonal conflicts and offenses.

There're too many people that don't know Jesus for me to take offense and have self-pity! Listen to Paul's next instruction:

4:5 | Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

Here he directs our attention from the Lord, the source of our joy, to other people, who are often the source of our stress. The key term, which the ESV conveys as

“reasonableness,” which means: “clemency, graciousness, forbearance,” or even “magnanimity.”⁷ The term refers to the calm and kind disposition that enables a person to offer a nonviolent, even generous, response to others’ aggression. Aristotle explained this “gentle reasonableness” as *a willingness to forgo one’s own rights according to the letter of the law*.⁸

Here Paul expands the circle of those to be treated “gently” beyond the borders of the church. We are to display such forbearing kindness to “everyone,” including those who are making our lives miserable. As children of a Father who sends sunshine and rainfall on the just and the unjust (Mt 5:45), as brothers and sisters of the beloved Son who died for us while we were his enemies (Rom 5:10), believers should extend kindness rather than retaliation to those who harass and oppress them.⁹

JOY IN CHRIST ENCOURAGES US THAT TIME IS SHORT

Paul concludes this section with the most hopeful words in the Bible: “the Lord is at hand” (4:5). There’s coming a day when all conflict is ended. Don’t get hung up with conflict. Move on. Don’t get weighed down with bitterness. Look up! Look up saint! Your redemption is nearer than ever. He’s coming soon. Indeed, you can almost see him in the clouds: “The Lord is at hand!”

Conclusion: Uncle Lew’s Yacht

What is it that is holding you back? We are called to be fighting for the Lord not fighting with each other. Our enemy is the world, the flesh and the devil.

When I was a kid, my Uncle Lew had a big yacht that we would sail on Lake Michigan. He would take us to wonderful places on that yacht. We would see other boats. And sometimes we would go to another bay and stop and see the sights. There are so many things we saw. I could never have seen those marvelous places without Uncle Lew’s yacht.

One summer, we had to delay our sailing because there were some repairs to be made. The ship was leaking. My cousin Russ had to repair the ship.

God wants us to set ourselves for sailing. He wants to use you in ways both big and small. Are you ready to set sail? You can’t set sail if there’s a hole in your ship. Get things right today. Get that heart of yours repaired. God wants to use you. Let’s set sail!

⁷ BAGD, s.v. *epieikeia* and *epieikēs*, 292.

⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 5.10.8, cited in G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 288n40. See John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 611–12.

⁹ Dennis E. Johnson, *Philippians*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, 1st ed., Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 267–268.