



'Back to Basics for Believers Series'

Sermons in the Epistle to the Philippians

Message 21 – 'Let Peace Reign' **Philippians 4:2 - 5**

Paul deals directly with the major issue that has arisen within the Philippian church. Two women have caused a division and as a result it is harming the work, and this grieves Paul. So he continues to call them to peace, and take the right steps to peace. In the very first part of this chapter, Paul speaks of how peace comes through standing fast, and yet as we can see in these verses, he speaks of some further steps to peace:

- 1. Peace Comes Through Unity and Agreement in the Lord** - It is very clear from the outset that Paul is referring to Christian unity. He is pointing to unity that can only come between those who have truly been brought by grace into the family of God. Paul with authority, yet with much love and concern, pleads with them to stop, and to get their minds together in the Lord. He wants them to focus solely on the Lord, to put this dispute behind them and throw themselves into the work of the Lord. When we realise the depth of the work that the Lord has given, there should be no time for bickering. It is a plea to operate in humility and self-sacrifice amongst each other. This can only happen when we have a real, personal, intimate walk with the Saviour. We cannot do this without Him.
- 2. Peace Comes Through Rejoicing** - The implication of Paul's statement here is such that he is saying that to rejoice one should not rely on circumstances. Rejoicing having the same root as joy means that it is God-given. Joy is the Christian virtue, and completely different to the circumstantial happiness that the world holds dear. Happiness passes, but joy is lasting, why? It is based on the unchanging, eternal, gracious God who sustains His children. Joy wells up inside the believer as the Spirit dwells within, it is not based on emotion and circumstance, and even when things happen that cause us to be unhappy, joy is a residing and abiding out-working of the presence of the Spirit within. The Christian filled with the spiritual fruit of joy will not look to cause disagreement and difficulty.
- 3. Peace Comes Through Gentleness** - The third step to peace is through gentleness, a strong gentleness that is also characterised by moderation. When Paul is speaking in this verse, he is also telling the Philippians not to be overtly rigorous in unimportant matters. Paul is not talking about doctrine in this verse, just like he was not talking about doctrine when he referred to the mind of Christ. He is telling the Philippians, and consequently us, not to be so hard about peripheral matters that it harms other believers. Paul is saying that the believers are to be gentle and forbearing to all men, including unbelievers, those within and without the church. This point is so important, that we must be gentle and forbearing with all men. Also the reason we must be gentle to all men is because the Lord is at hand. He is ready to return and His coming is near. We need to remember that our only hope is Jesus Christ and his dealing gently with us by His grace.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs