

The Gospel According to Philippians
Gospel Reconciliation
Philippians 3:20 – 4:3 (Ephesians 2:8-16)
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Christ is so opposed to division in the church that for 2000 years he has made a public example of Euodia and Syntyche for their failure to get along.

I) What's wrong between Euodia and Syntyche?

A) We don't know

Lack of specificity leaves us no wiggle room

B) Is the problem that E and S don't agree on everything?

Nothing inherently wrong with differences in priorities, vision, etc.

C) The heart of the problem

Failure to navigate the differences *in the Lord* (v. 2).

II) Why so wrong?

A) Division obscures the heart of the Lord

4:1: My brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown...my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche...

Whose words are these, most deeply?

Experiment: Think of someone in the church whom you do not like...

One of the only places where unbelieving friends get to see Jesus is in the way we love each other

B) Division denies the work of the Lord

4:1: ...my brothers, who I love and long for, my joy and crown...my beloved.

4:3: ...my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

What did it mean for Paul, a Pharisee, to speak of Gentiles this way?

- God was bringing history to its long-awaited climax
- His ancient promise to bind up the world's social wounds was being answered.

- *Ephesians 2:13-16*

III) What do we do?

A) Make the first move

v. 2: I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche...

B) Get help

v.3: ...true companion, help these women

C) Remind yourself of who you are and will be

v.3: ...whose names are in the book of life

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Do you have a friend who has no interest in finding out about Jesus because of the unloving behavior of Christians? What might you say to kindle or rekindle that person's interest?
- 2) God saw to it that two women would be "called out" publicly for 2000 years (their names are in our text) for their failure to get along. Why?
- 3) Reflect on the following statement: "When it comes to differences in the church, the important question is never, 'How can we make ourselves into clones of each other?'" It is rather, 'How do we cope with and process the inevitable differences of opinion and philosophy that arise as we live and work together? Do we process them "in the Lord" (Phil 4:2), or do we allow the differences to become personal—the grounds upon which we begin to distrust each other, or make judgments about each other, or pigeon-hole each other?'"
- 4) What does it mean to "agree in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2) if it does not mean to agree about everything (which it doesn't)? Phil 2:1-11 should help you answer.
- 5) Paul's heart attitude towards his readers (Phil 4:1) reveals the heart of Jesus. Think of a Christian you don't like, or are afraid of, and reflect upon the facts (i) that Phil 4:1 describes Jesus attitude toward that person and (ii) that Jesus lives in you and for that reason your attitude should be like his. What are you going to do about this?
- 6) Read over Ephesians 2:16-19, noting the tenses of the verbs Paul uses to describe the effect of Christ's work. Reflect in the light of this on the following: "To fight with each other in the church, to permit our differences to erupt into divisions, is to laugh at, to despise and scorn, what God in Christ has accomplished at unimaginable cost to himself. It is to declare to the world that nothing happened on Good Friday, that God gave his Son in vain, that there is no social hope for the world. And this is a lie. It is also an expression of deep and thoughtless ingratitude."
- 7) In Phil 4:2-3 Paul pulls out all the stops to advance healing between the women. Paul speaks even-handedly to them both, making clear that each of them is responsible to make the first move. He calls for third party help. What might you do to "pull out the stops" to advance peace in the church?
- 8) When Paul writes that believers are all in "the book of life" he reminds us of something very encouraging. No matter how problematic our social life may be, we will never have to claw our way by good social behavior into Christ's beloved church. We are now, already, his "beloved, his longed for ones, his crown and joy"—and so are those we are having a hard time with. And this means that we can run the risk, as we seek peace, of being rebuffed or yelled at or thought a fool. Thank the Lord for this.