

**Philippians**  
**“Living above the Clouds”**

**III. Main Teaching: D. 4:1-19 Joy in spite of anxiety**

**1. 4:1-9 God’s peace**

**4:1-5**

**“Don’t Worry Be Happy”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-5 People**

**I. Intro.**

Having already spoken to us about:

- 1 Joy in spite of circumstance
- 2 Joy in spite of people
- 3 Joy in spite of things (religion)

Paul now tackles the fourth and final thing that can rob us of our joy in Christ, **ANXIETY**. The word for “*anxious*” means to be pulled in different directions. The English root for the word “*worry*” means to strangle. Worry and anxiety is a great thief of joy but it does little good to tell a person not to worry because for the most part anxiety as a thief is an inside job! Dr. Walter Cavert reported a survey on worry that indicated that only 8 percent of the things people worried about were legitimate matters of concern! The other 92 percent were imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which the people had no control anyway. Worry is the interest we pay on the debt of unbelief with which we have mortgaged life! The antidote is to “*Turn your cares to prayers and your problems to praise!*” Thus the antidote to anxiety is a secure mind!

**II. Vs. 1-5 People**

Vs. 1 The use of the word “*therefore*” is a transitional word that is used to link two thoughts. **We must run to lose our religion but we must stand fast if we are to rid our self of anxiety but both are done in a relationship with Christ.**

One of the secrets of maintaining our joy in spite of anxiety is learning to stand still in your relationship while everything within you is screaming at you to RUN! The Christian life is like a cable car that is running up and down hills all day long but without any power of their own. Hidden under the street is a cable which the “Grip Man” with his levers must pull back to take hold of the cable in order to be moving. The car without the cable “stands firm” as it is the cable that is mobile. The Christian life is victoriously able to move forward as well as stand still all because invisibly it remains resting upon our cable in Jesus. Our race is gripping Jesus as we conquer the hill of religion and resting as we face the obstacles of anxiety. I believe Paul speaks of **three things that can cause the believer anxiety in our life and he gives us how our standing in Christ will deliver us from anxiety:**

- a. Vs. 2-5 People
- b. Vs. 6-7 Personality
- c. Vs. 8-9 Perspective

Vs. 2-5 **PEOPLE**: In the Church at Philippi there were two great ladies named Euodia and Syn...ty...che. We know these were special gals as their names mean “*fragrance*” and “*fortunate*”. We aren’t told what the situation was but something had happened in their relationship that caused as “*stink*” in their fragrance and made them “*less fortunate*” to be around. The fact that Paul is mentioning this suggests that the spat between these two was threatening the unity of the body of Christ in Philippi. It hadn’t caused a church split yet but folks were picking sides and anxiety and tension was in the air. So Paul offers them **two things they needed to do in order to rid themselves of the stinky odor of anxiety between people.**

1. Vs. 2-3 “**Be of the same mind in the Lord**”: If Paul only had said, “*Be of the same mind*” this passage would have been impossible as both of these ladies could have said, “*We aren’t going to see eye to eye on this subject*”. Paul isn’t suggesting compromise on our view point instead he is telling them that they need to seek unity on what they have in common instead of focusing on what they disagree on. You may be thinking that with that brother or sister in Christ you have nothing in common but that isn’t true as in Christ we always have Jesus in common. So when anxiety arises in our church relationships we must agree to get together in Christ and give our differences to Jesus. How can we accomplish this? Paul offers **three things** in verse 3:

- a. **Mediation**: As Paul was dictating this letter he must have turned and spoke to someone in the room as we read “*I urge you also, true companion, help these women*”. We aren’t told the identity of “*true companion*” but seeing that Paul was writing this letter to be sent back by Epaphroditus (2:25) I personally believe that it was him that Paul was speaking too when he said those words. At any rate Paul is suggesting that there was a need for “*mediation*” to come to these two ladies and get them together to settle this issue. I think that can be of great help in the body of Christ as we are to take Jesus’ side instead of picking sides of two people that should be coming together in Jesus, instead of dividing over their differences. There will be times when though we should be able to come together in Christ we will need the help of our fellow brothers and sisters.
- b. **Service**: Next Paul reminds them that **they had forgotten that they were serving Christ not their differences**. Division always has as its first casualty, “**service**”! Paul says to them, “*Ladies,... have you forgotten that you were involved with me and Clemet and the rest of the team in sharing the Good News about Jesus?*” When people are causing you anxiety you can bet that satan is behind it as he wants to put a halt to the work of sharing Jesus with those who need to hear about him. So he plants some division, a disagreement about something minor then feeds it in our minds until it consumes us and we stop the work of the gospel because we just can’t work with that person. In Nehemiah 6:3, Nehemiah responded to a request by Sanballat and Tobiah who were attempting to stop the work of rebuilding the wall at Jerusalem with the words, “*I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?*” Dear ones never let something so small stop something so great!
- c. **Big picture**: Finally notice that Paul says that all those believers who these two ladies new along with themselves are in the “**Book of Life**.” Here they were participating in division that wasn’t going to exist in heaven, **they weren’t going to be able to avoid each other in eternity, divide over some little issue while standing before the throne of God**. Paul is subtly letting them know that their anxiety over each other has blinded them to the “**bigger picture**” that Jesus has broken down all the walls that we erect to keep folks from us. So while we may be tempted to build our

house of sticks and stones it won't be going with us in heaven, so why not tear down those walls now? I can't wait to get to heaven and see all those folks that through our church history divided and separated, together holding hands singing united in praise to Jesus. The tragic truth is many would rather wait to experience this when they could be enjoying it now!

2. Vs. 4 “***Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice***”: The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing Paul tells them to do to rid themselves of the stinky odor of anxiety between people to “*rejoice in the Lord*”. ***Joy is a choice and no one can steal your joy, only you can give it up!*** Everything and everyone that comes into your life, (*even those irritating folks and unpleasant disagreements*) are allowed by the Lord to reveal something to you about your own heart and give you an opportunity to grab hold of Jesus! Notice that Paul isn't saying that you need to “*rejoice in the situation*” or “*rejoice in the unpleasantness of disagreements*”; no he is saying that you can always “*rejoice in the Lord*”. Ok pastor what about when you get angry with this person and they continue to harass you over and over. Well remember that underneath you undergirding your life is Jesus, He is holding you together so grab hold of Him and allow Him to move you off of anger to the place of peace and joy and remain standing fast upon Him. I'm saying that ***you can't*** but I am saying that ***Jesus can*** so take a grip and stand firm. Now notice that Paul says, “***Again I say rejoice***”! I think Paul understood that even after we do this when people are causing us anxiety that we can begin to “*slip*” back into this very quickly so we will need to be resetting ourselves back into joy. Paul doesn't say, “***Well if rejoicing in the Lord doesn't work try***\_\_\_\_\_.” Instead he says, “***When you begin to slip back into anxiety because of people, repeat the first step as often as needed!***”

Vs. 5 Paul gives one final exhortation to these two ladies in verse 5 by letting them know two important things:

1. “*Let your gentleness be known to all men*”: The first thing Paul wanted to remind these two was that what was going to show that they were right on an issue was NOT the force of their words but **the love in their character.** Oh how many times the Church has made this error thinking that the force of our argument is to be found in our division instead of the love that ought to be demonstrated through our actions. Saint's any opinion, doctrine or teaching that makes Jesus greater and me less and more dependent upon Him, more loving towards

all things that He loves is a right one to be passionate about!

2. *“The Lord is at hand”*: The second thing that Paul wants these two ladies to realize that they need to deal with this now not later as the Lord is at hand. Procrastination often links with pride to keep us in anxiety over people and Paul admonishes these two to deal with it now as the Lord is coming back soon!

Worry and anxiety from the time of the fall of Adam and Eve have found a home in human hearts. Anxiety is powerful to disintegrate the human life and rob us of joy in Christ. Certainly there are outside circumstances that feed our fears but we also have the Word of God that is a constant reminder for us followers of Christ to stop worrying. Though the song made popular by Bob Marley taken from the Indian mystic Meher Baba phrase *“Don’t Worry Be Happy”* seeks to lay claim on this admonishment it originated right here in Philippians as Paul not only admonishes Christians he gives them the reason why this is possible.