**PHILIPPIANS**

Leader Notes - 4:2-4:23

1. 4:2 Disagreements happen in the church. See Acts 15:36-41. What do you suppose Paul learned from his disagreement with Barnabas? What is good about his appeal in verse 2? What incentive is he holding before them in verse 2?

**Here on earth, also in the visible Christian church, we are all sinners, living and working with sinners, and sooner or later sin is going to affect our interpersonal relationships. In the carrying out of the congregation’s activities, sinful human beings with strong opinions and forceful personalities are inevitably going to clash. Something very minor might be the trigger. Sharp words are spoken. Feelings are hurt. Grudges are held. The result is lingering bitterness and factions that can truly disturb a congregation and hinder its witness and its work.**

1. 4:3 In this verse he uses the phrase “at my side in the cause of the gospel.” How might that motivate these ladies to work on reconciling? How does it encourage the other workers to feel like partners in helping the ladies to come to some agreement?

**These two women must have always proved to be true and reliable members and church workers. The Apostle does not want his readers to overlook this.**

1. 4:3 How is the phrase “whose names are in the book of life” the ultimate motivation for unity among them?

**By this Paul is saying that these women are saved for eternity. That should help them focus on what would help others to be saved and, then, overlook their earthly differences.**

1. 4:5 In difficult times, our joy is not always visible to others; yet acts of gentleness to others can be seen. What is the value of “gentleness” in our lives? What are some situations where might practice gentleness?

**The Greek word “gentleness” here is one that cannot really be reproduced by a single word in English. Expressions that come close to reflecting its meaning are “bigheartedness” and sweet reasonableness.” What Paul is saying here is that Christians ought to be people who would much rather suffer wrong than inflict it. Where others loudly demand their rights, believers will gladly yield theirs. Christians will make the interests of the weak and helpless their concern. They patiently yield to others as long as such yielding does not violate their Christian principles.**

1. 4:6 “Anxious” here means self-centered, counterproductive worry. How can the ideas shared in the rest of the verse be helpful in getting rid of anxiety? What are some things that you do to get over anxiousness?

**Where there is joy, there is no anxious care. Joy expresses itself in confident prayer. All that a Christian desires and cares for, especially such things that cause him anxiety and uneasiness, he brings before God in prayer. How he comes to be so fortunate is shown in the next verse.**

1. 4:7 Peace of God” is not merely a psychological state of mind, but an inner tranquility based on peace with God – the peaceful state of those whose sins are forgiven. How can we receive this wonderful gift?

**The apostle tells them and us that, God’s peace stands guard at the door of the believers heart. God’s peace standing guard keeps believers steadfastly clinging to Christ. It prevents care from wearing on their hearts and keeps unworthy thoughts from disturbing them. By trust and prayer believers enter the impregnable fortress of God’s peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, a fortress from which nothing can dislodge them.**

1. 4:8-9 What are some daily applications you can make from the items listed in these two verses? How does “And the God of peace will be with you” show itself in our everyday lives?

**Paul understood the influence of one’s thoughts on one’s life. What a person allows to occupy his mind will sooner or later determine his speech and his action. The combination of virtues listed in vv. 8–9 is sure to produce a wholesome thought pattern, which, in turn, will result in a life of moral and spiritual excellence.**

1. 4:10-13 What concepts are there in these verses that speak to relying on the Lord for everything we need? What can you learn from this in your daily life?

**The Apostle has not only a wonderful knowledge and understanding of what is proper in God’s kingdom, but he has also the ability to conduct himself accordingly. However, in himself resides no such knowledge or ability. In all humility he confesses these have been bestowed upon him through Christ.**

**The secret of being content is a union with the living, exalted Christ. It is also the source of Paul’s abiding strength.**

1. 4:14-17 Why is giving so beneficial to not only the receiver but to the giver as well? How have you experienced that in your life?

**When we give we are blessed beyond anything we could imagine. This comes about in many different ways, often not having to do with money.**

1. 4:18-20 The phrase “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice” has the OT background of a sacrifice that offered thanksgiving and praise. At the temple, sacrifices were made with sweet-smelling spices to remind the people that God was well pleased. It was not with the sacrifice itself that pleased God. It was with the people’s appeal to His mercy that made sacrifices sweet. How do the things Paul says and alludes in these verses make the activities of the Philippians smell sweat to God?

**He calls their gift a fragrant odor that is well-pleasing and an acceptable offering to God. What amazing dignity resides in the common gifts of sincere Christians!**

1. 4:21-23 Why is what Paul says in these verses so important for us to remember and imitate?

**Every saint, every member of the Philippian congregation, is remembered in the final salutation of the apostle. Being believers, they are saints, cleansed and sanctified by the blood of Christ. The brethren in Rome also wished to be remembered. Though they were not acquainted personally with the Philippian Christians, they felt themselves united with them in the fellowship of a common faith and love.**