*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 5 - 10

Philippians

**Monday, October 5 Philippians 4:2-3**

*“Settle your disagreement”*

 Paul continues his discussion of how the Philippians should “conduct” themselves “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (1:27). Once again he is concerned, as he has been throughout the letter, with the unity of the Philippians. Paul singles out two of his Philippian readers by name and asks them to adopt a common mind “in the Lord.” The unusual tactic of calling the women by name in a letter to be read to the entire congregation shows that Paul considered their disagreement to be significant.

 The manner in which Paul exhorts his readers is as significant as the content. (1) He addresses each woman equally, not taking sides but speaking to each participant in the dispute with equal firmness. (2) Paul asks for help from an unidentified third party, asking him to adjudicate the disagreement. (3) Paul mixes his firmness with commendation, speaking warmly of how they have joined with him in the cause of the gospel. He also places them in the company of Clement, who was probably a highly respected member of the Philippian congregation.

*Our relationships with each other in the church are in you, Lord. Amen.*

**Tuesday, October 6 Philippians 4:4-7**

*“His peace guard your hearts and minds”*

 These verses contain four admonitions: “rejoice,” “let your gentleness by evident,” “do not be anxious,” and “present your requests to God.” To “rejoice” is to show the joy you experience being a child of God. The term “gentleness” was often used of an attitude of kindness where the normal or expected response was retaliation. The words “be anxious” refers to being concerned about something unduly, more than is necessary. Because the Lord is near, we are to replace our anxiety with “requests presented to God,” sharing our concerns with him and trusting that he will give us what we need in our time of worry.

 The result of following these admonitions, and especially the fourth one of presenting our requests to God, is that the peace of God, which surpasses all our understanding, will stand like a protective guard over their hearts and minds. Since the peace mentioned here stands in contrast to the anxiety mentioned in verse 6, it is probably an inner sense of contentment supplied by God, one that affects both our emotions (heart) and intellect (mind).

*When I experience anxiety, Lord, I will prayerfully place the cause before you. Amen.*

**Wednesday, October 7 Philippians 4:8-9**

*“Think about these things”*

 The list of virtues that Paul asks the Philippians to think about is not a distinctively Christian list and could have been embraced by many right-thinking people in ancient times. Paul seems to place special emphasis on the breadth of these qualities by repeatedly using the indefinite adjective “whatever.” He tells the Philippians to look for the true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy everywhere around them and to ponder the things in which these qualities are exemplified.

 Paul goes on to say that the Philippians must also practice the distinctively Christian ethic they find exemplified in his teaching and conduct. He is reminding his readers both of his personal conduct while with them and of the Christian tradition passed on to them. The term “learned” refers to learning from someone else’s example. The term “received,” on the other hand, refers to the reception of a particular body of teaching, sometimes instruction specifically about how Christians should live.

*Though society sometimes seems hostile, Lord, it still contains good we can affirm. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 5 - 10

Philippians

**Thursday, October 8 Philippians 4:10-14**

*“You have always been concerned for me”*

 Paul faces the difficult balance of showing the Philippians his genuine appreciation for their financial support, both past and present, but of also showing that his work is neither dependent on nor motivated by this support. He does this through combining expressions of gratitude with qualifications designed to prevent misunderstanding. Paul begins in verse 10 with an exuberant expression of joy that the Philippians have again shown their concern for him. Previously, the Philippians had generously supplemented the income Paul earned in his tent making workshops during his ministry with other churches both in Macedonia and in Achaia (northern and southern Greece respectively).

 Despite this, Paul wants the Philippians to know that his joy does not depend on the alleviation of his physical discomfort; thus, although he is in prison, Paul says that he is not in need. He has learned to be content in every circumstance, finding the resource for this attitude not in himself but in the Lord, through whom he can face all things (verse 13).

*While we gratefully receive others’ help, Lord, you are our ultimate provider. Amen.*

**Friday, October 9 Philippians 4:15-20**

*“God will meet all your needs”*

 Paul was not interested in the gifts that the Philippians had sent for his own advantage, but for the Philippians’ spiritual advantage. Their generosity was a concrete demonstration that God was completing the good work that he had started in them when they believed the gospel (1:6). Still, he emphasizes his personal gratitude for their generous gifts. With a touch of friendly humor, Paul uses a technical term from the business world of his day, stating that he has received “full payment” for services rendered. They have gone above and beyond in their care for him.

 In response to these gifts, Paul says, God will meet all of the Philippians’ needs. As with God’s exaltation of Christ to the highest place in 2:9-11, this response is not recompense but God’s gracious and freely given blessing which addresses both physical needs and the spiritual need of being able to face all circumstances through the one who gives them strength. Paul ends his expression of gratitude to the Philippians for their partnership with a doxology (literally, “word of praise”), making the glory of God the goal of all ministry.

*You bless us, Lord, so we can be a blessing to others. Amen.*

**Saturday, October 10 Philippians 4:21-23**

 *“Greetings”*

 Paul closes his letter with what at first looks like an uninteresting greeting formula and a routine benediction, but in light of the letter’s two themes of internal unity in the face of dissension and outward steadfastness in the face of persecution, these seemingly humdrum features of the letter take on new meaning. Just as Paul stressed the unity of the congregation at the letter’s beginning when he addressed them as “all the saints in Christ Jesus,” so here at the letter’s conclusion he again stresses the equal worth before God of each member of the congregation.

 The greetings from Paul’s associates are likewise general and all-encompassing in nature. They come not only from the brothers with Paul – probably a reference to close coworkers, such as Timothy – but from all the saints in the area. Paul’s only effort to make distinctions in the greeting comes in the last phrase of verse 22, where he singles out the members of Caesar’s household for special attention. He does so to encourage the Philippians with the news that even some of the Roman emperor’s staff have turned to the gospel.

*We rejoice in you, Lord, for the gospel reveals your grace to our spirit. Amen.*