

# Standing Firm in the Lord

## Anthony Kim

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Go ahead and open with me to Philippians chapter 4 beginning in verse 1. And we're going to go through verse 5 this morning. So, Philippians chapter 4 beginning in verse 1 and through verse 5.

I want to ask a series of questions to kind of set our hearts to this message. First question is this. Is there something draining the life and vitality out of you? Are you spiritually drained this morning? Or are you spiritually dead this morning? Have your thoughts become poisoned, negative, and cynical? Because we live in a world that constantly saps our strength. Life's pressures, whether that be financial, whether it be physical or relational, all of those things go up and down, up and down. You can have great finances, great physical physique, great relationships, all that can collapse. They rise and fall. And those things act like a substance that dissolves our vitality.

Every day we encounter subtle yet persistent external forces, circumstances that daily distract us. And those pressures can gradually erode your hope. Your hope because the more you fixate on the temporal the current less hope. And so alongside these constant drains as it were, we can also be hit by sudden gust of temptation resembling violent short-lived storms in our lives coming at you left and right with unrelenting pressure to throw you off as it were on your foundation.

And invitedly what it does is physically it results in exhaustion. Constantly fighting, fighting, fighting, not doing, not doing, not doing. And then you are exhausted. That is not how Christians are to live. We're not to be on empty or how the world puts it, burned out.

But you see we often the reason why we can experience those is we focus on the how we can survive. But the more important question and I started the questions out this way are the why questions. Why? Why are you easily drained? Those are good questions to ask yourself because often by default we look for strength within ourselves. This is a result of sin. Independent, self-reliant, not needing God. And with that, we have a God that's there waiting for us, asking to rest in him who has all strength to keep you going and never ever give up.

The solution to our weariness is not merely to work harder in your own strength, but that we would abandon all of our own strength altogether. Because if we do so, we can avoid a lot of failure in our lives. The gospel is the thing that shifts this in our lives. The gospel. When we focus on the gospel, we don't see our works, we don't see our strength, we don't see our wisdom. It's all of God in Christ. So none of the personal exertion is there anymore as it were. It is God's limitless grace that is offered to us on a daily, if not moment-by-moment frequency.

So in this passage that we're going to see, the Apostle Paul demonstrates that the Lord Jesus is the source of our stability, our joy, and compassion. We're heading from the confines of a prison cell. While waiting trial, Paul remains remarkably joyful, remarkably filled with rejoicing, remarkably resolute with being in Christ and not based his life on external circumstances. His unshakable confidence stems not from his external situations because there is none. He has none of them, but from his deep rootedness in Christ.

The essence of this text is that spiritual stability is a gift, a gift rather than a personal achievement. God does not merely tell us to remain steadfast. He actively sustains us with his own power. And each of Paul's directives that we're going to see in this text is rooted in a central truth. And this is it. Spiritual endurance is not a human accomplishment but a God-given provision. It is gifts all around us waiting for us to just take. See, true spiritual life is located solely in Christ. Searching for it in other places inevitably results in a lack of firm footing, finances, physical relation, other relationships. Spiritual strength is found only in Christ. Seeking it elsewhere leads to instability immediately. So if there's instability in your life, it's due to your foundation. Where is your footing? Is it on the firm foundation? This is the heartbeat of the passage that we're going to go through. You see, God does not command us to stand fast by our own strength. He holds rather he holds us fast by his strength.

Everything Paul commands in verses 1-5 flow from this truth. So with that said, please stand out of respect for God's word and please follow along in your Bible as I read from Philippians chapter 4 beginning in verse 1-5.

Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodia and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow. Help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers whose names are written in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. This is God's word. You may be seated.

What we're going to see in verse one is that it is the Lord that holds us firm, steady. We see that this transition of therefore is what has followed in Philippians chapter 3 verses 20 to 21. And he starts then with saying my brethren dearly meaning very much the emphasis very much beloved and longed. This is an intense desire because they are loved by God. He can love them. And he says for my joy and crown which is the source of reward is the very people in the church of Philippi. That's his reward that he would see. We're going to see that they grow spiritually and mature in the Lord Jesus Christ. Third John 1:4 says this, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." In truth.

So, let's see these verses and see how tremendous of a way Paul deals with a situation that has arose that can divide and be causing division. You see, we stand because the Lord is standing with us. That's what we see here with stand fast. You see, it's the idea of advancing forward, not backwards. There is no idea of this notion that a Christian can go backwards and continue to stay that way. Once God has pointed us to Christ, we are advancing in our lives to become more and more like him.

And so that word soul right in front of stand fast is idea. What proceeds as a believer is that you follow Christ. So stand fast, he says. And in the Lord is important because as I mentioned, if you focus on the temporal, the financial, the physical and the relationships outside of Christ or any other relationship that is not of Christ, we are not in the Lord. He just wants us to focus on one person. And he says again, "My dearly beloved," repeats this important part of the text.

He is opening it up as like this. It's a beautiful thing. Many times in a wedding ceremony, someone would call my dearly beloved as an opening part of the ceremony. The idea is to remember who your first love is. Who brought you to the savior Jesus Christ. You see, dearly beloved would often be we are gathered here. So we are gathered here to remind ourselves as brothers and sisters in Christ who is the one we are to love who first loved us. And I love going to John 3:16. For God so loved the world and what did he do? He gave us his only begotten son. And that's the idea. He brought us to the great love of our lives. That is the one that sustains us and keeps us on the path of purity and of holiness and pleasing God.

And so this is vividly described here in this passage. He said, "The little things that are always at work upon us are the things that have most power to sweep us away. The little things in our lives, the day-to-day, the mundane things can easily take away and forget the importance of who we stand firm in, who we stand fast in. We're advancing not because of gaining more in our finances, gaining more in our strength physically, gaining more in our relationships. No, those are all temporal. As soon as you place your trust in those things, well, those things you have now put your whole belief that those things are

going to sustain you. And that's not what the Lord Jesus wants for us because he's the only one that has an unchanging nature. The opposite of finances and physique and relationships.

See, God does not leave his people to be swept away by the cares of this world. He anchors us in Christ. And this is what God uses in the Apostle Paul to state this that we are to stand fast, leaning our full weight on Christ. The idea is like a book stand and you place the book on it, it won't topple over. It's better than that. Not the best illustration, but the idea is that wall will not collapse. But you put instead your finances, your physical, your relationships, it will topple over. But he is always going to help you to stand because you're placing yourself on a wall. So when you place yourself directly on a wall, you're standing. You see that? You're aligned with that wall. It's he that is helping you to stand.

But as soon as you place that again with anything else besides him, you will fall. You will fall because those things change, don't they? They fluctuate. But Christ never fluctuates. He's always a firm foundation. He never moves. So the reality of our drifting then is because due to not trusting in him fully with our whole weight as it were on him. Why do we need to stand fast you ask? Because if you look for things outside of Christ, you will begin to drift and drift and drift and be further and further away from him. You will be feeling tossed to and fro. You will begin to sense a violent uncontrollable constant back and forth representing instability and uncertainty, being at the mercy of shifting circumstances, whether that be spiritual or intellectual or emotional. All of those to cause confusion.

Just think of a little boat as it were and you just want to go off on your own and the waves are coming and crashing. How do you think you feel in that boat? Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ is more like an ocean liner. Those waves can crash violently and you won't even feel a thing because he is the one that's keeping you stable, not you. Not you going off on your own as it were. You see, every wind of circumstances will say, "Anchor yourself here. Anchor yourself in your finances. Anchor yourself in your physical well-being. Anchor yourself in other relationships." But all of that, your job, your health, your reputation as it were, they are all sinking sand. They are all sinking sand because our identity is never meant to be on those things. Not on your job, not on your health, and not certainly in any other relationships. Ephesians 4:14 puts it this way, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. To deceive. What is that? It means you become vulnerable to manipulation. You become vulnerable to manipulation. Now you're trusting in external circumstances, trusting man instead of the Lord Jesus and his word. And you have essentially unanchored yourself and you have settled for the things that will go and move and drift and will ultimately you will not find the strength to continue.

So the motivation of love is here in this passage. That's why the apostle Paul uses it twice. Beloved, beloved, this passage is to explain you are being held by God's love. There is nothing greater. You're not going to find any greater love outside of God because why? God is love. God is love. And this verse commands us to stand fast. And it's the idea of reminding us that God has provided Christ as the only basis on which you can stand firmly. You cannot create your own spiritual strength. You cannot find it in anything else except in the presence of Christ. Stability is the very area that God wants us to be in.

Within the Christian experience, we can be found not by our own personal willpower but by having union with the Lord Jesus. And he is carrying us through every situation. Whatever storm you are in, whatever your finances are in, whatever your health is in, or your relationships of your lost loved ones, all of that if you just stay closely connected to the Lord Jesus Christ, it's like illustration is a piece of a sliver of a stone by that in itself is nothing. But if you attach that piece of stone and you apply it to the rock, what does that mean? It means that you are stable. Only if you attach yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Because a fragile piece of stone attached to a big rock changes the whole thing of that little sliver of stone. It's now becoming a solid rock that can endure all sorts of elements.

You can go out to many of these ocean piers. They don't move, do they? But you can see out in further and you can see the buoy and it is moving left and right, left and right. You see, that's a picture of us. We're founded in Christ and nothing can move us. Nothing ultimately, you might feel it temporarily, but ultimately you are eternally secure. You are eternally secure. God binds you to Christ. Once he puts you in Christ, once you're grafted in, nobody can remove you from him. God does this to us.

And so even though we live in this transient life, ultimately we know our souls are settled in Christ. We're settled in Christ. So we don't have to strive after things, as it were. He's going to help us. He's going to take care of us. He's going to help us to live anywhere we are. I often hear California is so hard to live in. It's so hard. It's going to be hard anywhere. I have not met a single person that says it's not hard. It's so easy to live here. It doesn't change your situation based on your location externally. It's your internal location. Where are you rooted in? Is it Christ or anything in this world? Doesn't matter. They will always go up and down. They will keep you unstable. So why trust in the things of this world?

You see, it is God who sustains you in Jesus Christ. He acts as the master sculptor of your life and he chisels all the flaws, the areas that are flawed in our lives and he finishes you up into a masterpiece. Ephesians 2:10 says this, "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." That word workmanship is derived from the word *poiema* which means poem and it literally means you are God's poem and that it implies that he's creating you for an

intentional purpose of making you more and more like Christ. He's chiseling areas in your life that doesn't conform to Christ. And it hurts. It hurts your pride. It hurts you physically because now he takes away those things that you desire in the flesh that are not good and he anchors you into the things that are good, the good works. And the idea of this passage refers back to the life of Job. Who was the one that allowed Job to experience what he had to experience where things had to be taken out of his life. We don't know exactly why it was done that way, but it was done for a purpose in his life. And many times God has to strip away, chisel away areas that don't conform to the things of God. And if we just simply allow him to chisel away at those things, there is a great benefit on the other side. And we see in the life of Job, he gets to hear from God and says, you don't have to question me. I know what I'm doing. You are okay. Everything might fall apart, right? His relationships all gone. His health pretty much to abysmal low and his finances all gone. All of his stock and his farm was all gone. But yet God restored him. Some of us will be restored in this lifetime, but ultimately we'll be restored forever in heaven. That's a guarantee. That is a guarantee.

So let's go on into verses two and three where we're going to see that God is the one that restores us. Verse two read, "I beseech Euodia and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord, and I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help these women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers whose names are written in the book of life."

Beseech literally means to call to one side. So there must have been an argument and so the whole idea is to separate the two and then allow them to work individually on their own selves. Many times we make the mistake of just attacking and defending ourselves and we don't take a step back and going where do I come in? Because we all are to some degree because of our sinful nature. We're accountable, all of us. In the moment, you might not feel like it, but if you just take a step back, I beseech you, call you out. This is the way a pastor does things. I want to work with you individually, not together. You guys are obviously not working well together. And so, he calls them out to one side, both of them, and he says, "I want you to think about for each one of you the same mind, not a different mind. Okay, Syntyche you have a better mind so you're you can just focus on this thing and then you know what your mind is here so you can work on this thing. No, this is the brilliance of God. We all to come to the same mind there. There is no favoritism here with Paul. There is no you're better than the other person or this person you're better than this person. No, what you need to come to is you need to have the same mind. And he says again in the Lord. In the Lord. And then he calls other people. He entreats others. It's an idea of I request others to join in helping these two sisters in Christ. And he calls one true yoke fellow united by the bond of Paul. So it's a person that agrees with Paul in calling out these two sisters.

And what is he ultimately in bond of? He says, "Help those women which labor with me in the gospel. Help them remember what this whole thing about in this life is about is to proclaim the gospel not only in our words but in our actions." The idea is that Paul is encouraging them to be unified in a team effort. This is a team effort. You guys are thinking individually. You guys need to go separate and come back together and think and remember you're in this for the gospel. You're in this for the gospel.

Philippians 1:27, Paul encouraged a team effort. It's the idea of athletes working together. They might be disagreeing in the locker room, but when they're out on the field, they are working for one goal. We need to get to that other side. Another picture is idea of soldiers lined up and advancing forward. And if you see one person falling back, okay, we need to go and help that person before we advance together again. We're not going to leave that person stranded. That's what a soldier does. A good soldier. He's fighting on the same side. We're all fighting on the same side, advancing together. We're advancing the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the sad thing is when we get fixed on our own things and not on the gospel, we forget people need to be rescued. People need to be rescued from their sin and delivered from sin and hell. And we miss the big picture when we get so caught up in the little things.

And so he calls Clement also who he mentions as a fellow laborer just like he did with Philippians 2:25 as for Epaphroditus a fellow laborer whose names are in the book of life. So the gospel here is the all-important and then the all-important, our ultimate goal is understanding that we're written in the Lamb's book of life. We're written already. So the idea is God uses the same ink. He doesn't use a different colored ink. This one's special or this one's no. All of us our names are written in the book of life. There is no parenthesis. It's your name. That's the most important thing. Is my name written in the book of life? We see passages like Exodus 32:33, Psalm 69:28, Revelation chapter 3 verse 5, chapter 13 verse 8, chapter 20 verse 15, chapter 21 verse 27. And then we see it here in the book of Philippians. And what is this list? It is a list of those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ from our sins.

That's why we are written in the book of life. We can easily forget the big picture, can't we? We can forget that our eternity is secure. So why do we care so much about the little incidental things? And so that's where our sin goes. We make small things blow up and the big things of God into the small thing. But what Paul does, he goes, "The gospel is the big thing. Your situation is a small thing. The big picture in eternity is that your names are written in the book of life, not your reputation here on this earth."

So the big why in these verses is to explain why do we experience such bitter disagreements in the church. It is a result of wanting seeking honor. It's wanting seeking honor. That's one of the compromises of our flesh that we want to receive accommodation

with people and not ultimately the things of God. So rather than yielding to the Lord's authority, it's you have to listen to what I say. No, no, no. You have to listen to what I say. So the authority becomes diminished. The Lord's authority becomes diminished in the church when there's a disagreement. Whose authority are we under? Whose word is ultimately the one that we're supposed to listen and obey? See, that's why Paul doesn't mention the words because it doesn't matter. What does the Lord say about this situation? Deal with it on your own. Deal with it on your own. And then come together with the same mind. However that long, however long that takes, the goal is we need to be in the same mind. We need to be on the same page when it comes to the gospel.

The other thing is jealousy takes root when you want to get more honor. Disagreements often arise from jealousy, comparison, or maybe your pride was wounded. We saw this in Philippians chapter 2:3. The idea that vain glory leads to strife. Strife meaning jealousy, comparison, and your pride being wounded. That's vain glory. It leads to all sorts of things that you shouldn't be thinking about. And Philippians 2:3 urges us to be humble by regarding others as more important than ourselves. See that that's what happened. But they forgot that it's not about us being important. It's about them and the Lord. This passage emphasizes that the action should not stem from our selfish motives, but rather a humble mindset like that of Christ.

Here's some references in the Gospels. We see here in Luke chapter 9 verses 46 and 48. This is while they were on the journey some of the disciples with the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus addresses dispute over greatness by placing a child beside him explaining that whoever is least among them is the greatest. So the least not the greatest according to God's standard. And then we see again Jesus, the Lord Jesus speaking about this issue about greatness. In Luke 22 verses 24-27, it says during the last supper, the Lord Jesus contrasts worldly leadership with servant leadership. He says, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve." So it's the one that serves rather than being served. And then the third one, Mark 9 verses 33-35. This is during the time at Capernaum when they were disputing the disciples about on the road and then when the Lord Jesus came to them, they just were silent like as if he doesn't hear them. And then the Lord Jesus teaches that to be the first one must be the servant of all. But when Christ is the center, the question changes from who is the greatest to who is the Lord? Who's the greatest? The Lord. The Lord, not us.

And so in these verses two and three is grace offered. Grace offered to these two sisters. So Paul calls out Euodia and Syntyche, these two women who have been powerfully used in the gospel. And he doesn't tell them to just work together. No. And be nice to each other. No. He ultimately fixes their mind. No. Be in the same mind in the Lord, in the gospel, rather. It's not good enough to just be nice and give a casual glance at this and think it's a small little thing. No, this is a big issue when you are denying the gospel in

your life and your action. So he points them to the gospel to be in the same mind in the Lord. He is the authority in our lives. He regains his authority in our lives. And when he does that, all disagreements go away. It's a quick easy way to get over whatever it is that we disagree with. When the Lord becomes the main person of authority, all of our jealousies over who gets more appreciation vanishes quickly.

God makes the work about himself. Who's the one that does the work through us? It's him. It's only because of him we can do good works. So only when God restores our sight to see that my work is ultimately also for the Lord. So then human appreciation ceases and unity is brought back between our relationships in the Lord and God produces when we surrender our pride and our own preferences in Christ. What does Christ want in us to speak and live out the gospel?

Furthermore, we're going to see what God provides here. And he provides this again idea of that we're written in the book of life. So, we don't have to fight for reputation. Oh, who's first on this list? Who's higher on this list? There's nothing of that sort. There's no favoritism. As long as our names are written in the book of life, that's all that matters. Not our place ideally in where it is in the book of life. God has already registered our identity in heaven. That was last week's sermon. Our identity is written in heaven. Our place is already identified in heaven. That's not going to change. It's all settled already. The most important thing in our life has been settled then everything else becomes secondary and we think like that and I love this the grace that offered you see he brings in Clement and then he says all the fellow laborers this is the whole church gathered help these two sisters if you see that there's something that you can help go and strengthen them don't just stand and go I'm good with the Lord No. When God in a church is healthy, he's going to spur up those that are in a place of good standing with the Lord to help the weak.

Acts 20:35 says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." See, the one that's weak is the one that keeps taking and taking and taking. The one that's in a good standing is being able to give the over plus of what God has given to you. It's not for all for yourself. It is to be poured into other people's lives. And so we are blessed to be a church that does that, understands that, that we come together, we rally together to help. We don't all want to be all weak, do we? We all want to be in a good place, a good standing with the Lord.

Notice Paul makes it pretty specific. He doesn't call out a lot of people. Just calls out two people in this case. That's a good thing. That's a good place to be. I would be kind of confused if it was a bunch of people in that church because that wouldn't be a healthy church, would it? This is a true church and things of these happen. But the whole idea is that the church is healthy, fully restored by grace. And he uses means of grace. The means of grace is people, his other brothers and sisters in Christ. He does that. And so we see that God preserves the service of Christ in the church through these means of grace,

securing us and firmly planting us into the places of helping others to think about the eternal perspective. Right? The book of life is eternal perspective. The gospel is for eternal perspective. Our problem is we get shortsighted very easily, don't we? We do. That's our own admission and we should always ask for help in those situations.

Revelation 3:5 says this, he that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. That's a promise. Shall be clothed in white raiment.

Now let's go to verse four. Verse four says, "Rejoice in the Lord always." And again I say rejoice. This word rejoice is in the imperative. It's a command now. Do this now. Not wait later now. And he says again rejoice now. This idea. Don't wait. Don't wait. Don't wait. You see, God calls us to the now, not to the later. Today is a day of salvation. This is in the immediate tense. You see, Paul was living like this. He was doing this in his own life. We know this because he had already repeated themes of joy and rejoicing over 10 times before getting to this verse. And by the end, we're going to see up to 16. But this idea is so important to this idea of rejoicing in the Lord. Again in the Lord. We can only rejoice in the Lord. It's the idea of your soul being well. Are you internally here well with the Lord? And he says it always, not sometimes, not when you feel like it, but it means at all times. At all times. So you can talk about any of your financial situation, your physical situation, your relationships with people outside of Christ, and you can always rejoice. It's a command. Do this now before you get spiritually sucked out and drifted away from the Lord.

And here's a way to remind yourself of what the word joy and rejoice means. Joy is the noun. It's the state of being. This is who you are in Christ. This is your state. Rejoice is the verb. It's the expression of that internal joy that you have in the Lord. And so essentially joy is the feeling that you have. And rejoice is the how to express that feeling.

Why are we to rejoice? Well, namely that he's saved us from sin. That we don't have to suffer in our sin. That we don't have to sorrow in our sin. That we can rejoice rather because we are written in the book of life. That we have the gospel to proclaim and share with other people. You see, that's ultimately why we can rejoice in the Lord. He didn't save us again for ourselves. He saved us so that we can go and help others to be saved.

You see, we live in a world that is full of lies that are opened against us. Psalm 116:3 puts it this way. The sorrows of death compass me and the pains of hell got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. One of the most troubling things and what brings the most sorrow is someone living in a lie. Someone living in a lie. Because a lie leads to doubt. It leads to distrust. It leads to ultimately not trusting the Lord Jesus Christ who is the truth. And if we look at ourselves, there's a lot to be shameful and sad over if we just look

constantly in ourselves. There's nothing good in us. That's this passage in Psalm 116:3. If we look in ourselves, there's just only pain and sorrow. There's only pain and sorrow.

And you see we're often a lot of our stress comes from constantly looking inwards. Constantly looking inwards that creates negative thoughts and a cynical cycle where everything becomes negative and everything becomes hopeless because there is no hope in ourselves ultimately. You see though those are all things that we cannot base our true joy in. It's in the Lord. Amen. Not in ourselves. It's in the Lord.

And so the motivation for this joy that radiates in us in Christ, in the Lord, it's something that we don't necessarily do, but it's what the Holy Spirit does in us. God provides himself as the infinite center of our joy. Infinite. Get that? He is infinite in his being. So therefore, our joy is infinite in him. Not the size of what's in your bank right now. Not the material possessions that you have, what kind of house, what kind of car you have. Not even the kind of family you have, whether you're a good Christian family or not. Not in the possessions that you have, the hobbies, the toys, the gadgets. No, the joy that God gives us is provided by perpetual increase in knowing the Lord only found in him. Think of it like in the old days in castles when it was dark at night. You would know that the castle that someone lived in it because of the light that radiate inside of it. And you would know, oh, the king is at home. Is the king living in your soul right now? Is the light of Christ reverberating, radiating out to others and going that person is a believer in Christ. There is something in him. There's no reason why he should find joy in and of himself or anything in this world. There's something greater. There is something more infinite and that's the joy in the Lord.

That is it. God's grace prevents us from looking inward. Amen. God's grace is the one that helps us not look inward. He helps the Lord radiate in us and we look in Christ. All the praise goes back to him. That is what it means to live in joy. You're giving praise to him for what he is doing in your life. Is that the expression? That's the expression is praise. Thank you, Lord, for saving me. Thank you for protecting me. Thank you for providing all these provisions in my life. Thank you that I get to be a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ not only in my words but also in my actions because you rest in the unchanging nature of Christ. This is for all believers.

You know in Pilgrim's Progress Christian was walking outside the wicket gate and one of the first things that he fell into was a slough of despond. And what is that representing is a pit of doubt, pit of fear and discouragement and guilt that a person experiences when first realizing the weight of their sin. Despondency is because of the weight of sin still hanging over your shoulders as it were. Remember the pack. We don't have to have that guilt experience anymore. We don't need to doubt God anymore. We don't need to fear

man anymore. We don't need to find joy in people anymore. It doesn't come from external but from in the Lord. That is the way life can no longer be drained out of you.

He's not only like a rock, but he protects all parts of you so there's no leak. Your life is not just draining out, but that he is protecting you. His mercy protects you so there's no drain, but that you are constantly being overfilled with his presence. There's nothing worse than being a hollow Christian. There is such a thing that you're just externally you're trying to please other people but inside you know there's nothing there's no life in you there's no joy there's no reason to rejoice at all times that's a dangerous place to be and no Christian should ever be found there because God constantly supplies his joy in us did you know that he's constantly pouring himself that's why it's a command I'm ready. Just do it. Just allow me to pour my joy into you. That's what he's doing. He supplies our need. We need joy in our lives, don't we? We need it because it matches with the gospel, doesn't it? Do you remember that moment, believer, when you first trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ? The amount of joy that you experience that the weight of sin was completely removed from you and you know now you feel free. Amen. You're free from a bondage of sin and now you're able to overcome sin like you never were able to before. That's a great assurance that you're truly saved from sin. Amen. That you're truly saved from sin. And that it has this lasting joy in you.

Joy is not pretending everything is fine. Joy is trusting that Christ is enough. God lights up your soul and your heart with his presence. 2 Corinthians 4:6 says it, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The glory of God shining immensely bright in your heart. No more darkness, no more despondency, but you have the very presence of the glory of God in you. What an amazing passage.

Now, let's go to verse five. Verse five, let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. I want us to just take a look at phrase let your moderation be known unto all men. Moderation can be explained this way that God himself is gentle with us so then we can reflect being gentle with others. He first was gentle with us that we can be gentle with others. That's what moderation means. We reflect what we receive. We could only reflect what we receive. We're often harsh and demanding, right? And when we're emptied, as it were, of joy, things tend to be more harsh. Things tend to be more demanding my rights because you want to gain life from that and it won't give you life. So, we're looking in the wrong direction altogether.

And because of that, we feel that we have to protect ourselves in a hostile world. And we are constantly threatened by the temptations to claim our rights prematurely. It is premature to seek our rights. When we rely on the world, we become defensive, angry. Animosity begins to creep in. Impatience starts to take over. And pride ultimately takes

root in us. We become loaded with a short temper and painful memories just keep coming back in our minds treating people like we have as it were. Just come on just say it. Just say I'm going to I just need you to make me upset. Just make me angry. That's a bad place to be. And we live in a culture like that full of outrage. Full of outrage. People who are quick to be angry, not slow to anger, as the book of James says. Not slow to speak, but quick to speak. This is the world. Quick to retaliate, quick to take offense, but gentleness is not that. It's not a sign of weakness. By the way, remember I mentioned in another sermon that it's self-control. It's power under control. That's what gentleness is. And Jesus Christ said himself that he is lowly and gentle. Imagine if he used all of his power on the world. And if somebody made a mistake, you're done. You can just speak it. You're done. He doesn't do that. Control, power under control.

And ultimately, because he was in control, we can be in control. Amen. He gives us that kind of power to be gentle with others because Christ was gentle first. Because ultimately what gentleness says is I have confidence in God's justice, not mine. I have confidence in God's justice, not mine. You see, God himself in Christ did not insist on his rights, did he? In fact, he did not open his mouth when he could have. He was perfect in obedience. He was sinless. He could have easily said why are you doing this? No, he was not thinking about himself. He was thinking about God's justice. God's justice. He pursued us. He pardoned us. And the Lord Jesus bore our sins on the cross.

So what is this passage here namely wanting us to focus on? Is on the cross. The cross of Christ. Why should we let go of our rights? Because Christ didn't. He let go of all of his rights and his power. He didn't depend upon himself in his flesh. Look at the way people treated him. He never opened up his mouth. He never got angry for what people were doing to him. In fact, he said, "Forgive them for they know not what they do at the cross." The word moderation means just like the word love in the Bible means many things and here moderation means gentle. It also means patient and it means to be fair and all combination of that. It describes a person who does not insist again on his own legal rights. But how is this possible? You say is because God is the one that allows us and gives us the capability to do it in his grace. By his grace you see he gives us exact amount of understanding that we don't need to receive any payment from anyone else. We don't need to exact payment from others. Why? Because Jesus paid the full payment on our behalf. So why do we need to go back and going, hey, you need to pay me back. You need to pay me back. You need to pay me back. No, we've been fully restored. So we don't need to receive any payment from others. That was the cross. That's what Jesus did for us.

You see, we all had as believers, we understood that sin brought the death penalty. The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23. We knew that. And we were released from death, the death penalty by Jesus paying for the payment. He took our place. He went ahead of us

and said, "You don't have to pay for it. I will pay for it with my death." And he pardoned us because it was through a bloody death on the cross meant for us but Christ received it on our behalf. And whenever you find yourself unable to forgive others, remember that God has already granted you pardon. He already did that for us. He removed the death penalty that we could ultimately not pay. There was nothing anything that we could do in ourselves.

And so God's character being made known through you ultimately his love working in you that allows you to be on the side of others rather than against them. What he does is he helps us to look at from their perspective to come have compassion. See that's what Jesus always did. He never whenever a sinner came to him he would be as it were on their side and going come come trust me. It was never antagonistic, never a battle of you're on that side and I'm on this side. He wanted to help them to be restored.

And so that is an amazing truth that we can live by in this life. God allows us also to live as pilgrims. That we're no longer settled here as a home, but that heaven is our home. And we don't have to fight for our earthly rights anymore because our rights are in heaven, not here. And our inheritance is over there, not here. So we live as it were a foreigner in another country, light in our possessions.

And so the ultimate motivation here at the end is the Lord is at hand. This is where we're going to end in the sermon. The Lord is at hand. So we can let go of everything that is rooted in this world and rooted in Christ. He sustains us because he is at hand. He is at hand. That literally means as it were it's like the idea of what's coming up in the holiday is July 4th, right? It's the idea it's going to happen. We just have to wait for it. That's all. It's just waiting patiently. That's the other part of gentleness. We're just to wait patiently. It's going to happen. We just got to wait. And then also speaks as if he is near. When Christ saves you, he is near by the work of the Holy Spirit. So he is ever present in the help of need. He helps us and so we can trust that he will help us through all. I like what 1 John 3:2 and 3 says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear that we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purified himself even as he is pure."

So that's how you know that you are a believer. He is constantly purifying your thoughts and your heart to the things of this world and to things what is important to God. And he does this by his grace and his mercy.

I want to leave with this understanding of here the Lord is at hand is a reference in another passage that really helps to bring out so much of what this part of the text means. Such a short part of this text, but it's so powerful. It's this expression that the Lord Jesus

uses to us. He'll never leave us nor forsake us. The idea is that it serves an eternal promise of his unwavering presence. It's a triple assurance. In the Greek, it literally uses multiple negatives. Never leave you nor forsake you. So, it literally means I will not I will not I will not abandon you. This is the Lord Jesus and his commitment that he will never abandon a believer. He will always be present in a time of need. You can understand that he will never leave you in a trial alone. He'll never make you feel isolated ultimately alone. And he'll never allow you to use your own strength ultimately. He will sustain you by his strength and uphold you if you see yourself in danger. And then the word not forsake literally means to never let go of. It's not us holding on to him. It's him holding on to us. That's what not forsake us. He'll never leave us. Never forsake us. And so the idea of this is that he was always going to help us in a time of need again.

And so I leave it with Matthew 28:20. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Amen. So let's go and pray unto God that he will bless this message unto our hearts and use it for his glory.

Thank you, Father, for granting us the ability to have the same mind in Christ Jesus, Lord, in this life and to live with the importance of knowing and living out the gospel to continue to share with others that need to hear the gospel. That we always keep the big picture in mind that there are still people that need to be rescued from their sin and delivered from judgment. And they can only find safety in Christ. Help, Father, this message to speak to all of our hearts that you apply it unto wisdom. I pray your Holy Spirit would use us to glorify you today, the rest of this afternoon, and as we come back, Lord, this evening. Please, Father, bless all that we do in Jesus name. Amen. If you want to speak with me, I'll be made available.