*For years our preachers have sown the seed for deception with their "cotton candy" gospel. No preaching of sin or judgment, no deep repentance or holiness. Just a diet of "sugar water." But all that has to change. For we are in the end times-the days of great seduction and deception, of "lying signs and wonders"-and there has never been a greater need for Truth than there is right now.*

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Prayer Study #472

**PHILIPPIANS 4**

First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

New King James Version (NKJV)

# My Joy and Crown

**4** *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

Paul is finishing up his letter to his beloved Philippines. He writes from prison, and most probably, he knows that his days are limited and dark and that he is approaching death. Yet he has joy remembering his beloved Philippians. There are few passages in scripture that show, as much as this one, the tender heart that a shepherd has with his sheep or a minister has with his converts. The Apostle John shows this same love for those he has the oversight for in the Lord and calls them *"my little children."* In a sense, these are Paul's *"little children,"* whom Paul has labored for, birthed, and brought into the family.

There are two words for crown in the Greek. First, there is the crown (*diadema*) which is used in the hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy* ad which means royal crown or the crown that a king would wear. The second word for crown (*stephanos)* is the word used here. It

refers to either the crown a victorious athlete was given at the Greek games or to the crown guests were given when they sat at a banquet celebrating some great joy. Paul is saying here that the Philippians were the crown he would receive at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, since he had brought them to Christ.

Paul uses the phrase *in the Lord* three times in this chapter. First, there is *stand fast in the Lord.* Every shepherd or minister wants those under his charge to *stand fast in the Lord.* The word Paul uses for this phrase refers to soldiers standing firm and not moving when the enemy comes attacking and surging down on them.

## *Be United, Joyful, and in Prayer*

***2*** *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.* ***3*** *And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*
***4*** *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*
***5*** *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*
***6*** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;* ***7*** *and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

In verse two, we find this phrase *in the Lord* again. This time it is coupled with "*be of the same mind*" in the Lord. Paul is speaking of unity in the faith. Throughout the history of the Christian faith, there

has been disunity, resulting in many different denominations and theological positions. We must recognize the importance of Christian unity, a unity that can ONLY be achieved in recognizing that Jesus is the real head of every ministry or church group. This is such an important issue that I want to spend a good deal of our time on this lesson discussing unity.

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*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.*
Psalm 133:1

**An Example of What the Lord Does When the Body of Christ is in Unity** Acts 2:1-4

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were ALL WITH ONE ACCORD in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it set upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

**The Importance of Unity at the End of the Age**
Ephesians 4:11-16

*And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleigh of men and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, from which the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working*

*in the measure of every part, making increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love.*
Jesus gave these "gifts"(apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) to the church for the following purposes:

1. For perfecting or equipping the saints
2. For the work of the ministry
3. For edifying or building up the Body of Christ
4. ***So that we may come into unity***
5. And into knowledge of the Son of God
6. To a perfect or complete or mature person

**Biblical Test of Spiritual Maturity**
Paul wrote to the church in Corinth a sharp rebuke: *And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able. For you are carnal; for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men?* 1st Corinthians 3:13 He is saying that, when we walk in divisions, we are carnal believers, not spirit-filled believers.
**We are Family**
*We are all parts of one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.* Romans 12:5b NLV

*I beg you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree with one another and not be split into groups. I beg that you be completely joined together…*1st Corinthians 1:10 CEV

*When we have the opportunity to help anyone, we should do it. But we should give special attention to those who are in the family of believers.* Galatians 6:10

*Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.* Matthew 12:50 NLT

*Now the multitude of those who believed was of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed were his own, but they had all things in common.* Acts 4:32

*Your love must be real. Hate what is evil and hold on to what is good. Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves.* Romans 12:9-10 NCV

*My brothers and sisters, God called you to be free, but do not use your freedom as an excuse to do what pleases your sinful self. Serve each other with love. The whole law is made complete in this one command: "Love our neighbor as you love yourself." If you go on hurting each other and tearing each other apart, be careful, or you will completely destroy each other.* Gal. 5:13 NCV

*For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* Galatians 3:26

**How do we come to Unity?**

1. <u>We love as He loved.</u>

*A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.* John 13:34-35

*This I command you: that you love one another.* John 15:17

*Now you can have sincere love for each other as brothers and sisters because you were cleansed from your sins when you accepted the truth of the Good News. So see to it that you really do love each other intensely with all your hearts.* 1st Peter 1:22 NLV

*We do not need to write you about having love for your Christian family, because God has already taught you to love each other. And truly you do love the Christians in all of Macedonia. Brothers and sisters, now we encourage you to love them even more.* 1st Thessalonians 4:9-10 NCV

*This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.* 1st John 3:11 NAS

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.* 1st John 3:14

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* 1st John 4:7-11

*What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels? If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains? I would be nothing unless I loved others. What if I gave away all that I owned and let myself be burned alive? I would gain nothing unless I loved others. Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!* 1st Corinthians 13:1-8

2. <u>We receive the Baptism in Holy Spirit and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, especially peace.</u>

*As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.* Ephesians 4:1-5

3. <u>We bless and not curse.</u>

*Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.* 1st Peter 3:8-9

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The two people in verse 2 were once thought to be the Philippian jailer and his wife, but now most scholars believe that these were both women. There is little known about these two women. Perhaps they were part of the prayer group that met at the river to pray with Lydia. At any rate these two women had had some kind of falling out. This made Paul very sad, and he exhorts them to resolve their differences and live in peace.

On a side note, women in Greek culture were marginalized. They were never expected to be out in public on their own. Women had their own apartment in a house and never joined male members of the family, even for meals. Yet apparently things were different in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), where women seemed to have more freedom.

We do not know who the true companion or true yolk fellow in verse 3 was. Some have even suggested that this was Paul's wife, which I have a hard time believing. Perhaps it is Epaphroditus, the carrier of the letter. Nor do we know who Clement was, although a Clement was later the Bishop of Rome.

There is a beautiful reference at the end of this letter refers to Paul's fellow workers. He does not give their names but says their names are in the book of life. What a different climate we would

have in the American Church is we were a nameless, faceless generation who did not seek fame and fortune in ministry but were just content that we are in the Book of Life.

Next Paul comes back to a theme of this Epistle of Joy, rejoicing! William Barclay says, “Christian joy is independent of all things on earth because it has its source in the continual presence of Christ. Two people who love each other are always happy when they are together, no matter where they are. Christians can never lose their joy because they can never lose Christ.

The word in Greek used for *moderation* is one of the most difficult words to put in English. Some translate it as *patience*; some, *softness*; some, *modesty;* some, *forbearance*; and some, *magnanimity.* Charles Kingsley Williams translate this verse: *Let all the world know that you will meet a man half-way.*

M.R. Vincent says in commenting on verse 6, “Peace is the fruit of believing prayer.” We don’t need to be anxious or fearful because we can take *everything* to God in prayer. This prayer should always be accompanied by thanksgiving, not only for the privilege of being allowed to talk with the Lord but also past and present blessings and future hopes. As someone once said, “There is nothing too great for God’s power; and nothing to small for his fatherly care.” And again, the result of believing prayer is peace.

## *Meditate on These Things*

***8*** *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.* ***9*** *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

If we think of something often enough, we will

come to the point of when we cannot stop thinking about it. The first thing we need to think on is whatsoever is true. Since the Last Days will be heavily characterized by deception (Matthew 24:24), this becomes crucial for the genuine Christian whose knows that he or she is just a pilgrim passing through and is awaiting a heavenly home (Hebrews 11:13). Truth is Jesus (John 14:6), and Jesus is the incarnate Word (John 1:14), so we should think on the word as much as we possibly can.

The word *honest* is not honest in the sense that we use the word in modern English. It means *honorable* or *venerable* or *worthy.* Barclay says the word describes, "that which has the dignity of holiness upon it."

The Greek word for *just (dikaios)* means to give to the gods and to other people what is their due. Paul is saying here that we should remember their duty to help other people and to honor God.

The word for *pure* means morally uncontaminated and ceremonially refers to something that has been cleansed so much that it is worthy to be brought into the presence of God.

The word for *lovely* is perhaps best translated as *winsome*. Barclay paraphrases this, "that which calls forth love," and says this refers to things like *kindness, sympathy*, and *patience*. Our presence in a room should inspire others to have Christian love.

Perhaps the best explanation of *good report* is those things that are fit for a holy God to hear. This eliminates much of the conversation in movies and television programming.

The word *virtue* could best be translated as *excellence.* Barclay comments on the phrase*, if*

*there be any praise,* Paul is saying that Christians should "live in such a way that they will neither conceitedly desire nor foolishly despise the praise of others."

For many, personal example is the best teacher. The famous poem by Edgar Guest illustrates this well, and I quote only a portion of it.

I'd rather see a sermon
Than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing,
But example's always clear.
And best of all the preachers
Are the men who live their creeds.

Paul is telling the Philippians to copy what they see in him.

Paul ends this section with a reference to the *God of peace*, his favorite and most often used title for God. He also refers to God, as *the God of hope* (Romans 15:13)*; the God of patience, of comfort, and of consolation* (Romans 15:5)*, and the God of love and peace* (2nd Corinthians 13:11).

## *Philippian Generosity*

***10*** *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.* ***11*** *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:* ***12*** *I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to*

*be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* ***13*** *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* ***14*** *Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.* ***15*** *Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.* ***16*** *For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.* ***17*** *Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.* ***18*** *Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.* ***19*** *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* ***20*** *Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Paul wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great gain (1st Timothy 6:6). Here, while expressing deep appreciation for what the Philippians have done for him, he nevertheless asserts his contentment in all things, no matter what condition he finds himself in. He has learned that he can do all things in Christ who strengthens him.

This is not the only time the Philippians have sent money to him, and they were apparently the only church that ever did so for Paul's specific needs, even though Paul never sought money for himself. Here he seems to be piggybacking on the words of Jesus, ***"Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that***

***you measure, it shall be measured to you again."*** This is the principle of Reaping and Sowing. Because they gave, God shall supply all of their needs according to His riches in Glory.

## *Greeting and Blessing*

***21*** *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.* ***22*** *All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.*
***23*** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

The Philippians had sent gifts to Paul. He sends back the only thing, but the most important thing he could send, his blessings. It is interesting to note that the Christian religion was already at work in Caesar's household. This is not referring to the biological family of Nero but to the workers in the palace. The Caesar would have been shocked if he could have known that in 300 years the official religion of Rome would be Christianity.

## The Blood of Jesus lyrics

Chorus:
The Blood of Jesus,
the Blood of Jesus,
the Blood of Jesus,
can cleanse your deepest sin.

Verse 1:
You may think you've gone too far
you may think there is no power
that can wash away your deepest sin.
There is hope for you my friend,
Jesus died and rose again,
so that you could know the joy of sins forgiv'n.

Verse 2:

You may have some hidden sin
you've tried to cover deep within,
and everybody thinks your life is in control.
You can run but you can't hide
God sees everything inside,
but forgiveness waits at the foot of Calvary's cross.

It will never loose it's power,
Oh it will never loose it's power.
The Blood that cleanses every sin
will never loose it's power.
It will never loose it's power.