**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***The Joy in Standing Firm in The Lord***

**Philippians 4:1**

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

May 8th, In the Year of Our Lord - (Anno Domini A.D.) 2022

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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***Happy Mother’s Day!***

We praise God that He made humanity to progress forward with mothers and fathers leading the way to cherish children as a gifted creation of His divine love and authority. From the first couple, we see Eve thank God and acknowledge His sovereignty over her life as mother and the giving of life in her new son, Seth.

Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him" (Genesis 4:25).

This is an inspiring passage of Scripture to see God work through fallen humanity to continue the pursuit of life. In addition, all mothers can be encouraged that from this childbearing event bringing Seth into the world that God is the author of life and has chosen them as His unique person to accomplish the furtherance of life on earth.

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (Isaiah 54:13 KJV)

Behold, children are a gift of the LORD. The fruit of the womb is a reward.

(Psalm 127:3)

Grandchildren are the crown of old men, And the glory of sons is their fathers.

(Proverbs 17:6)

***Sermon***

***The Joy in Standing Firm in The Lord***

*You will make known to me the path of life;*

*In Your presence is fullness of joy;*

*In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*

***A Psalm of David 16:11***

In our sermon series in Philippians, we come to what scholars have numbered to be the last chapter in Philippians. Paul did not originally write the letter with chapter and verse numbers. None of the Bible was outlined in this way. (1)

To this point in the letter, Paul has instructed them in many areas of Christian life. We can see that Paul cares deeply about his friends in Philippi with whom he had shared life about ten years prior to writing this letter.

It is profitable for us to review Paul’s previous words in this letter to highlight the tone and context of this last chapter. Paul uses the word “joy” seven times in Philippians (1:4, 25; 2:2,17,18, 29; 4:1) and starts his last words with. . . Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved (4:1).

Strong’s 5479 χαρά chara

Jesus used the word “joy” in the parable of the Talents.

**Matthew 25:21** "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

From Jesus’ words, we can see that God can have joy over the faithful lives of Believers in His creation. Similarly, Paul has joy over the faithful lives of the Believers in Philippians.

Let us read portions of chapter two to regain Paul’s “joyous” insight.

**Philippians 2:2-4, 13-18, 29**

**2** make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

**3** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

**4** do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. . . .

**13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

**14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

**15** so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

**16** holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

**17** But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

**18** You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me. . . .

**29** Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

From reading Paul’s letter, we can see that Paul is not a distant church authority raining down pontifications upon the congregation in Philippi. There is a very personal tone to Paul’s approach in delivering much needed words of encouragement and instruction. Paul is a dear friend and fellow Believer struggling in the fallen world, just as those are in the Philippian church. All the teachings Paul brings to their attention are the same ones he personally has addressed in serving the Resurrected Lord. Let us focus upon the opening words in chapter 4 to see how Paul is going to bring this letter to a close.

**Philippians 4**

**1** Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

Paul reaches-out to them with an acknowledgement that he longs to see them and tells them that they are his “joy and crown”. We see with these words that the saints in Philippi, with whom Paul had poured-out his life, have rewarded him with *steadfast witness*. These words in chapter 4 are similar to Paul’s opening words in this same letter (Philippians 1:3-6). Again, these are personal words meant to encourage. Coming from a man who is under arrest waiting trial, these words carried more spiritual weight. With these words comes a future expectation on the Philippians to continue progressing in the maturity of the Lord

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

And, with these accolades, Paul encourages them to continue *standing firm* in the Lord, knowing they are spiritually strong, but that they still need to be encouraged to rely on the Lord’s strength in this fallen world operating all around them. Paul sees that to live the Christian life, he wrote about in his letter, they will need the strength of God operating within their hearts and minds. . . meaning *standing firm* in the Lord knowing that they can be challenged by those in their own congregation.

We previously read Philippians 1:27-28 which informed us that Paul had opponents that they needed to “stand firm” against.

27 I will hear of you that you are **standing firm** in one spirit,

with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 in no way alarmed by your opponents-- **which is a sign of destruction for them,** but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

God takes great joy in seeing His Church stand firm in one spirit in living the gospel-life He intends, and not being alarmed by opponents. God’s Word is clear that opponents of Believers are on a destructive path.

**Standing Firm**

**There is not any doubt that Believers must stand firm due to the evil that is now brazenly being displayed and flaunted before the American people led by the Democrat Party and its leadership.**

Historically, in America, the Church’s main concern was in the area of correct theology in the teaching of God’s Word. The discussion between scholars and denominational heads were, for the most part, related to movements within the Church. However, today the national discussion is about a shift from values/morals long part of the established Judeo-Christian worldview to the implementation of secular/atheistic beliefs that seek to overturn the public’s allegiance to a Bible-based code of ethics not only in government but throughout all of society. The result could be that there will not be any more individual rights of religion, speech, press or association. Because all of these individual rights are a threat to a totalitarian regime. In fact, the secularist/atheist seek to do away with individual rights in consideration for an overriding authority of the state and those that manage the state. They seek a shift in the definition of good. . . to good being a relative situational personal choice that does not have any basis in the God of creation ethic. These secular atheists view people as biological masses to be manipulated in the management of the state and its resources. With this shift in public policy, there is not any call for a check of personal moral behavior. Survival of the fittest is the rule. This atheistic state religion allows for the exploitation of the weakest members of society starting with embryos in the womb and the grooming of children to be harvest into the sex trade.

In case anyone missed the news. . . we all are witnessing the evil heart intent of the Democrat Party and its leadership to groom children to be sexually exploited starting in kindergarten with mentally manipulating curriculum. . . to threatening American democracy by leaking a Supreme Court’s brief detailing individual states rights in governing abortion. Let it be said that it is a direct contradiction to be a member of the Democrat Party and be a Christian. And of note. . . the two of the most highest-ranking political office holders claim to be Christian (Roman Catholic) . . . being the current occupant of the Oval Office and Speaker of the House.

Their beliefs in action are parallel to the **abomination of desolation.** These politicians have made their offices **unclean**. They have the blood of millions of aborted babies on their hands and seek to take captive children through psychological grooming into the world of pedophilia. Jesus spoke of the prophecy of Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11 in Matthew 24.

**If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; (1 John 1:6)**

I will read Matthew 24:7-15 to you this morning. In your own time, read all of chapter 24 and Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11.

Historical Note: In 175 B.C., Antiochus IV, a Syrian king, took the name Theos Epiphanes which means God Manifested. He marched through the Holy Land, down to Egypt. But because he was turned back (in 170 B.C.), he had such anger that he took it out on the Nation of Israel. He went into the Holy of Holies in the Temple and offered a pig on the altar there. And then he forced Jewish people to eat that meat and to bow down to him.

Now Theos Epiphanes had a bit of an ego problem, right? “Just call me God Manifested.” Eighty thousand Jews refused to bow down **to him** and they were all murdered in the streets of Jerusalem. Daniel’s prophecy was fulfilled and will be fulfilled again in the end.

**https://www.christianity.com/jesus/life-of-jesus/teaching-and-messages/what-is-the-abomination-of-desolation.html**

**Standing Firm Principals**

**What are the principals of standing firm?**

**What does standing firm look like?**

David stands firm in the Lord by taking refuge in Him and through prayerful petition to be preserved. David prays to the Lord in Psalm 16:1. . . .

Preserve me O God, for I take refuge in You. I said to the Lord “You are my Lord. I have no good besides You.”

From this prayer of David, we receive the truth that there is not any good outside of God’s plan for our lives. David takes refuge in the Lord. Therefore, anyone who takes refuge elsewhere are telling Believers that there is not any good in their pursuits. In addition, those that refuse to take refuge under God’s Will and Word are announcing to us that they are enemies of a free people. . . they are announcing that they are enemies of peace and life and have abandoned the pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. For Free God-Reverencing people. . .

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (U.S. Declaration of Independence)*

By the way, murdering innocent helpless babies in the womb is not treating them equally and denies them to ever have the opportunity to pursue life, liberty and happiness.

And . . . by the way. . . the psychological grooming of kindergarteners to be sexually exploited denies them to be secure in their own person but to be subjected to the vices of pedophiles. There is not any life or liberty in being a victim of human trafficking and bondage.

**So, what does standing firm look like. . .** from this Psalm of David, we see that standing firm in God begins with prayer and taking refuge in Him alone. This maintains unity of spirit within the Church and provides for our defense against evil. A house united in the Lord will not fall.

**The Joy of Standing Firm**

I see that God receives great joy in watching His Believer’s-Church standing firm against the enemies of the Gospel. This means that the power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and of death (Romans 8:2). With this said, in these times of evil pressing-in on a free people we remember. . .

**35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

**36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."**

**37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.**

**38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,**

**39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)**

**AMEN**