

Philippians 4:1-5 A Caring Church

Intro: There is no such thing as a perfect Church. – The reason is the Church is full of imperfect people.

A) Heard that saying – If you ever were to find a perfect Church – don't join it because you would ruin it.

B) The Church is full of sinners – full of broken people who are being transformed by a loving savior.

C) Sometimes – our brokenness is prominently in View

1) Sometimes the Church can look like a mess!

I think the Lord feels the way I did one day – when I came home when my all three of my kids were little.

A) I remember this day vividly – I came home and walked in the house – and the living room was a mess.

B) Toys all over – the kids had taken the couch cushions to build a fort – that was halfway destroyed

1) And at the moment I walked in all three of them were fighting – not fist fighting but arguing.

C) My First thought was – Must have been a tough day for Denise and my second thought was – what a Mess!

1) But then I thought – but this is my beautiful mess!

D) Kids can be messy – Kids themselves can be a mess!

1) But we love them – they are our Beautiful Mess!

E) That is how I sometimes think the Lord feels we he looks at the Church –

**1) What a Mess – so many problems – divisions
They are a Mess – but they are my Beautiful Mess**

Here in the book of Philippians Paul has had a lot of good things to say about the Church in Philippi

A) Dual Residency in Chapter 1 – In Christ and in Philippi

**B) Their Participation in the gospel
1) Their heart to give toward the work of the Gospel**

C) Their love and concern for Paul and Ephaphroditus

But here in Ch 4 he addresses a Mess – a conflict between two ladies who were prominent members in the Church.

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

In dealing with this situation Paul gives us 4 characteristics of a Caring Church!

#1 They are loved and they are loving. V.1

**A) Notice how Paul describes them- he calls them his beloved twice His longed for brethren – His Joy and his crown.
(His prize that brought great Joy to his heart!)**

B) Beloved is such a tender description: It means loved ones!

1) Loved by God and Loved by Paul

C) Longed for Brethren: Paul missed them – Missed being with them - he missed being around them.

D) I can relate to that – Whenever I am away from you guys especially for an extended period of time

1) I miss you guys.

E) Quite often – When I am speaking at another church on a Sunday –

**1) somewhere in the morning – I have this thought
Why am I here- I wish I was w/ the family at CV today!**

Yrs ago when Denise and I moved to Oregon to plant a Church there.

A) People would always ask us if we missed CA –

B) Now I will be honest having lived in Oregon for 5 yrs – I love CA

C) But when people asked us – it was not CA that we missed but it was the family here.

1) We missed Calvary Vista. **We longed for the Church – You are our beloved and longed for brethren.**

D) We had a great Church in Oregon – awesome people
Loved dearly!

1) CCCV recently – 10 surprised us – after 22 yrs I cried – Awesome people

E) But when we were in Oregon – we missed this body – something special about you guys!

F) After we came back – to lead Pastor Chuck one asked how I was doing –

1) Great! I pastor the best church on the planet

2) He proceeded to tell the whole conference what I said and that every Pastor should feel that way

I want to pause here for a minute and tell you what is so special about you –

A) I could spend the rest of the service on this but I will limit this to 7 things

B) Don't let this go to your head – NOT PERFECT – but you are appreciated.

1) If you are new/ visiting - We know parking is difficult

C) The Building isn't amazing – should have seen it before – it has come along way.

D) But if you hang around here a while – you will notice these things to be true of the people here!

Things I love about Calvary Vista

1st You are real – not playing church here.

2nd Your love for Jesus is evident

3rd You love His word – Easy to teach. – Don't feel like I have to try and entertain you.

4th You are down to earth – which makes you relatable

5th You are hard working servants – You give of your time and energy and effort like no group I have ever seen before.

For the size of our church we have a relatively small staff- 13 full time staff members and 9 part time

A) Small Staff - But we get so much accomplished because so many of you volunteer to serve –

B) You do it with Joy and gladness of heart! – And you serve diligently with all your heart – AMAZING

#6 You are worshippers! – We love how passionately you sing and praise the Lord.

A) We often get comments from guest musicians and worship leaders at how – noticeable your Passion is

B) People who travel around – Like Hilary and Kate – will say - This place is different.

1) They enjoy coming here – You are responsive

#7 You are mission minded!

A) You are into missions both local – Back pack program or Camp Pendleton – or the Homeless – You respond

B) As well as abroad – I love pastoring a Church that has a vision for the world

1) Support missionaries – Go on mission trips

C) You guys are awesome and I know I speak for all our Pastors when I say – You are beloved.

D) That is how Paul felt about the church in Philippi 1) In this one sentence he is able to express his gracious pastoral heart toward this group.

A Church that knows they are loved by God and by their Pastors will be a loving caring Church.

A) According to Jesus that is to be the Hallmark of every Church –

Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."

B) Note that – by your love – not truth – although that is important –

1) Not Holiness although that is super important –

C) But the one thing that takes precedence over everything else is love!

D) This is what Love does: It takes the invisible God and makes him visible.

1 John 4:12-- "No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us."

E) if the world could possibly see a community of nurturing, caring, loving, forgiving people,

1) that love each other across the barriers of race and rank and age and sex, they might listen to our message

First mark of a Caring Church is #1 They are loving and they are loved.

#2 They stand fast in the Word!

A) A big heart needs to be balanced out with a firm stance.

B) Love is not flimsy – Love is not an anything goes type of thing – there has to be structure –
1) Dating or marriage – If there is no structure – no exclusivity you end up just using people.

C) Playing with people's hearts

God's word provides the Structure needed for our love and relationships 2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche (Aren't you glad you have the name you have- hopefully didn't just offend – Euodia or Syntyche's in the room)

2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

A) We are not sure what happened with these two women – but the disagreement – was so big Paul had to address it

B) Notice these are two prominent women in the Church –

1) **Paul says V.3 they labored with him in the gospel.**

C) Remember the Church in Philippi – started with a group of women meeting by a river –

D) These women were probably a part of that early group – working together – Same team.

1) But now there is a problem.

Ever thought about this: It is a big deal to get your name in the Bible –

A) Not that many people – history of Humanity

B) Imagine – having your name in the PAGES Bible – because you were in a conflict

1) Unfortunately it is what they are remembered for

C) Begs the question: What do you want to be remembered for.

A guy name Michael Bentley asked this question—

A) if in 100 years time your name was to be discovered in an old document,

B) what one thing would you like the finder of that document to learn about you?

C) It's a good question, because these two women at Philippi go down in history being remembered for a disagreement.

Paul implores them- to be of the same mind in the Lord!

A) That last phrase is key- **in the Lord.**

B) Here is what that is telling us- My feelings and emotions can't be the basis for my actions.

C) Nor can my perceived rights be the basis for my actions

1) I can't say – I have the right to feel this way – act this way.

No as a Christ follower – I am supposed to bring my mind and emotions under the governance of God's word!

A) Jesus said in numerous places – I am to forgive those who have wronged me

B) Paul said – back in chapter 2 – We are to prefer others and their interest above our own.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Colossians 3:15

C) Note this – the Context of And let the peace of God rule in your hearts is resolving conflicts –

1) Remember you are ONE BODY – SO Let the peace of God rule – literally – referee in your hearts

D) Let the peace that God grants to you who were his enemy – you who are at times rebellious –

1) Let him referee your relationships

E) In other words Let your hearts and relationships be brought under the rule of JESUS

The American Psychological Association did a study a few yrs ago where they studied members of orchestras.

A) And an orchestra is fascinating. You have all these different instruments in an orchestra pit,

B) But they are able to make one harmonious sound

C) Well, the APA decided to ask the different people in the orchestra what they thought of the other people in the orchestra.

These were the results: they discovered percussionists were seen as insensitive, unintelligent, and hard of hearing-- yet fun-loving.

A) **String players were seen as arrogant, stuffy, unathletic**

B) The orchestra members overwhelmingly chose the word loud as the primary adjective to describe brass players.

C) **Woodwind players seemed to be held in highest esteem, described as quiet and meticulous, though very egotistical.**

Now here is the question, given what you just heard

A) How on earth can people with such different perceptions of one another and different personality quirks make beautiful music together?

B) The answer-- they subordinate their feelings and their biases to the leadership of a conductor.

C) Once they get in the pit, and they get the music in front of them, and they're about ready to play
1) they don't think about what the personality differences are, the opinions are, or the political differences are,

D) They're there to make music. They subordinate all of that to what a conductor wants.

1) They follow the conductor.

E) So that's wrapped up in the idea-- **in the Lord.** Jesus is the conductor. His word is our guide!

So a Caring Church knows that it is loved – and therefore is loving –

#2 They stand fast in the Word of the Lord- Guide

#3 A Joyful heart Verse 4-- "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice."

A) Once again the key phrase is **in the Lord!**

B) It is choosing to focus on what we have in common – rather than what divides us.

C) We have so much in common. – Sinners saved by grace.

1) People who are so underserving of God's mercy. – Not better than someone else

D) Blood bought – The precious blood of Christ – purchased our salvation

1) Blood unites us as family.

E) We were destined for Hell – now we are going to heaven.

We have so much to rejoice in the Lord over!

A) Appreciative people are not easily – angered! – Ever notice that.

B) Those people who are appreciative who's hearts marked by gratitude tend to role with the punches

1) Much better than those who are entitled.

C) One of the reasons we have so much conflict in this country is we are so entitled.

D) Rejoice in the Lord always! – Not just on Sundays – not just when things are going my way – ALWAYS

E) The more our hearts are filled with Joy – the more gracious we will be!

The Marks of a Caring church-

#1 They are loved and they are loving

#2 They stand fast in the word of God

#3 They have Joyful hearts

#4 They have a gentle touch. verse 5-- "Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."

A)Whenever there's a conflict, like this conflict at Philippi, it's that gracious, gentle, diplomatic touch that will make all the difference.

B)The word, gentleness, could be better translated-- sweet reasonableness.- I like that

C) Let your gentleness – your sweet reasonableness **be known to all men.**

D)In other words, start being famous for your gentleness. - Let that be your reputation

1) -May gentleness be what you are known for.

Why? The Lord is at hand.

A)Now this phrase – has commonly been understood to mean that the coming of the Lord is at hand!

B)The idea that we are living in the last days! –

1) I believe that we are – the signs are all pointing in that direction.

C)Time is short – the world needs to see the Church and people in the church – as loving – not fighting

D)The World needs to see how amazing it can be when people of different color, race, backgrounds

1)economic status – education – come together as one

Under the conductor Jesus Christ

Plus you don't want to be fighting and bitter when Jesus shows up

A)You want your heart to be in the RIGHT PLACE

B)So that can be what Paul is saying here when he says – "**Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.**"

C)But I think another way to look at this:–

1)When Paul says **the Lord is at hand** – he is saying the Lord is near

D)NIV actually translates it that way.

I actually think that better fits the context - "Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is NEAR."

A)The Lord is right here among us! – Don't fight! – Focus on him. – He is here!

B)Bring your hearts before him.

C)Remember he is here – watching listening!

D)If you really grabbed a hold of that – would you treat others differently?

1)Act differently – He is here – watching listening

I will close with this story- and One final thought

A)So there was a guy named Tim, and he wrote something very honest.

B)Tim was a Christian. Tim was a mature Christian. Tim was a leader.

1)But when Tim found himself having conversations with other believers about the church – always turned negative

C)He often found himself talking smack Christians – and just having an overall – negative tone when addressing the subject of the Church

So as he was doing that one day he said a mental image flashed in his mind of a bride and groom on their wedding day.

A)In this mental image he saw himself walking up to the groom on the wedding day, **leaning in and saying, your bride is ugly.**

B)You can't imagine doing that, right? And he said, I would never do that.

1)I mean, no matter how unattractive a bride might seem to somebody else, to the groom she's gorgeous, she's radiant.

C)But he said, the Lord used that. It was as if he was saying, **Tim, every time you criticize my church you're telling me my bride is ugly.**

D)That is a great analogy! – You are sitting next to someone who is a part of the Bride of Christ –

E)Rejoice in the Lord – Focus on the Positive – not the negative –

1)let your gentleness be your reputation – The Lord is near! – He is here.

Finally I just want to say a word to those of you who have been hurt by the church. You left the church

A) You don't have fond memories of its leadership. They did something to you or your family.

B) You're still holding on to that.

C) And I just want to say to you, on behalf of the church as a representative, how sorry I am.

1) I'm sorry that whatever church it was, whatever city you came from, whatever happened to you,

2) would you just accept that apology from a representative of His church. I'm sorry.

But I Also want to remind you of this:

A) Jesus never said, follow my people. He said, follow me.

B) He never said, follow my pastors. He said, follow me.

1) He never said, follow my church. **He said, follow me.**

C) So don't take it out on Jesus for what some bad representatives did to you!

1) Because, here's the deal. He's the only perfect one.

D) We follow a perfect Savior, imperfectly. BECAUSE - We're all imperfect.

E) AND WHEN you decide I'm going to follow Jesus, the perfect one,

1) Remember this: you're going to be surrounded with a lot of people like you-- imperfect.

F) Broken people who are in the process of being transformed by a Loving REDEEMER

1) So let's be patient with each other

So let's remember:

- **how greatly we have been loved and be loving**
- **Lets allow God's word to be our guide not our emotions feelings**
- **Lets Rejoice in the Lord and focus on what we have in common**

So that Gentleness is our REPUTATION – JESUS IS GLORIFIED IN THIS PLACE

AMEN!

Next week – begin a very important section of this book - 'Theme is Joy –

Something that attacks Joy – ANXIETY

3-4 weeks breaking that down – very helpful.

Very important – hope you will be here.