

Resolving Conflict in the Church

Philippians 4:1-3
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Introduction

Conflict – home, marriage, work place, church, etc.

Examples of conflict in Scripture:

Cain & Abel – Genesis 4

Abraham & Lot – Genesis 13

The church in Acts 6

Paul & Barnabas – Acts 15

Transition

¹Therefore,

Serves as both a conclusion to the previous verses (especially 3:17-21) and a transition to the following verses (vv2-3ff.). 3:21 see the connection to 1:27.

Similar to the “so then” or “therefore” of chapter 2:12-13, ‘...work out your salvation with fear and trembling....’

Paul’s Love for the Philippians

My beloved (2x) (see also, 2:12)

brethren (see also, 1:12, 14; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:8, 21)

whom I long to see, (see, 1:8; Ephroditus in 2:26)

my joy and (see, 1:4, 25, 2:2, 17, 18, 29)

crown, the victor’s crown; now and in the future at Christ’s return (see 2:14-16) contrasted to an earthly crown in 1 Cor. 9:25. (1 Thess. 2:17-20, esp. v. 19)

Paul’s Exhortation

in this way (Phil. 3:7-21)

stand firm in the Lord, military term – hold your ground 1Cor. 15:58; Eph. 6:11, 13, 14) “In light of 3:20-21 they must persevere.” O’Brien

Phil. 1:27-28 27Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28in no way alarmed by *your* opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that *too*, from God.

“**in the Lord**” in our union with, in relationship to, by His empowering grace, in your obedience.

A plea for unity among two members Paul names names.

²I urge Euodia

and

I urge Syntyche

“urge” to beg, beseech, appeal to.

An impassioned plea equally to both women so he would not appear to have taken sides with one of them.

Euodia & Syntyche

1. Maybe part of the original group of believers at Philippi – Acts 16:13

2. They Were True Believers

Saints – Phil. 1:1

Brethren (v. 1)

Names written in the Book of Life

In the registrar of heaven (those who lived in Philippi as citizens of Rome would have had their names recorded in a book)

OT – Daniel 12:1-3 NT – Luke 10:20; cf. Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15

What will they be remembered for? Gospel Ministry or conflict?

What will we be remembered for?

3. They were ministry minded believers.

“these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel”

“struggle” (see 1:27) an athletic metaphor “to contend, struggle along with” (see 1:30)

“In the cause of the gospel”

“together with Clement”

“also the rest of my fellow workers”

Paul appeals for help (v. 3)

Indeed

True Companion (possibly a proper name, Syzygus)

I ask you also to help/assist these women

The need for help (Gal. 6:1-4)

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God.”

Paul’s Exhortation

“to live in harmony in the Lord.” “to have the same attitude or mind” because of their common bond in Christ.

See phroneo as used in 1:7; 2:2 (2x), 5; 3:15,19; 4:10 (2x)

What’s at stake?

The progress of the gospel.

The health of the church.

The Church’s testimony before the world.

It’s too easy when we are faced with conflict in a church to just walk away and find another church rather than commit ourselves to the gospel and work for reconciliation.

Application:

The foundation for all Christian conflict resolution is the Gospel.

Sometimes other believers must come along side of those in conflict and help them find peace.

Conflict can lead to opportunity to glorify God and magnify the Gospel.

Resource: The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict, Ken Sande. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004