

21. WE MUST STAND FIRM IN UNITY: Philippians 4:1-3

by Brett Baggett on Sunday, October 18th, 2020

THEME/INTRO: Saints must stand firm (v.1). If we do not, we will not be effective for Jesus' glory. One of the ways we stand firm is by our unity. Christian unity is a means by which saints stand firm and therefore glorify God in the world! Sadly Christian unity is constantly under attack—mostly from within. Therefore we must line the battlements of the church with shields of remembering our love, our Lord, our labor, and our life and so be protected from the shame of disunity.

I. ONE SHIELD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS BY REMEMBERING THE GENUINE AFFECTION WE HAVE FOR THE SAINTS (v. 1) *(you must remember our love)*

Philippians 4:1 “Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.”

- **THOMAS WATSON:** “A believer's heart is the garden where Christ has planted this sweet flower of His love.”
- **Jesus' love for us produces our love for Him. And not only that!** but our love for Him produces a love for those whom He loves—His precious saints, washed clean by His blood!
- **Q.** You who are in Christ through faith, Do you know He does not simply tolerate you but truly loves you? Do you love Him? Do you love those he loves?
- **1 Jn 3:14** “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.”
- **Proverbs 10:12** “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.”
- **Q. Do you love the saints—they that are precious to your Savior?** Then you must have passed from death to life—you have been born again!
- **Oh remember your love and see strife VANISH and unity FLOURISH!**

II. ANOTHER SHIELD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS TO REMEMBER THAT WE ALL HAVE THE SAME LORD (v. 2) *(you must remember our LORD)*

Philippians 4:2 “I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.”

- **Beloved, remember: The Christian life is not about the Christian;** this life is about the Christ! Life is not about what I can get out of it; life is about living and dying in such a way that “Christ is honored in my body.”
- **Q.** Do you not know that is what will make you most happy? **A.** The simple principle is: It is more happy to give than to receive.
- Your **preferences** are not the LORD; your **desires** are not the LORD; your **feelings** are not the LORD; **comfortability** is not the LORD; **getting your own way** is not the LORD—Jesus Christ is the LORD!
- **Q.** Who is your LORD?Is it not the same as your brothers and sisters in Christ?
- **Oh Jesus is not campaigning, He is conquering!** He does not debate, nor does he hold events to bolster up his supporters; He does not poll his creatures in order to see how they will respond to his platform.
- **He is the once-crucified now resurrected, ruling, and reigning King of the universe.** You have two choices—yes only two: submit to Him as LORD or be in open rebellion against the Sovereign.
- **Beloved, you must agree in the LORD!** He does not say, “try to get along.” He says, “I entreat you...agree in the LORD.”
- This means **I)** you must agree; **II)** your unity must be founded the fact that both of you have the same LORD; and **III)** Jesus is the one you listen to and obey in order to agree. **Q.** How? **A.** By HIS written Word and sometimes with guidance of your leaders.
- **Q.** Where do you turn when you have strife with another person? You must turn to the Lord Jesus who reveals His will in His Word.
- **Q.** Why is this so crucial? **A.** Because saints must stand firm in the faith and the only way we saints can do that is TOGETHER!

III. YET ANOTHER SHEILD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS REMEMBERING THAT WE ARE LABORING SIDE BY SIDE IN THE GOSPEL (v. 3a) *(you must remember our labor)*

Philippians 4:3a “Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers,”

- **We have labor to do as fellow workers in the gospel;** indeed the Lord has enlisted us as workers and we are sent out into the harvest!
- **Matthew 28:18-20** “18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- **Q.** Do you treat Jesus' Great Commission as if it were His great suggestion? **Q.** What would others say you have been commissioned to do?
- **Saints cannot faithfully sow the seed of the gospel in the world while they are throwing rocks at another in the church.**
- **There are few things so detrimental to our labor in discipling the nations** than to have saints preoccupied with disagreements and strife amongst themselves! Pride and refusals to confess sin kills the good labor in the gospel!
- **Q.** Is this passage and my application wounding you as you are convicted of sin? Let me encourage you with this from William Gurnall: “God's wounds cure — sin's kisses kill!”

IV. THE FINAL SHIELD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS REMEMBERING THAT OUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN RIGHT NEXT TO ONE ANOTHER'S IN THE BOOK OF LIFE (v. 3b) (you must remember our life)

Philippians 4:3b “whose names are in the book of life.”

- **Q.** Is your name written in the book of life?
- What a shield this is to protect us from disunity! What a promise this is—A promise that will humble us to the dirt yet exalt us to the skies!
- Oh to think that my name is written in heaven in the Lambs book of life—and it is written in blood! Christ Jesus has purchased my body and soul for His heavenly glories!
- **WILLIAM PRICE:** “We drown our sins in the Red Sea of Christ's blood.”
- “I am not my own; I was bought with a price. Therefore I must glorify God in my body!
- **Q.** Can you see the book of life in your imagination? All who have ever been, are now, or ever will be united to Jesus Christ through faith are written there—some of you who have not believe YET are written there now. Think about that book, that says, “Brett Anthony Baggett” and then read your name right next to mine. The next time you disagree with someone who belongs to Jesus, think about your name written right beside theirs.
- It is the same Father who unconditionally chose you, adopted you, and loves you for Christ's sake.
- It is the same blood of the Redeemer that cleanses you from all sin. *Oh think of the precious blood of Christ spilt for US!*
- It is the same Spirit that raised you from your spiritual deadness in sin and gave you the gift of faith in Christ; the same Spirit that is transforming you from one degree of glory to another.
- **It was with the same heavenly pen that your names were written in the book of life!**
- **Q.** How can you live disagreeably with a saint on earth whose name is written on the same scroll as yours in heaven?
- “...our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (**Philippians 3:20-21**)
- Can you bicker with fellow saints while your eyes are fixed on the Savior and all of His glorious promises in the gospel?
- **Q.** Which saint do you need to “agree” with? **A.** Reconciled now. Do not let another day go by allowing bitterness to build.
- **You must stand firm and you cannot stand firm without the saints!** You cannot stand with firm with the saints while you slay any in your heart.
- **THOMAS BROOKS:** “Your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure. Therefore faint not, hold on and hold up, in ways of well-doing, and *Heaven shall make amends for all!*”