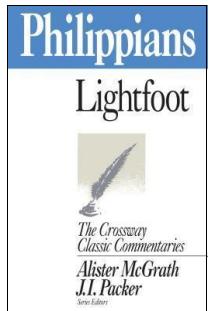


Personal plea

4:1,2 For Paul to break the flow of the letter in this way, what is a fair assumption about these women?

[4:2] Euodia and Syntyche appear to have been ladies of rank, or possibly (like Phoebe, Rom.16:1) deaconesses in the Philippian church ... They may have belonged to the company of women to whom the Gospel was first preached in Philippi, Acts 16:13 ... [Lightfoot 158-159]



4:3 Who, likely, is Paul's 'true comrade' [NAS; yokefellow, KJV, RSV]? What may we assume is Paul's reason for referring to 'the book of life'? (cf. in the Lord, v.2)

[4:3] ... if Euodia, realizing that Syntyche has been redeemed to God by the same precious blood as herself, and is indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, determines to think of the virtues or anything worthy of praise in her life and personality; to magnify her graces and minimize her faults ... she will be so attracted by what is of Christ in her that she will find herself linked in heart to the one from whom she had previously turned coldly away. [Ironside 115]

Peace passing understanding

4:4,5 What might we deduce from this emphatic repetition, and its connection with the preceding personal advice and the Lord's nearness? (1 Cor.13:7)

[4:5] This consciousness of the imminent advent was a mighty lever, by which to lift the whole state of thought and feeling in the early Church to those higher levels, the best and most glorious levels, which the Church of God has ever attained ... If every one of us could do as the late Mr Spurgeon did, who said he did not recollect spending a quarter of an hour without the distinct thought of the presence of Christ, life would become ever so much better, brighter, and stronger than it is. [Meyer 208-11]



F.B. Meyer

4:6,7 Define the relationship between anxiety and thanksgiving (contrast Psalm 55 with Psalm 56, esp. vv.12,13)

[4:6] Half our worries would immediately melt away if we began to sing a psalm of praise. Some anxieties can resist everything except thanksgiving. When that begins, they melt away like icebergs in tropical seas. The life that is ungrateful is very cold, and icebergs abound in its atmosphere. Let us raise the temperature and we shall be amazed at the results. [Jowett 185]

The power of thanksgiving

4:8 Identify Paul's 'point of contact' with the aspirations of paganism (Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31)

[4:8] Let these six sisters stand at the gateway of your soul, and challenge every thought as it offers itself, admitting only those thoughts which approve themselves as true, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. O God, let these six angels come into our souls, and from now until we meet Thee, let us give the entire control of our nature up to their serene, strong, wholesome restraint, that all that is inconsistent with them may be abashed, and everything which is consistent with them admitted to infill and dwell within us. [Meyer 236]

'What we weave in life, we wear in eternity'

Thinking and doing are the conditions on which the God of peace will tarry in the heart. To think rightly, and to do rightly – these will bring the blessed dove of heaven to brood in the nest of your soul. Almost everything in life depends on the thoughts, as the forest lies in the acorn, and Scripture itself lays stress upon this.

The wise man says: 'Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life;' and, again, we have it: 'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.' ... If a man cherishes bad thoughts, almost unwittingly he deticates; he cannot help it. There is a profound philosophy in Rom.i., where it says that because they refused to retain God in their minds, but cherished their vile lusts, God gave them up to their passions to defile themselves ... Our character takes on the complexion and hue of our inward thinking ... Thoughts are the looms in the wonderful machinery of the inner life, which are running day and night, and weaving the garments in which the soul shall be arrayed. If you will care for your thoughts, the thought will mould character reflexively and unconsciously. [Meyer 229-31]

4:9 In order to imitate Paul, how must we view 'orthodox teaching'? (John 13:17)

[4:9] Paul had also given them the concrete expression of abstract truth: "and heard and saw in me." They knew his life among them which was an open book. This is the Bible that the world eagerly reads, the epistle that is known and read of all men – the life of Christ in God's people. [Robertson 136]

Invocation

Study 8a: CONTENT in ALL CIRCUMSTANCES (4:10-13)

4:10-12 How is Paul able to reconcile the Philippians' gift with his financial ethic? (1 Cor.9:6-15; 1 Thess.2:9)

[4:12] John Wesley is reported to have said that he did not know which dishonoured God the most – to worry, which is really to doubt His love and care, or to curse and swear. Yet every saint would shrink from the latter with abhorrence, while many of us have no sense of the wrong we do when we fret and worry. [Ironside 120]

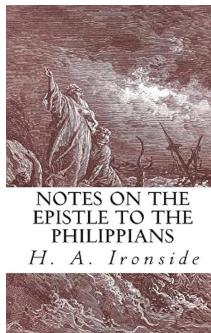
4:13 What, for Paul, is the secret of contentment? (1:21-24)

Study 8b: THANKSGIVING, BLESSING INVOKED (4:14-23)

4:14-18 How is Paul on the spot, as it were?

[4:14-17] Paul gave the Philippians their crown of glory as the first of the apostolic churches to rise to the full height of complete co-operation in the missionary enterprise ... The way to lay up treasure in heaven is to give it away while on earth ... It is literally true that we only save what we give ... If the gospel could be preached to the world free of all cost, it would be a misfortune to the churches, for they would be denied this spiritual growth that comes from hearty giving to the Lord's cause. [Robertson 144-45]

[4:18] And so the principle is clear: the servant of God is to go forth in absolute dependence upon the One who has commissioned him, and who makes Himself responsible to meet his needs. But the people of God are called upon to be exercised before Him as to what share they should have in the support of those who are thus engaged. No ministering brother has the right or authority to demand support from the saints. They, not he, must judge whether he is worthy of that support. But, on the other hand, if receiving from him in spiritual things, it is, we are told, a small matter that he should reap their carnal things. "They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor.9). [Ironside 123]



4:19-23 Enumerate some of our 'riches in glory' that Paul meditates upon in these few verses (1 Jn 3:1)

[4:20] With his growing experience of grace, Paul became increasingly grateful, and the letters of his old age abound in thanksgiving. He had learned the secret of keeping a wakeful spirit by the ministry of "a grateful psalm." And really there is nothing like gratitude for keeping people young. The pestering microbes, which are so destructive of the peace and happiness of old age, cannot live in its fine and

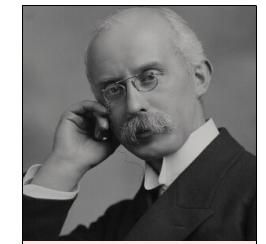
tonic air. [Jowett 226]

[4:23] "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" ... And so this letter, which began in a prayer for grace, ends in the same petition. It is a little volume of graciousness, bound within the covers of grace. It is therefore a model letter, and should be regarded as the type of all Christian correspondence and conversation. [Jowett 239]

[4:23] And what is its secret, its elixir of undying life? It is the Name of Jesus Christ ... The incidental topics and interests of the document are numerous indeed; but the main theme is one, and it is Jesus Christ. From first to last, under every variety of reference, "Christ is preached." ... The mere number of mentions of the Saviour's name is remarkable. More than forty times we have it ... [Moule 255]

'He puts the Infinite into the inch' – do we?

[4:21] Everything in the Christian life must be pervaded by Christian grace and clothed in sacred beauty. Nay, it may justly be said that a man's growth in grace may be measured by the progressive sanctification of the things "which are least." The Christian disciple begins with large canvases, he advances to the small canvas. He draws his picture upon a thumb-nail. He puts the Infinite into the inch. Therefore I am not surprised that this great epistle is culminating in the sanctification of the common salute, the hallowing of the ordinary courtesies between man and man. And I think the lesson is by no means gratuitous. There are many Christians, whose integrity is unimpeachable, who would yield their life rather than lie, but who are sorely lacking in fine courtesy, in gracious and winsome behaviour. They are never suspected, but they are never liked. Their discipleship is unquestioned, but they are regarded as boors ... a professing Christian should be ashamed of roughness as he is of falsehood, of courtesy as he is of a blazing temper. Truth is grace possessing human speech; courtesy is grace possessing common behaviour ... I would that Christians who worship in the same building would become a little more expert in the gracious art of Christian recognition. And I would that Christians who worship in different buildings, and under different forms, would become a little more free and liberal in the Christian salute. How coolly we treat one another; how often we "cut" one another. And the world is looking on. [Jowett 228-233]



John Henry Jowett

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