

# STANDING FIRM THROUGH UNITY

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## READ Philippians 4:1-3

**ILL: 300 movie** – horribly deformed man seeking to join the Spartan army fighting the Persians

- He remarks that he wishes to redeem his father's name, trained to fight with spear, sword & shield.
- Thrusting his sword with power comments that he will kill many Persians for the King
- The king rejects him because he doesn't understand the source of the Spartan's power or their method of fighting... both which are based on unity.
- We work as a single unit which is our greatest power. Each man protecting the man to his left with his shield. One weak spot will bring down our entire army. Opposite of what the deformed man said.

This is exactly what Paul is getting at in this passage...

- as a church, all its members **MUST** stand firm in the Lord in unity for that is their strength as Christians.
- As a church, all the members **MUST** see the purpose of their personal growth not merely to improve themselves but to better love the body... for this is to glorify God.

## Pleading with the Church Body to Agree

This letter was intended to be read to the entire congregation of each of the house churches in Philippi.

- In that setting Paul personally names two people – who need to be in agreement.
- Their disagreement was threatening the unity of the church which is absolutely critical.

What does it mean to be in agreement?

- This is not about a sinful issue – because of the public mention of their name & uplifting comments.
- Refer back to Phil. 2:2 *“complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”*
- Paul is talking about biblical agreement, and methodology. Let the bible lead you to agreement:
  - as it speaks to ultimate purposes for life and ministry,
  - as it speaks into issues to determine right from wrong, acceptable and unacceptable.

Then you are to agree on the Bible perspective – after that you are to bear with one another as different and support & encourage while being different.

- Then you will be of the same mind biblically, having different personalities, perspectives, & gifts.

You are the one responsible for unity in the body... not the other person to fix themselves.

- You are never to wait, ignore, deny, or place conditions for someone else meet before you seek to unify.
- If you believe someone is being disunified and do nothing, **YOU** are the problem with the unity in the church.

## Fighting for Unity in Others

First, who is “true companion” or “Yokefellow”? (Luke, Paul's wife, Epaphroditus, or name of “Syzgos”) Intervention to help others who are stuck in relationship disunity. Third party unity – it is all our

## Conclusion

This is what we have by grace in Christ.

- Our works will not do and can not stand – they can only fail and destroy relationships.
- But by the grace of Christ alone are we saved, and can freely admit weakness, error, & sin.
- As we rest in Jesus for both salvation and the life of faith that follows, we can conquer sin and restore what sin damages. This is how the kingdom of God is built.

