

BROKEN CHAINS
The Philippiian Series #13
July 2nd, 2017

TEXT: Philippians 4:2-3

CONSIDER THIS: When we began the **BROKEN CHAINS** series several weeks ago, we acknowledged that many times the great promises of Philippians 4 (lasting joy, peace, contentment) are unfulfilled in the lives of Christians. Is it a mistake then to cite these promises when trying to encourage other Christians? Are we setting them up for defeat, discouragement and disillusionment if we point them to promises that are likely to fail? **GOD'S WORD NEVER FAILS AND GOD NEVER BREAKS A PROMISE.** Today's text alerts us to a huge barrier that we create which cuts us off from what God has promised. But take hope. There is a cure for what ails us! We can have **BROKEN CHAINS.**

GOD'S WORD TEACHES US ...

I A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP (4:2)

- A) "God cannot pour His blessings into hands that are already full." This saying reminds us that we often get in the way of God's desire to deliver on His promises (Malachi 3:8-12).
- B) For Paul to mention these two women by name, in a public letter, meant at least two things:
 - 1) Their dispute was **public**.
 - 2) Others were being damaged because of it.

We don't have any other information about Euodia and Syntyche other than what is implied here. Clearly they had been highly visible in service and ministry in Philippi (4:3). They may have been among the women Paul met in Acts 16:13. If so, then they were founding members of a church that was now more than 10 years old. Perhaps they were women of wealth, in which case the church may have met in their homes (similar to Romans 16:3-5). Euodia and Syntyche had a strong disagreement(s) that lingered, unresolved. It had to be made right biblically and until it was, they would miss out on God's best.

II THE COMMAND TO AGREE (4:2)

- A) Although Paul is being gentle, he speaks with a voice of command. To leave our damaged/broken relationships with other Christians unaddressed is not an option. If I have not submitted a damaged/broken relationship to biblical remedies then I am in **sin**.

To whatever degree we are not in right relationship with a fellow-believer,
to that degree we are not in right relationship with God.
To that same degree we sabotage the Philippians 4 promises.

- B) The phrase "in the Lord" is not a throw-away line, it is a dynamic and fundamental theological concept. Because we have been supernaturally united to Christ, we are supernaturally united to one another. Paul was implying that Euodia and Syntyche were close to denying the Lord Jesus Himself, something these godly women would never want to do. Paul was gently but pointedly holding the mirror of God's Word in front of them. The seed for this rebuke was planted in Philippians 2:1-5.

- C) “agree in the Lord” does not mean they had to agree identically on every little matter. It meant that in whatever way they had differences of opinion, those differences would be submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They would disagree in a very humble and agreeable manner. They would be like-minded about the pre-eminence of Christ.

In essentials, unity.
In non-essentials, liberty.
In all things, charity.
- Martin Luther

III THE COMMAND TO HELP (4:3)

- A) “Loyal yokefellow” is probably a proper name (Zusugus), which means “one who pulls well in a double harness”. Paul knew he could depend on Zusugus to bring the Word of God to bear upon Euodia and Syntyche. Every Christian must be equipped and willing to be a Zusugus.
- B) “Contended at my side” is the translation of a Greek word used of athletes who played on a team together, co-operating with one another in an intense pursuit of a common goal. Somewhere along the way Euodia and Syntyche had allowed personal agendas, personality differences or **hurt feelings** to sidetrack them from the team. Unless it was fixed, they would not be able to truly experience the promises of joy, peace and contentment because their division was contrary to their supernatural union with Christ and with each other.

Individuals in this type of condition seldom recognize that they are **HURTING THE ENTIRE BODY**. The solution is provided in Philippians 2:1-5; Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-18.

IV CLEAR THE DECK FOR GOD’S PROMISES (4:4-19)

- A) Paul’s letter doesn’t begin at 4:4, it begins at 1:1. Here are the foundational truths upon which the promises stand:
- 1) My identity in Christ (slave and saint).
 - 2) There is power in a thankful heart.
 - 3) All circumstances are by Divine appointment.
 - 4) God is a full-time teacher.
 - 5) My trials can become a blessing for others.
 - 6) Focus on the eternal perspective.
 - 7) The glory of God and the exaltation of Christ means everything.
 - 8) Imitate the humility of Christ.
 - 9) Avoid false spirituality.
 - 10) Conduct my relationships biblically.

When I lack joy, peace and contentment, I need to consider what I have done to sabotage it, and what I need to address in my outlook in order to experience it.

NEXT WEEK: THE PROMISES!