

## Philippians 4:1-9 — Christian Endurance

**August 2, 2020**

Good morning CrossWinds! Turn in your Bibles to Philippians 4. This morning, I am at the Spencer Campus covering for Pastor Jordan while he is on vacation. I will be back on the Spirit Lake campus next week. Before we get started, let me tell you what is happening for the next few weeks with teaching at CrossWinds. Today, we are studying the first nine verses of Philippians 4. Next week, we will finish the book of Philippians. Philippians went quick, especially during COVID. It is only four chapters.

After we finish Philippians, I will take a little break for the two weeks. I will be around the office preparing for fall but not in the pulpit. Pastor Kris Neider will preach for a week. Pastor Andy will preach for a week. That will bring us to August 30. I will be back in the pulpit and we will return to our study in the Gospel of Mark. We paused our study in the Gospel of Mark when COVID hit in the spring. It will be good to get back to that gospel. We will pick up Mark in chapter 13, which is the most difficult chapter in the book, and one of the most difficult in the Bible. It is about the end of the world. At the rate things are going, it feels like it will be soon so I expect good attendance as soon as we announce that is the topic.

Today, we are in Philippians 4. Let's read Philippians 4:1-9 together and get to our study.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 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, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:1–9 (ESV)

In the fourth chapter of Philippians, Paul begins wrapping up this letter. These verses are bullet point summaries of themes he has already discussed in previous chapters. He is saying, “If you didn’t get it, these are the things I want you to know.” The big theme he puts them all under and that he is using to hammer home is “stand firm in the Lord.” You can see in the first verse.

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

If they had football in the ancient world, Paul would have been a good coach. He understands what coaches need to do when it comes to getting the most from their players. They need to build them up, then send them out. That is what Paul does in this verse. He begins by building them up.

Paul tells the Philippians how much he loves them. He reminded them how much he longs for them. He misses them and is constantly thinking of them. He cares about them. They are his joy. That means he loves them like a father that cares for his children. He is proud of them like a father is proud for his children. If you have children, you know what I mean. You know what it is like to see your son or daughter succeed on the athletic field. You know the joy in your heart when your son or daughter succeeds in life. That is the way Paul feels

about the Philippians. He loves them and is proud of them like they are his own children. They are also his crown. When Paul says that, he is thinking of the day when he stands before Jesus and will be rewarded by Jesus. Paul was confident the Philippians would be his joy and the reason for his reward on the day he stands before Jesus.

After Paul builds them up and tells them how much he loves them. He sends them out and challenges them. The challenge is to stand firm in the Lord. It doesn't matter that we begin well for Christ. What matters is we stay strong for Christ and finish well for Christ. Too many people begin well for Jesus but they flame out and crash along the way. Paul doesn't want the Philippians, and us, to finish poorly for Jesus.

It is like the Indy 500. It doesn't matter if you start the race. The only way to place is to finish the race. If you crash into the wall, blow an engine, or burn out a tire, your race is ruined. In the same way, after we start life with Christ, we must keep our eyes on finishing well for Christ. If we flame out along the way, it ruins everything.

In verses two to nine, Paul gives us five hurdles, that is five challenges every Christian must handle if they want to follow Jesus for the long-haul. Every one of these hurdles, if not handled successfully, will cause us to crash, to flame out, and not finish the race of faith. They are as follows: 1. We must learn to maintain unity with other Christians and not be sidetracked into fighting with other Christians. 2. We must learn to keep a good attitude that comes from who we are in Christ, not become a grumpy Christian because life in this world is difficult. 3.

We must learn to be exceedingly gracious to people when we have been wrong by people. 4. We must learn to handle our anxiety through prayer. 5. We must guard our though life if we are going to stay faithful to Christ in this life.

We have a lot to cover. These hurdles we must overcome if we are going to follow Christ for the long-haul are not just for the Philippians. They are also for us. If you are a Christian for any length of time, you have already faced some of them and you will most likely face all of them. Let's learn how to overcome them so we are faithful to Christ all the way to the end.

### **1. I must work for unity and pursue humility.**

I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 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, whose names are in the book of life. Philippians 4:2–3 (ESV)

Put yourself in the church of Philippi. You are at church and this letter from the apostle Paul has arrived. The church has gathered to hear this letter being read. Earlier in the letter, Paul talked about the importance of Christian unity because of Jesus, but it was more theoretical. You heard what Paul said, but it didn't change your life. At this point, Paul changes course. He takes off the gloves and gets serious. He addresses two women in the church who are fighting with one another by name. Talk about an awkward moment! You could picture them hearing their names in Paul's letter and them wanting to slide under their chair. This is like pastor Jordan addressing people in the church by name during a sermon and telling them to stop fighting. I am sure that grabbed their attention.

What do we know about these ladies and their disagreement. Not a lot. We know the disagreement was vocal. Everybody in the congregation knew

about it. Everyone in the church knew about these ladies and that they were fighting. Nobody was untouched. It was such a big disagreement between them that even Paul knew about it , and he was under house arrest almost 2,000 miles away in Rome.

We also know the disagreement between them was not theological. If one of them had gone heretic, Paul would have said something. Paul is never shy away from calling out people out if they were drifting away from Jesus or distorting the truth about Jesus. Look at the book of Galatians. When people in that church started to become heretical slaughtered them in his letter. He essential told them hell is hot, eternity is long, and you are heading there in a hurry. You need to head in the opposite direction right now. Paul doesn't do anything like that with these ladies. There is no issue of heresy. There is no crucial theological deviation. These are ladies having a disagreement on a secondary matter, on a preference matter and they have let their differences become device. This is such a big deal that a worship service looks more like a session of congress with democrats and republicans yelling at one another instead of a church meeting..

We also know these ladies were influential. Paul says they used to work with him when it came to sharing the gospel. These ladies were pillars in the church. Maybe they both ran the women's ministry or were co-leaders in BSF. I don't know. Maybe Euodia was the lead worship singer. Synteché showed up but she was better so Euodia was asked to sing harmony and she doesn't like losing center stage.

We don't know what the issue was between these two women. It really doesn't matter what the issue was. What matters is there was a fight between them that was tearing about the church and it was over a matter secondary importance, not primary gospel importance. People in the church had drawn battle lines. People were taking sides.

Paul is just adamant about this. Ladies. You need to work it out. You need to get along. Here is the problem. *Whenever there is division between Christians in the church, it is always a fight between more than two people.* People around you will start supporting you or hating you. *People don't choose sides based on the facts. They choose sides based on their friends. A fight between two people in the church always lead to a division in the church.*

*The second big problem with this church fight is it leaves us constantly expending sideways energy in the church.* That means, when people get together, instead of talking about Jesus and instead of worshipping Jesus, and instead of sharing Jesus, all people's energy goes into gossiping and fighting. You can imagine the conversations in the hall, "Did you hear this? Did you know what she said to her? Have you heard the latest gossip?" The mission of the church derails because the focus is on the fight and not on Jesus.

*The third big problem with fights and disagreements in the church over secondary issues is it destroys the witness of the church.* If you go to Portland, New York, or Chicago, you expect to see fights. You expect to see violence and killing, especially right now. That is why people are moving out of the city at record numbers. Nobody wants to be there.

The same thing happens when people fight in the church and start rioting with one another like the antifa versus the police. People start leaving. Nobody wants to live in an unsafe community that is a war zone. Nobody wants to go to a church that is a war zone. These battles over secondary issues of preferences leave people running.

The church is supposed to be different. It is supposed to be a little taste of heaven where there is relational unity and harmony between people. That doesn't mean everyone in the church gets along with one another. Of course there are disagreements. It is how we handle those disagreements that matters. It is the way Christians commit themselves to working through disagreements and still loving one another, praying for one another and caring for one another that makes all the difference. When a church has disagreements but people work through them and still love one another even if they don't see eye to eye with one another that the church becomes even more attractive to others. People see when there are disagreements, God's people handle them in a way that honors Jesus. That makes all the difference.

Unfortunately, after 25 years of pastoring, I have seen far too many Christians that have prayed together, worked together, and done life together part ways over truly petty disagreements, not gospel issues.

Since unity among Christians is so important, where does it come from? How should we handle our disagreements? Paul gives us some answers.

Paul tells these ladies they must agree in the Lord. That little phrase *in the Lord*, is referring back to Philippians 2:5-11 where Jesus was the one who humbled himself. He didn't cease his identity as God, but he gave us the honor and glory of being God to take on a human body so he can die for our sin. Jesus humbled himself by going from the top of all things to becoming the most despised of all things. He became sin for us so he could save us and restore our broken relationship with God the Father.

Restoring the broken relationship between us and God was so important to Jesus that he was willing to become the most humble being in the universe to accomplish it. He was willing to even die to accomplish it. If Jesus was willing to humble himself and be wrong to restore our relationship with God, shouldn't we be willing to swallow our pride and humble ourselves to restore broken relationships with our brothers and sisters in Jesus?

If part of the gospel involves swallowing our pride and embracing humility to restore broken relationships even when we have done nothing wrong, shouldn't we be willing to do that? Jesus gave us a pattern to follow. As Jesus humbled himself to restore us to God, and he didn't deserve to be humbled, shouldn't we be willing to humble ourselves to restore our relationship with a brother or sister in Christ even if we have done nothing wrong? We should be willing to sacrifice our preferences issues in the church if it brings unity to the church. This doesn't mean you have to agree on everything and start ordering the same toppings on your pizza but it means giving up our preferences for unity is part of the gospel.



The Jesus that unites us is bigger than the differences that divide us. When we let preference issues tear us apart as a church, it is sometimes because we have lost sight of the significance of the gospel. The gospel, and what God has done for us through Jesus, is such a big deal that it turns most of our people problems into peanuts. What God has done for us is such a big thing, our preference issues are really nothing in comparison. People who are often fighting over things in the church have often lost sight of the big thing in the church, that is Jesus and the significance of what he has done for us!

If we can't resolve our problems by being humble like Jesus and by putting issues in perspective by the gospel, the next step we are to follow is we are to get someone from the church to help us resolve it. Paul says, I ask you also, true companion, help these women. At first we wonder, who is this guy nicknamed true companion? I think it is in your footnote that the Greek for that nickname is Syzygus. Some scholars believe Syzygus, which means true friend, was not a description of this person but was the actual name of this person. That is probably true. In the ancient world, they named people based on admirable character qualities, just like we do today. For example, we have girls named Grace. We have girls named Faith. Those are girl names that highlight an admirable character quality. In the same way, I believe Syzygus was this guy's actual name, but like the girls Grace and Faith, he was named after an admirable character quality called true friend.

Who was Syzygus? He was probably the pastor of the church or the head of the elder board in the church. Either way, the point is clear. When there is

conflict in the church, people must work hard to solve it. If they can't solve it, church leaders must get involved to help people solve it.

The last step in resolving conflict is to remember the big picture. Paul reminds these ladies that their names are in the book of life. Ladies, work out your differences now because you will not be fighting about those differences later in heaven. In heaven, the non-gospel issues you are making a fuss over now will seem like totally foolish things in the presence of Jesus later. It is also better to work through those disagreements now before we stand at the judgment seat of Christ rather than Jesus ironing out issues for us when we are standing at the judgment seat of Christ.

So as Christians in the church, we will always have conflict. Most of those conflicts are over secondary issues. People's feelings get hurt. People don't get to do what they once did. The church grows and changes. The color of the carpet is different. We no longer have shag. The style of the music changes. Banjos are no longer the lead instruments. When those changes happen, there is plenty of opportunity for conflict. Paul says, "Don't let that tear apart Christ's church! The Jesus that unites us is greater than the preferences that divide us. Humble yourself to solve those conflicts. Swallow your pride and don't perpetuate those conflicts.

**2. My attitude matters. I must be a person filled with joy because of Jesus, not grumpiness because of my circumstances.**

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4 (ESV)**

A common struggle in the Christian life as we follow Christ for the long-haul is maintaining a joyful heart. Paul talked about the importance of being joyful

many times in this letter. Let's face it, that is tough. Life is hard. We have rioting in the street. We have a virus that keeps us apart. We have financial challenges. We have the summer to enjoy being outside but winter is coming, and winter in Iowa is tough enough before COVID. It isn't just that life is hard, but life is an emotional roller coaster. If we do well on a test in school, we feel great. If we bomb a test later the same day, we feel terrible. We are fine when we have our health. We are depressed when we are sick.

While everyone in the world has their attitude go up and down because of life circumstances, as Christians, we are to be known for having joy in spite of our circumstances. That doesn't mean we never have hard days. All of us have those days. What I am saying is that overall Christians are to be joyful people. Our attitude isn't determined by the good things and the tough things that happen each day. Our joy-filled attitude comes because of who we are in Jesus and what God has done for us in Jesus. That means we have joy even when the world is falling apart around us. Even when the world is falling apart around us, what is really important is ok. We are loved by Jesus. We are saved by Jesus. Nothing can tear us out of God's hand. We get to worship Jesus. We are the most blessed beings in the universe because of Jesus!

Let's be practical. How do we restore our joy when times are tough? One of the things I like to do when I am having a tough day, is to listen to Christian worship music to help me fix my thoughts on Jesus and what God has done for me through him. That way, even when life is falling apart around me, I am remembering what God has done for me through Jesus and worshipping God

because of it. It gets my eyes off of myself onto Jesus and what really matters. If I am having a really tough day, I go for a long run and listen to worship music because the run helps me deal with the stress and the worship music helps me to fix my thoughts on Jesus and what God has done for me through him.

To be clear, what gives me joy when I listen to worship music, is not the music. It is the truth of God's word that is put to music. Let me share with you some truth from God's Word that is a joy to sing.

1. We rejoice in God's sovereignty. No matter what happens to us, we know it is not beyond God's knowledge and control. This reminds us about the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. Even the evil things were done to him, that couldn't thwart God's good plan for him. God used the evil done by his brothers and incorporated it into God's good plan for him as the way God brought him to Egypt so Joseph could be God's man to save many lives. What was true for Joseph, it also true for you and me. God takes the evil that is done to us and he uses it as part of his good plan for our lives. Evil done against us can not destroy God's good plan for us.
2. We rejoice that God saved us and made us his child. I don't trust in what I have done to make myself right with God. Jesus did it all. I simply trust in what he has done for me through Jesus. God is so good, he has promised to give me an inheritance through Jesus. He has made me the most blessed being in the universe through Jesus. All of my sin is taken away because of Jesus. How can we not celebrate this? Even when life is tough, how can we

be whining people when God has done all this for us, and we deserve none of it.

3. We rejoice because we know God is able to supply all of our needs. God knows exactly what we need to accomplish the plan he has for our life. He promises to supply all we need to accomplish his will. When God dropped manna from heaven so there would be enough food to take the nation of Israel across the desert. If God can supply his people's needs miraculously every day for 40 years, he will provide exactly what we need every day as long as he has work for us to do.
4. We rejoice because we know we can talk to God any time in prayer and he is listening. The one who created everything passionately loves us. He hears us and he responds to our prayers according to his wisdom and goodness.
5. We rejoice because death is gain. The worst moment of our life is the best moment of our life. The moment we lose life, we gain being with Jesus, which is far better than this life.

I know what some of you are thinking. You understand this in theory but you don't see how this will work in your life. Your job is so bad, you can't even watch The Office because it is not funny. It resembles your real job. To all of you who think your life is too hard to have joy, I want you to remember the beginning of the church in Philippi.

After Paul began the church in Philippi, Paul and Silas were arrested, they were beaten bloody, then put in stocks in the bowels of the Philippian prison. What were they doing to maintain joy in the agony of that night? They were fixing

their eyes on Jesus by singing about Jesus as he went through suffering and pain. It is by singing to Jesus and focusing their attention on Jesus that they could have joy in their suffering.

If we are going to stand firm in Christ for the long-haul of life, we need to do the same. Life will get hard. Satan and circumstances will try to turn us into the scrooge from the Christmas Story and make us irritable people that are attractive to no one. We must fix our eyes on Jesus. We must sing to Jesus. Let us have a heart filled with gratitude to Jesus and make Jesus attractive to everyone.

### **3. I must focus on being gracious to others, even when I am hurt and disappointed by others.**

**Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; Philippians 4:5 (ESV)**

The key word in this verse is reasonableness. It is the Greek word *epiekes*. What makes this Greek word important is that it is difficult to translate into English. There is no single English word that encapsulates the full meaning of that Greek word. This is why modern translations use a variety of words when they translate this verse. Some translations say, "Let your graciousness be known to everyone." Other translations say, "Let your reasonableness be known to everyone." Another translation says, "Let your gentleness be known to everyone." If this word can mean graciousness, reasonableness, and gentleness, "What does this Greek word mean?"

The best way to help you understand the word is to describe the meaning of the word. Here is how one resource I ran across described this word. This word means a willingness to accept less than you think you are owed. It is a

willingness to allow your self to be wronged by others yet not make a huge issue out of it. It is desiring only good for others and not trying to get even with them. It is going beyond what is expected to help other people. It is patiently tolerating injustice, mistreatment, and people being bitter toward us without retaliating or seeking revenge.

It means if someone mistreats us, misjudged us, misrepresents us, or ruins our reputation, it is humbly and graciously accepting it, overlooking it, and not declaring war on them.

In today's world, it would be a rioter smashing the windows of a store in Portland Oregon, then they stole the merchandise out of the store. Next they poured gasoline on the carpet and set the store on fire. As the rioter was running out of the store they deeply lacerated themselves on a shard of glass in the window they broken. They ended up on the ground in front of the store clutching their arm trying to get the wound to stop bleeding. In that moment, the store owner has a decision to make. Will the owner get their shotgun out and finish up the rioter or will the owner of the store get out. the first-aide kit to help the rioter? Which one would you do?

We know exactly what Jesus would have done. Jesus embodied what it means to only seek the good of those who help us as he prepared to hang on the cross when he was being killed by Roman soldiers and a vicious mob.

And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. Luke 23:34 (ESV)

The apostle Peter talks about the same thing.

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:23 (NIV)

If we are going to follow Christ for the long-haul, we need to have this forgiving attitude that brushes off the wrongs done to us and seeks the best for the people that hurt us, not retaliation. You say, "That is impossible." If someone hurts me, I will get even with them. If that is true, your savior is named Rambo, not Jesus. Rambo gets even with people. Jesus humbles himself and dies for people.

Let's face it. We will have disagreements between Christians. How will we handle the hurt from those wounds? Will we bottle it up then get even with people or will we go out of our way to forgive people and love people, even when we are hurt by people.

#### **4. When I face anxiety, I must constantly turn to God in prayer.**

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6 (ESV)

Anxiety about the future is a huge issue in society. One study says 40 million Americans struggle with anxiety disorders, that is 18 percent of the US population over the age of 18. Another study claims that almost a third of all money spent on health care goes to treat conditions related to anxiety.

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down,... Proverbs 12:25 (ESV)

Paul tells us that as Christians, we handle anxiety differently. We are not to be anxious about anything. We are not to be anxious about who we will marry, what our grade will be on the final, where we will go to college, we will have enough money for retirement, we will have enough money for medical bills.



When we start to feel anxious about those kinds of things, we are to pray about those things. Prayer is to be our reflex reaction to worry.

Whenever we start to feel anxious and worry about the future, our reflex reaction must be to pray about the future. That doesn't mean God will make all our problems go away. When we give our anxiety in prayer to God, we know we don't need to worry because God will take care of us and he is watching over us. What could be better than giving your worries about the future to the God who loves you and he holds the future?

Let me tell you how I handle anxiety in my life. When I am going through stressful times, I get up early and I pray before I start my day because I can feel the anxiety in my life beginning to build. Like you, I have those mornings when I am not sure I want to get out of bed and face the day. I either go up to my office above the garage and put my face in the chair and pray to God about my concerns on my knees or I sit on the back deck by myself and talk to God in prayer as I watch the sun come up. Those times in prayer are especially calming to my heart because God reminds me he loves me and he is handling what worries me.

I don't just run through my prayer in a hurry but I try to talk to God about my worries. I try to think about my worries. In that time, sometimes God brings Bible passages or verses to mind and reminds me how they apply to the challenges I face. Other times, God helps me see things about people and situations I am missing so I know how to face the challenges. One thing that

always happens after praying to God and listening to God is I have peace from God.

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7 (ESV)**

This is one of the ways Christians are to be different from the rest of the world. Everyone else is filled with anxiety about the future. We aren't filled with anxiety because we have talked with God about the future and nothing is out of his control.

Peter talks about the same thing in 1 Peter 5:7.

**...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)**

Isaiah talks about the same thing.

**You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3 (ESV)**

This week, if you haven't been praying about your worries, take time to find your lazy boy where you can get alone to talk to God. Take time to get on your back deck as the sun rises so you can pour your heart out in prayer. When you are praying about life's worries, I will be praying too. God will provide the peace both of us need in our worries and troubles.

## **5. I must guard my thought life if I am to follow Christ for the rest of my life.**

**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8–9 (ESV)**

This is one of my favorite passages in Philippians. Paul says what we think about will affect our lives. Every temptation we face will come at us through our minds. Our minds are the command center. The mind can reach backward in

time to recall memories to relive them. The mind can reach forward in time with our imagination to create the future.

If we are going to stand firm for Christ in the long-haul, we must be careful what we think about, especially in tough times. What we allow our minds to think about will become what we act upon. This is the way advertising works. If an advertisement can get you thinking about a product, they know you will likely purchase the product. What we think about becomes what we act upon. This is why social media is causing so much unrest. If they can get you to believe something is terribly wrong, they know you will act upon it. If they tell you all the protests are peaceful, even as cars are burning in the background, they are trying to make sure you do nothing about it.

Whatever direction people's thought lives go, their real lives will go. This is the way Satan manipulated Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. If he could get her tasting the fruit in her mind, he knew she would reach out and taste it with her mouth.

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, [your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:3 \(ESV\)](#)

Satan knew that if Eve entertained sinful thoughts in her mind, she would acted upon them in her life. In the same way, if Satan can get us consuming sinful entertainment in your thought life, it won't be long until we are acting out our sinful desires in our real life. This is why we must carefully guard our thought life to follow Christ for the long-haul.

Look what Paul says about the importance of our thought life being pleasing to Christ.

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ... 2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV)

I challenge you to be careful what you put into your mind. If we are thinking about sinful things now, we will be doing sinful things later. It is only a matter of time.

## Conclusion

So how to we stand firm for Christ over the long haul. There are five things we need to know.

1. We stand firm in Christ for the long haul by working hard to resolve conflicts between us, not letting them fester. We solve those conflicts by learning to swallow our pride and be humble with one another. We solve conflicts by realizing the gospel that unites us is greater than the differences that divide us.
2. We stand firm for Christ in the long haul by being joy-filled people in a negative world. Our joy is not a farce. We are filled with joy because our joy isn't coming from our circumstances. It comes from what God has done for us in Jesus which is so good how can we not have joy in our heart even when life is falling apart.
3. We stand firm for Christ in the long haul by being people filled with gentleness and reasonableness toward others who wrong and hurt us. We brush off the hurt and instead of seeking to get even, we go out of our way to do good for others and don't keep a record of wrongs.

4. We stand firm for Christ in the long haul by learning to give our anxieties and our worries about life to Christ every day. He may not take away life's difficulties but he will give us supernatural peace in return.
5. We stand firm for Christ in the long haul by being people who guard our thought life so we are only thinking about things that are wholesome and true. We limit our Internet. We refuse to fill our minds with garbage. We read the Word of God, which guides us into the truth.

My friends, let us stand firm for Christ all the way to the end of our life. We don't just need to start well for Jesus. Let us finish well for him too.



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