



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Philippians 43 Modelling- Obedience

Philippians 4:9, *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Spiritual stability:

What it takes to be strong in the trying times?

How can we be spiritually strong?

How can we have that stability that looks death right in the eye?

How can we have that kind of calm in the midst of grave difficulty?

Every Christian hunger for that.

Stand firm in the Lord.

V 1, *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

Apostle Paul wants the Philippians to be strong.

He wants them to be rooted and grounded.

He wants them to act like men, to be courageous and bold and strong as they stand for the Lord.

Last few weeks we saw the principles of spiritual stability.

1. Peace and harmony

V 2-3, *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.* ³*And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

You are to be a peacemaker, cultivating peace in the fellowship of love.

What is the one great need of the church?

Harmony in the church.

Why?

Because loving, peaceful harmony is a stabilizer.

When you are in an environment of harmony and love, you are stabilized by that environment.

On the other hand, discord, disunity, chaos, division in the church will always produce great insecurity, and it will destabilize people.

For the sake of unity of the church, you are to do everything you can to be a peacemaker so that in the peace of the church and in the loving bond of the church, you find spiritual strength.

2. Joy

V 4, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*

This joy is based upon our relationship with the Lord, not our circumstances.

We are to rejoice in the Lord. Our joy is because of our privileged, permanent union with the Lord.

We must cultivate that deep-down joy that comes when we understand and live in the light of a privileged union with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Humility

V 5, *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*

You expect nothing and demand nothing.

If you rightly assess your sinfulness and know you deserve nothing, then you don't mind when you get nothing.

But if you wrongly assess your worthiness and assume that you are worthy of much and deserve much, if you don't get much, you are very upset and unstable.

You can be spiritually stable in the most difficult time, if you understand that as an unworthy sinner you don't deserve anything anyway, and you should be grateful for the grace of God, which is yours, and not expect anything beyond that.

4. Faith

V 6, *Be anxious for nothing,*

Spiritual stability demands resting on a confident faith in the Lord.

“The Lord is near;”

“be anxious for nothing.”

That’s sequential.

The Lord is near in terms of His presence and because the Lord is near, we are not anxious for anything. So spiritual stability, then, is predicated on a confident faith in the Lord. That’s the bottom line.

- If you understand that God is sovereign,
- If you understand God is loving,
- If you understand that God is in control of everything in your life for His glory and your good,
- If you understand that nothing is beyond the purview of God’s control,
- If you understand that God’s orchestrating everything for eternal purpose and you can rest in that confident faith,

Then you are going to be stable in the most serious times.

5. Thankfulness/ Gratitude

V 6, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

Here is the antidote to worry!

Paul says that,

- if you know your God,
- you know your God is near,
- you confidently trust your God in the midst of any trial,
- knowing that it is affecting His purpose,
- then being thankful in the midst of that for the purpose of God even in the difficulty,
- you are granted the peace of God,

that peace will guard you and protect you from anxiety, difficulty, distress, dissatisfaction, discontent, doubt.

6. Godly Thinking

V 8, *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*

In order to be spiritually stable, to experience peace, joy, humility, faith, and gratitude, you must be focusing on godly virtues. You must be focusing on godly virtues.

You cannot experience godly virtues unless you focus on godly virtues.

We must be committed to thinking and thinking on the right things.

7. Modelling- Obedience

In order to be spiritually stable, you must have godly attitudes, godly thoughts, and the source for all those thoughts is the Word of God.

Stable life can be witnessed by godly attitudes generated by the Spirit of God, godly thoughts generated by the Word of God, and godly conduct.

One writer says, "All the countless concerns that burdened the Philippian Christian's mind could be kept at bay if they would continuously reckon up, think over, estimate aright, fill their minds with all things good and true and rise up and put into practice the demands of the Christian gospel."

That is our final point.

Thoughts can never be abstracted from action.

V 9, *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Paul is now calling for them to do!

The Greek word is '**prass**'. Meaning practice, do and it's a very common verb. It is a verb which means repetition, action that is continuous.

A lawyer having a practice, it means it's a constant way of life.
A doctor has a practice.

Different than practicing something.

We say someone practices the violin or they practice tennis using the word in the sense of working on something to learn it.

When we say the doctor has a practice, we mean it is his practice to do that. It is his normal routine to live as a medical doctor. That is the intent of the word **prass**.

Paul is saying this should be your practice.

This should be your pattern of life!

Godly attitudes:

- Peace,
- Joy,

- Humility,
- Faith, and
- Gratitude.

Godly thoughts:

- True,
- Honourable,
- Right,
- Pure,
- Lovely, and
- Good.

Godly thinking produces Godly attitudes.

Then godly practices produce godly deeds.

Spiritual stability finally comes down to the matter of living a life disciplined to obey God's standard.

The reason people have so many problems, which spin them off to all the books and counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and all the formulas. The reason they do that is because they haven't properly assessed the fact that the inability to stand your ground and live a balanced, and stable.

Christian life is directly related to the godly attitudes, godly thoughts, and godly practices.

How in the world is someone going to fix you?

Because you are the only one who can fix those areas in the power of God.

You are the one who must walk in the Spirit that He might produce in you the peace, joy, humility, faith, and gratitude.

You are the one who must go into the Word of God and find there the thoughts of true, honourable, right, pure, lovely, and good repute.

You must do it, and you are the one who must discipline your life to do what is right.

You show me a person filled with the Spirit and, therefore, having godly attitudes, you show me a person in whom the Word dwells richly and so they have godly thoughts, you show me a person who lives an obedient Christian life, and I will show you a spiritually stable person.

The first thing we must do is diagnose the problem at its root as a spiritual one.

When you have godly attitudes produced by the Spirit and godly thoughts produced by the Word, together they arrest your flesh before it can commit any sin.

The flesh moves to disobey God's standard. It moves that way because the godly thought and attitude arrests it, preventing it from committing a sin against the law of God.

The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly. If you try to use fleshly weapons against the flesh, it isn't going to help. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual. Spiritual attitudes and spiritual truth, spiritual thoughts, will bring everything captive to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6, *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

It's a great truth. It takes everything prisoner and pulls it down to the obedience of Christ.

You want godly attitudes and godly thoughts to take your flesh and bring it captive to the obedience of Christ.

Sin in your behaviour will produce spiritual instability.

Sin in your practice will produce spiritual anxiety.

However, purity in behaviour will produce peace and stability.

Isaiah 32:17, *The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.*

When we see a person living a pure, godly life, we can witness that they are experiencing peace of God in their life.

This is true not only in the millennial kingdom to come, where righteousness of Christ ruling in the world will bring peace, but it's true in your life.

Righteousness produces peace.

Righteousness produces quietness and confidence.

Isaiah 32:18, *My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,*

Righteousness produces peace.

It was at the cross where righteousness and peace met. It is the wisdom from above that is peaceable, the true wisdom. The righteous wisdom of God produces peace.

James 3:18, *Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

At the cross, righteousness and peace kissed each other.

Where there's righteous practice, there is contentment, comfort, calm, quietness, peace, tranquillity, and stability.

The Philippians needed to continuously put into practice, to uncompromisingly embrace, and to allow their conduct to be habitually controlled by, the law of God.

Therefore, virtue conquers vice.

Romans 12:21, *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

So, Paul's words are very direct. You have got to practice these things as a way of life. These things need to be your habit. This calls for discipline.

The discipline of your life that creates the habits.

As you grow as a Christian, you begin to notice that the habits of your life are right. The diminishing of the bad habits, the arrival of the good ones. That is a matter of self-discipline by the power of God.

As you discipline your life and begin to cultivate good habits, you get your life under control.

V 9, *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Where did a Christian in Philippi go to get information about how he was supposed to live?

They went to the Scripture.

But all they had was the Old Testament.

The New Testament books were not yet brought together.

All the New Testament books certainly weren't written at this time. They may have had access only to a very minimal amount of written revelation in the New Testament.

So, if they wanted to know God's standards for life, where did they go?

They had to turn to whom?

To the apostles.

Do you remember in the book of Acts it says that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost?

Three thousand people believed and were baptized.

Acts 2:42, *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Why?

Because that was the source of their truth until all these books were brought together.

So, before the composition of the New Testament and its full acceptance as authoritative Scripture, the standard of Christian belief and the standard of Christian behaviour was embodied in the teaching and the example of the apostles.

The Apostles were the persons who had the authority of Christ and who practiced the standards of Christ.

That's why Paul says, "*Be the followers of me as I am of Christ.*"

What does Paul say now?

You want to know how to live?

You can't tell them to turn to the New Testament, it's not together yet.

So, Paul says, "*What you learned, received, heard, and have seen in me, do these things, practice this way.*"

The apostles really lived among the people.

They ate with them,

They slept with them.

Because it was an utter essential that their life be totally, from start to finish, exposed to them so they would learn how to live.

Paul uses 4 terms here:

1. Learned,
2. Received,
3. Heard,
4. Seen.

Each of them highlights a very important aspect.

1. Learned

The Greek word '*maths*' is a learner, one who receives instruction.

This comes from the Greek verb root for the word "disciple." It has to do with the idea of teaching, instructing, and discipling.

So, Paul here is referring to his personal instruction of them.

- Sometimes preaching to the Philippians,
- Sometimes teaching them in a formal class,
- Sometimes conversing with them in a dialogue,
- Sometimes discipling them one-on-one.

In Ephesus he went from house to house this is what mentioned in Acts 20.

Acts 20:20, *how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,*

“practice these things that I have taught you.”

This was instruction, expounding to them the Old Testament truths, expounding to them the meaning of the New Testament revelation which he had received from God, explaining to them how to apply it in their life. His personal teaching exposition to them.

Paul says the similar thing to his spiritual son Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:10-11, *But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

You follow everything in my life that’s the only place Timothy could go to learn.

Timothy was traveling with Paul he just patterned his life exactly after Paul. Since he didn’t have a New Testament yet, he just patterned his life exactly after Paul.

The key function of the apostles was not just to reveal truth only but to live it. So that the early church would have a model to follow.

Paul on numerous occasions says you are to follow my pattern.

Philippians 3:17, *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.*

Follow my example and the example of people who follow my example.

They had to follow a human pattern.

1 Corinthians 4:16, *Therefore I urge you, imitate me.*

1 Corinthians 11:1, *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

First, you must practice in your life the things I taught you and the things you learned from me.

2. Received

The word “received” has some interesting usages in the New Testament.

Most commentators would agree that the word “received” can be used as a technical term for the revelation from God that came direct.

Paul has in mind here the received Word. Not what he taught them in explaining and expounding the Scripture, but what God gave him, and he gave them, which was the Scripture which they received.

1 Corinthians 11:1-2, *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*
² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

Here Paul is talking about something different.

Paul is saying, “Not only do you follow my example, not only do you listen to what I say, but you are holding onto the tradition the same way I delivered it. I delivered something to you, and you have received it.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8, *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*
³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

What God delivered to me I received, what I delivered to you, you received.

Paul is talking about the treasure of Scripture, and I take it that we can use this in the technical sense, the received Scripture.

Galatians 1:9, *As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

Here he seems to be more directing his thought toward the revelation from God in actuality.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2, *Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.*

Paul is talking about the revelation from God to him, from him to them, that became the treasure which they were to guard.

1 Timothy 6:20, *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge*

Paul is saying,

I want you to practice in your life what I have taught you.

I want to you to practice in your life what I have delivered to you of the Word of God itself.

The Word and my comments on it, my instruction from it.

2 Timothy 2:2, *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

You received it from me you pass it on.

You received it from me, they will receive it from you.

They will pass it on to the next generation.

So, Paul is passing on the baton!

3. Heard

The third term he uses here is the term “heard,”

Paul has already covered what he told them in “learned.”

Paul has already covered what God told them in “received.”

Now Paul is alluding to what they have “heard” from other sources than himself or God.

What you have heard about me and is true of me. Because the word spread everywhere about Paul.

His reputation was impeccable.

They had surely heard much from others about his

- ministry,
- character,
- lifestyle, and

➤ preaching.

So, Paul is not afraid that something has been exposed that isn't right.

- ✓ What you have learned – what I personally have given you;
- ✓ What you have received – what God has revealed through him by His revelation;
- ✓ What you have heard about me from many sources. Practice these things.

4. Seen

We are coming to first-hand experience.

Not what you heard from me, second-hand.

Not what I gave you from God, third hand.

Not what you have heard from people around, fourth-hand or fifth- hand.

Butt first-hand what you have seen.

You have seen my life and you have observed me. We have been together.

Practice these things.

What a supreme call to Christian duty.

Everything you have been taught, everything that's been revealed from God, everything you have heard to be true of my

lifestyle, and everything you have observed in me, do it as a way of life.

The apostles were called not only to walk with Christ, but they were called to be living models of New Testament Christianity before the early church. That was their calling.

Paul modelled the standard. He had the peace, the joy, the humility, the faith, and the gratitude. He thought on what was true, honourable, right, pure, lovely, and of good repute. He walked according to the revealed truth.

Paul says, “You have got to live like this. Follow me, I am your pattern.”

When the New Testament came it was written down. Now the pattern is the New Testament. Those who preach, teach and represent the New Testament are permitted to live according to the word of God.

Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, talking about the man who built his house on a rock and a man who built his house on the sand.

Matthew 7:24-25, *“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵and the rain descended, the floods came,*

and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

What about the man who heard but did not practices it?

Matthew 7:26-27, *“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”*

Paul is saying practice what you have learned.

You remember what James said in

James 1:22, *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

It’s the same pattern exactly.

“Practice these things that are true in my life. Practice the lifestyle that I live.”

Why?

Because I am living according to the revealed Word and Will of God.

Every one of us should be able to say that, too!

“Follow my life because I am following the revelation of God.”

“Follow my patterns, I am following the revelation of God.”

What is the promise attached to that?

V 9, *The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

God is the God of a lot of things.

- ✓ The God of love,
- ✓ The God of grace,
- ✓ The God of mercy,
- ✓ The God of compassion,
- ✓ The God of all comfort,
- ✓ The God of justice,
- ✓ The God of power,
- ✓ The God of light,
- ✓ The God of life.

Why does he say the God of peace?

Because Paul is talking about spiritually strong, stable, firm, tranquil, content in the midst of difficulty.

He is talking about,

- being adequate for life,
- being sufficient for all the difficulties.
- being able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.
- being content in anything and in everything.

That is why he calls Him the God of peace.

That is why in verse 7, he mentioned the peace of God.

If you have

- godly attitudes,
- godly thoughts,
- godly deeds,

Then you will be guarded by the peace of God and the God of peace.

What a tremendous statement!

Therein lies your comfort, your calm, your quietness, and your confidence.

It was so real to Paul.

The God whose character is peace and the God who is the giver of peace, the source, the origin of it. He began to think of God that way.

Why?

Because he was in endless trouble all the time.

We can find that from **2 Corinthians 11:23-33**.

Always in difficulty, facing temptation, hostility, persecution, tests, and trials. Paul had found God to be the God of peace.

Why?

The Spirit had granted to him godly attitudes, the Word had granted to him godly thoughts, and he had policed his life by

those means to godly practices and so he knew the peace of God.

Romans 15:33, *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

Romans 16:20, *And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

2 Corinthians 13:11, *Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23, *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Thessalonians 3:16, *Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.*

How can you know the God of peace and the peace of God?

How can you be calm in the midst of everything – temptations, onslaughts, doubts, fears, troubles?

By living according to God's pattern,

By thinking according to God's pattern,

By feeling according to God's pattern – right attitudes,

That means you must be disciplined.

We must be disciplined to add to our faith virtue – pure conduct, patterns of life, practices of righteousness.