



World Christian Fellowship

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Philippians 40 Humility and Faith

Philippians 4:5-6, *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

Where do you go to find stability in life?

Where do you go to learn to deal with anxiety?

Where do you go to get your life really stabilized?

Psalm 1:1-3, *Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ²But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

That is the kind of life that most people would really like to live. They would like to be firmly planted in a place that flourishes with all the delights of life.

They would like to produce significant fruit.

They would like not to dry up and wither away but to flourish throughout their lives and whatever they do, to prosper. That's the stable life. That's the spiritually stable person.

Psalm 1:4-6, *The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

There is a man whose life is deeply rooted, firmly planted, who sucks up the pure water of life, a man who is productive, a man whose life is sustained in its flourishing capability, and a man who does things that really count and prosper.

Then there is a man who's just like chaff, just blowing around without purpose, without value, shapeless, worthless, rootless, unstable, good for nothing.

The first one is the one who walks with God.

The second one is the wicked man who rejects God.

The key to the first life is found in delight in the law of the Lord, and in His law, he meditates day and night.

Two things contribute to a stable life:

- Delighting in the Lord that's having a living relationship with the Lord.
- Meditating in His Word so that life is viewed from a divine perspective.

How to be spiritually stable here in Philippians 4.

Spiritual stability demands cultivating peace in the fellowship of love, and we noted that in verses 2 and 3.

Harmony in the church is a great stabilizer. The unity of believers stabilizes the individual.

Maintain a spirit of joy from verse 4.

Cultivating an attitude of joy, maintaining a spirit of joy, incessant joy, independent joy in the sense that it doesn't depend upon circumstances.

Always rejoice in the Lord in your privileged union with Him. Joy is at the heart of stability.

Humility & Contentment:

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

It is really speaking about contentment.

The Greek word could be translated big-heartedness/ very generous/ good will/ friendliness/ magnanimity.

Let your graciousness be known to all men.

Certainly in

- sweet reasonableness,
- big-heartedness,
- good will,
- forbearing,
- friendliness,
- magnanimity,
- charity,
- mercy,
- leniency,
- indulgence,

There is grace

Humility is that someone may have offended, mistreated, misjudged you, but you humbly accept it!

- You may not deserve it,
- You may have been treated badly,
- Your reputation may have been damaged badly,

Humbly and graciously accept it!

- You may have hated Me.
- You may have been My enemies, God could say.
- You may have shaken your fist in My face.
- You may have blasphemed Me.

- You may have mistreated Me, misjudged Me,

I still reach out to you in love.

When you have that kind of an attitude, you are a stable person. Spiritual stability belongs to the humble and gracious!

You don't demand your rights. You get into that kind of mentality, and you will become an unstable person.

Paul says is be humble, gracious, don't demand anything, give charity to those who are committing crimes against you. Give mercy toward the failures of others and you will be a stable person.

Spiritual stability comes when I have no demands for myself!

Whatever way you are treated then you will be fine with that.

Faith

V 5-6, *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.
6Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

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

“The Lord is at hand/near.”

The Greek word ‘**eggus**’ can mean near in space or near in time.

The Lord is near.

What does that mean?

Paul was talking about Rapture in mind.

Philippians 3:20, *“Our citizenship is in heaven from which also we eagerly wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Certainly, the Lord was near in terms of time. Return of Christ sometime soon, obviously, was a relative term.

We still say His coming is soon, relative to the history of this world and to eternity. So, it could be that he’s got the Rapture in mind.

Maybe it’s used in the sense the Lord is near in time because you are going to die soon.

Another possibility!

Either Lord will come and take you to be where He is, and you will meet Him face to face. Or you are going to die soon and see Him, don’t be anxious.”

Psalm 119:151, *You are near, O Lord, And all Your commandments are truth.*

The Lord who will come, the Lord who will meet us in death, is now near.

Don't you live your life in that confidence?

God is living in you, providing the very spiritual life which is your life.

We are dependent on that! The Lord is near, so don't be anxious, or unstable.

Understand the Lord is near.

Now, we must understand not only that the Lord is near, but we must understand who this Lord is who is near.

Illustration:

David and Adullam

David is running from Saul. He is really in no-man's land. If he's going to get away from Saul, he is got to get out of the area, so he runs to the next region, which is Philistia. David ends up in Gath, and he goes to Achish, the king of Gath.

David was looking for asylum from Saul.

1 Samuel 21:10-12, *Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.* ¹¹*And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the*

land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"¹² Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

David's running for asylum, exile in a sense, protection. The servants of Achish say that we don't want this guy around here. If you think Saul is a formidable enemy, this David is a warrior.

David finds out that they told him that, and now he panics, assuming now he's right there in the environs of the king who can kill him on the spot, and in his panic he has to come up with a ploy to get out of there.

1 Samuel 21:13, *So he changed his behaviour before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard.*

This is the king David, scribbling on the gate, and let his saliva drool all through his beard like a mad man.

Why did he do this?

He got un-stabilized.

He was so fearful that he was taking things into his own hands.

1 Samuel 21:14-15, *Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me?"¹⁵ Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the*

madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

So, David's little ploy works. David escaped but still he got to run away from Saul.

Where does he go?

1 Samuel 22:1, *David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him.*

David sits in the cave and starts to think about what a fool he had just been.

Do you think God could have delivered him from Achish?

Did he think God could have delivered him from Achish?

Yes.

Practically?

Panic set in.

From the cave of Adullam David wrote Psalm 57.

Psalm 57:1-3, *Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by. ²I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs all things for*

me. ³ He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

David goes through this tremendous statement about the power of God.

Psalm 57:7-11, *My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise. ⁸ Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn. ⁹ I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the ^[c]nations. ¹⁰ For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds. ¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth.*

If David had remembered about God in Gath, he wouldn't have acted like such a jerk. He wouldn't have embarrassed himself and been such a reproach to God as if the God of David couldn't deliver him from that little man named Achish.

That is the way our life goes on sometime.

Our theology works on Sunday, but when we hit the wall on Monday through Friday and we get some trauma in our life, then we start drooling in our beards.

We lose our self-control. We flip out.
It is a lack of confidence in God.

If you have a confident trust that the Lord is near, what are you worried about?

It doesn't matter to me what men say against you.

It doesn't matter how you are treated.

The Lord is near, and the Lord knows the truth about everything, and the Lord is the ultimate equalizer.

All things are equitable in His hands for everyone else and me, and this is the source of my security, trust in the presence of my God.

If I understand who my God is and that He is near, that's all I need to know.

Another illustration:

Habakkuk

Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah, and he had an interesting problem, and this will speak volumes to us about our own problems.

Habakkuk 1:2-4, *O Lord, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save.*
³*Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises.* ⁴*Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.*

This is a prophet who's doing more praying than prophesying.

God, what are You doing?

Look at Your people, they are a mess and You are not listening, You won't hear.

I told You about violence and You won't save.

Why do You make me look on this iniquity?

Why do You make me look on this wickedness?

Why do You make me look at the destruction and the violence in Judah?

The strife, the contention, the ignoring of Your law, the terrible miscarriage of justice, wicked surrounding the righteous people, justice being perverted, why?

God, why are You tolerating this?

Remember us Judah, Your people.

Why don't You bring revival?

Why don't You cause repentance?

Why don't You turn this thing around?

So, God answers him.

Habakkuk 1:5-11, *"Look among the nations and watch— Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. ⁶For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which*

marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. ⁷ They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. ⁸ Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle that hastens to eat. ⁹ "They all come for violence; Their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand. ¹⁰ They scoff at kings, And princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, For they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. ¹¹ Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, Ascribing this power to his god."

Here is an utter pagan nation who believe only in their own might, and they are a law unto themselves and they sweep in to and they are going to come and just wipe you out.

Problem number one:

Why doesn't God bring revival?

Problem number two:

How can God use a worse nation to punish Judah?

How can You take the Chaldeans, they are worse?

How can they be Your instrument against Your covenant people?

None of this makes sense.

✓ You are a holy God!

- ✓ You ought to revive Your people.
- ✓ You are a covenant God.
- ✓ You keep Your covenant.
- ✓ You are a just God.
- ✓ You don't have a worse people punish a better people.

Doesn't make sense, I don't understand this.

Heavens are silent, no answer.

How am I going to deal with this?

Habakkuk was seriously traumatized!

Habakkuk 3:16, *When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops.*

This prophet should be hospitalized.

- He is shaken on the inside, all his organs are going up and down, his stomach is in knots.
- His heart is beating irregularly or uncommonly.
- His lips are shaking and quivering.
- His bones ache through his whole body.
- He is shaking from head to foot.

Totally traumatized.

What does Habakkuk going to do?

Here stands a totally distressed prophet in a state of panic, not an imaginary problem.

A very serious problem of nation is being wiped out by God.

What he does?

He starts to remind himself about his God who is near!

Habakkuk 1:12, *Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction.*

You are eternal!

You are before, after, outside and above history!

You reign in eternal timelessness.

You are bigger than this little deal.

There is a massive eternal plan that is way bigger than what I am seeing here. I feel better already. Somehow this fits the eternal perspective, even though I don't understand how You can do it this way.

Habakkuk 1:13, *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*

God is uncreated. He is the God who exists in perfect unperturbed tranquillity, uninfluenced by anything or anyone.

We will not die. God, You are faithful.

He is reminding himself that God made a covenant, we won't die, we can't die.

God had a covenant. God is true. God can't lie.

Habakkuk is starting to feel better.

Habakkuk 2:4, *“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.*

“The just shall live by faith,” that Paul uses.

He's starting to sound “I am just going to have to trust God for this one. I am just going to have to believe even though I don't understand.”

Habakkuk 3:17-19, *Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— ¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.*

Fig trees blossomed, that was normal

Fruit on the vines, that was normal
The yield of the olive oil that was normal.

They must cure the wood 400 years before they can carve them
because they are so full of oil.

If all the normal things of life you always count on suddenly stop
and the fields produce no food and the flock is cut off from the
fold and there are no cattle in the stalls!

Yet I will exalt in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my
salvation.

I don't care if everything I always depend on falls apart, if
everything is reversed, if everything you can always count on
you can't count on anymore, I will still rejoice in the Lord, I will
still put my hope in God. God will give me the ability like a
mountain goat to walk upon the precipices along the cliffs of life
confidently.

That is a stable man. His stability was directly related to his
assessment of his God.

The Lord is near and if you will delight yourself in Him and if you
will meditate on His law day and night, on His Word day and
night, you will then know the God that He is, and you will know
how He acts, and that will be the source of your own
confidence.

What is the result of knowing the Lord is near?

“Be anxious for nothing.”

If you worry, the real underlying demonstration is you really don't trust God.

That is a form of blasphemy.

1. If you imagine that God can't help you, then you have created a god other than the true God, and that's blasphemy. You have created a god who is not God.
2. If you believe that God could help you but won't, that's blasphemy, too, because you are questioning not His character but His integrity and His Word.

So, the key to a stable, firmly planted life is to be delighting in the Lord and meditating on His law.

The Christian church today is a lack of understanding about who God is and how God acts. They do not understand the majesty of His wonderful attributes, and that is why we have such wholesale instability. Because we do not know God, we do not trust God to act consistently with His revealed character and His revealed history of acts.

Churches are not giving people a knowledge of the true God in His character and His works. As a result, there is a tremendous lack of confidence in Him.

No wonder people have guilt, fear, and anxiety, have an inadequate knowledge of God and an inadequate trust in God. There's only one resting place for the soul and that's in God. We stand fast in the Lord.

Matthew 6:25-33, *Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

²⁸ *"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

³¹ *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

How can you be stable?

1. Love, seeking peace and harmony in the fellowship of love.
2. Joy, cultivating a joy that I have that is deeper than my circumstances that's in my relationship with the living Christ.
3. The graciousness of humility that demands nothing, accepts anything, commits it to God.
4. Great confident trust in the Lord that knows that He's got it all under control.

That's how to have a stable life!