

I. Introduction (Why is this important?)

- **Question:** How do you handle conflict?
 - avoid, indifferent, dismiss it, unfollow, exclude someone. untag someone, gossip
- We have a choice in how we respond to conflict. What/who rules our hearts in exposed in how we respond. It boils down to a battle of Humility vs Pride. That is the difference between unity and disunity.

II. Lesson

• Read Philippians 4:1-9

- Take a look at **verse 1**, it is a purpose statement that follows the reason(s). Paul's point is for us to stand firm in our faith in Jesus Christ and much more.

A. **Question:** But what is our motivation to stand firm? Why should we stand firm?

- **3:21**- our bodies will be glorified to be like Christ
- **3:20**- present reality that our citizenship is in heaven and Christ will return to restore things
- **3:18-19**- the tragic destiny of the enemies of the cross, destruction
- **3:7-17**- righteous experienced through faith in Christ
- Knowing and experiencing God's love now and understanding its fullness that is to come, changes the way we live. Knowing that we have secured peace with God for eternity and so much more, stirs in us gratitude that leads to obedience. Paul says stand firm in your faith brothers and sisters.

B. **Question:** Well Paul, what does it mean? Exactly, what is being commanded here?

- Paul has been teaching joy is found in unity and self-sacrifice to Philippi because there was division in the Church.
 - **Consider again 1:27, 2:2 & following, 2:5, 3:17**
- Look at **verses 2 to 3**, the division revolved around a conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. If Paul is going to mention the conflict then it must have been devastating to the church.
- Stand firm means to be unified.

• **Question:** How are people unified?

- It is when the common bond between two persons is Christ and that bond in Christ becomes central to the relationship. That changes the way one views the other. Each one's attitude toward the other will be the same as Christ's expressed on the way to the cross.
 - **Consider 2:1-11 again**
 - When this is true of you, you will not claim your rights for your advantage. but you will take the form of a servant.
 - So you will die to yourself and eat at the restaurant that others choose. At whitewater, you will wait (and not run off) to ride your favorite ride until the group makes its way to it. On the ski retreat, you ski with the group or maybe express patience with a new skier. You pursue reconciliation and forgiveness with someone who you think wronged you instead of gossiping about them or attacking them.
 - This requires humility and we see that in the humility of Christ in becoming human and choosing death on a cross.
- Notice in **verse 3**, Paul elicits the help of others to bring about reconciliation between these two women. At times, each one of us may be required to step up and help another's relationship within the group to be made right.
- **Reflection Questions:** How does this lesson apply to your life? Where is God at work in your life? Where is He giving you opportunities to make a relationship right? Where does unity need to be pursued in your life?

