

# Thinking The Same Thing And Rejoicing In The Lord

## Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:1-4

Philippians 4:1 says, "So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, beloved." The words **so then** indicate that what Paul is about to say is a conclusion. Here Paul speaks of the brothers as the "beloved and longed for," his "joy and crown." These words indicate that Paul was filled with emotion, full of feeling. Twice he uses the word *beloved*. After referring to the believers as his beloved, he again addresses them as beloved ones. The believers were his joy within and his crown without. Joy is inward, whereas a crown is manifested outwardly. In this verse Paul was saying that the believers were both his inward happiness and his outward glory. In 4:1 Paul charges the believers to "so stand firm in the Lord." The expression "so stand" means to stand in a particular way, in the way presented in the foregoing chapters. In this verse Paul was urging the believers in Philippi to stand in the way he had shown them.

### THINKING THE SAME THING

Paul continues, "I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord." (4:2) This verse indicates that these two sisters were dissenting from one another. They were not of the same mind. Hence, there was the exhortation to strive together with one soul for the gospel (1:27), to be joined in soul, thinking the one thing (2:2), and to have the same mind to pursue after Christ (3:14-15). These were very good sisters who had been helpful to Paul. (4:3) Paul says of them that they "contended with me in the gospel, with both Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life." The Greek word rendered "contended" is an athletic term; it means to labor with, to strive together for, to wrestle in company with, as a team of athletes. These sisters were a help to Paul and the other workers, contending with them in the gospel. However, even these sisters needed help to be one by thinking the same thing in the Lord. According to the foregoing chapters, to think the same thing is related to pursuing Christ in order to gain Him and enjoy Him in full. Euodias and Syntyche were not pursuing Christ to the uttermost. Any who are tempted to be dissenting should heed Paul's word to these sisters to think the same thing.

### GENUINE YOKEFELLOW

In 4:3 Paul uses the term yokefellow. In ancient times farmers used two oxen to pull a plow. The term yokefellow thus refers to being yoked together with another to bear a common burden. In writing to the Philippians, Paul was seeking a genuine yokefellow, one who would bear the same burden as he, under the same yoke. If we do not seek Christ to the uttermost, we have not yet been yoked. Rather, we are still quite free in our thinking. If we have truly been yoked, we shall think the same thing as Paul. Those who had not been yoked together with Paul would not have been able to help him with Euodias and Syntyche. Paul was burdened to help these sisters to think the same thing—to pursue after Christ that they might gain Him and experience Him. But because Paul was in a Roman prison far away from Philippi, he needed someone there in Philippi to be yoked together with him to bear this burden. Paul expected that among the saints in Philippi there would be at least one who was the same as he was in pursuing Christ. Because Paul had been yoked, he had no freedom in his thought or concept. His mind had been yoked to think the one thing.

At any cost and by any means, Paul wanted to pursue Christ to the uttermost. This was his mind. Hence, his mentality had been absolutely yoked by Christ. Apart from Christ, he had no liberty to think anything. His mind had been fully yoked by Christ, in Christ, and with Christ. As he was writing to the Philippians, he was looking for at least one saint who could work together with him to help the two dissenting sisters to think the same thing. Anyone who wants to help them must first be yoked under the same mind as Paul had. To have "this mind" and "to think the same thing" is to be a genuine yokefellow. Paul's expression "genuine yokefellow" is related to his charge to the Philippian believers to have this mind, to think the same thing, even to think the one thing. After issuing this charge, he mentions two sisters who were dissenting. Then he goes on to urge someone to labor together with him as a genuine yokefellow to assist Euodias and Syntyche to think the same thing, to turn from their dissension and set their minds on the pursuing of Christ.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF REJOICING IN THE LORD

In 4:4 Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Whether or not the believers were dissenting, they all had to rejoice. Those who would not rejoice were wrong, but those who could rejoice were right. I do not believe, however, that dissenting ones can rejoice very much. According to Paul's word here, we should rejoice in the Lord always. This rejoicing affords us the strength for the oneness spoken of in verses 2 and 3. In order for Euodias and Syntyche to think the same thing, it was necessary for them to learn to rejoice. Rejoicing in the Lord is also the secret of having the excellent characteristics listed in verses 5 through 9. If we would have the virtues found in these verses, we need to rejoice in the Lord. To rejoice in the Lord is a very important matter.