

SERMON SERIES: YES I CAN**(SERMON FOUR) “YES I CAN AGREE”****PHILIPPIANS 4:1-3**

“I PLEAD WITH EUODIA AND I PLEAD WITH SYNTYCHE TO AGREE WITH EACH OTHER IN THE LORD. YES, AND I ASK YOU, LOYAL YOKEFELLOW, HELP THESE WOMEN WHO HAVE CONTENDED AT MY SIDE IN THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL, ALONG WITH CLEMENT AND THE REST OF MY FELLOW WORKERS, WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE BOOK OF LIFE.”

INTRODUCTION

AS WE CONTINUE THROUGH THIS SERIES OF MESSAGES, I AM COMPELLED TO LOOK AT A TEXT THAT YOU DON'T HEAR VERY MUCH ABOUT.

THE REASON IS BECAUSE, FOR THE CHURCH, IT IS NOT AN ENJOYABLE TEXT OR ENCOURAGING TEXT.

IT IS NOT MELODIOUS LIKE THE PSALMS OR DIRECTIVE LIKE THE PROVERBS.

NO, IT IS A PAINFUL TEXT BECAUSE OF THE CONFLICT THAT IS REVEALED WITHIN IT.

I WAS READING A COMMENTARY ON THIS PARTICULAR TEXT, PHILIPPIANS 4:2-3, WHICH SAID, “THE SINS OF THE SAINTS CAN BECOME A PROBLEM AT THE CHURCH.”

AS A PASTOR, I NODDED MY HEAD AND SAID “HOW TRUE.” EVERY CHURCH CAN BECOME INFECTED BY SIN AND EVERY CHURCH NEEDS TO BE AWARE OF THE TRICKS AND SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL.

ONE OF SATAN'S GREATEST TRICKS IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE IS SOME TYPE OF MALADY IN EVERY CONGREGATION.

IF YOU WERE TO EXAMINE SIX OF THE LETTERS PENNED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL YOU WILL FIND A DISTURBING TREND:

1. THE CHURCH AT ROME HAD '*DISSENSIONS*' AND '*HINDRANCES*';
2. THE CHURCH AT CORINTH HAD '*DIVISIONS*','*STRIFE*' AND '*IMMORALITY*';
3. THE CHURCH AT GALATIA WAS TOLERANT OF '*FALSE TEACHING*' AND '*LEGALISM*';
4. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS NEEDED TO BE REMINDED TO '*WALK WORTHY*' OF THEIR CALLING;
5. THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE SUFFERED WITH '*SPIRITUAL DEFICIENCIES*';

WHEN PAUL WRITES TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI IT IS ONE OF THE MOST ENCOURAGING LETTERS THAT HE'S WRITTEN.

1. THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI DIDN'T SUFFER NECESSARY WITH A GROUP OR CORPORATE MALADY;
2. THEY DIDN'T HAVE DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES OR ISSUES;
3. THEY DIDN'T HAVE IMMORALITY OR FALSE TEACHING ISSUES OR LEGALISM;
4. THEY DID, HOWEVER, HAVE A PROBLEM.
5. THE PROBLEM AT PHILIPPI WAS WITHIN THE BODY OF BELIEVERS, TWO INDIVIDUALS, SPECIFICALLY TWO WOMEN WHO ARE EVEN SUGGESTED BY HISTORIANS AS BEING TWO CHURCH LEADERS, PROBABLY DEACONESSES IN THE CHURCH BODY,

WERE ENGAGED IN THE WORST KIND OF BEHAVIOR FOR LEADERS, THEY HAD '*PERSONALITY DISORDERS*'.

6. INSTEAD OF OPERATING IN THE CHURCH AGREEABLY – THEY ARGUED, FUSSED AND COMPLAINED, ESPECIALLY AGAINST EACH OTHER.

MAY I TELL YOU THAT THIS IDEA OF AGREEMENT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ALL WILL HAVE THE SAME TASTES IN HOUSING, CARS, SPORTS TEAMS, COOKING, BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO HOW WE OPERATE AS BELIEVERS IN THE LORD, IT'S VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE LEARN HOW TO PUT PETTY DIFFERENCES ASIDE.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE LEARN HOW TO CHERISH THE SAME VIEW, THAT WE STRIVE AT ALL COSTS FOR HARMONY IN THE CHURCH, AND WE MUST LEARN HOW TO AGREE.

HARMONY IN THE CHURCH IS NO LONGER AN OPTION. IF WE INTEND TO REACH SOULS FOR JESUS CHRIST. WE HAVE TO BE UNITED AND HARMONIOUS.

1. THE '*WORLD*' SHOULD NOT HAVE BETTER HARMONY THAT WE HAVE HERE!
2. THERE SHOULD NOT BE MORE FELLOWSHIP AT THE '*VFW*' THAN WE HAVE HERE!
3. THERE SHOULD NOT BE MORE LOVE AT THE '*CLUB*' THAN WE HAVE HERE!
4. THERE SHOULD NOT BE MORE UNITY AT A '*CRACK HOUSE*' THAN WE HAVE HERE!
5. THERE SHOULD NOT BE MORE '*SISTERHOOD*' BETWEEN THE '*DELTAS*' THAN WE HAVE HERE.

AGREEING OR BEING OF THE "SAME MIND" – "*PHRONEO*" IN GREEK – IS IMPORTANT IN THE BODY OF CHRIST AND BODY OF BELIEVERS BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE WALK

AROUND GRUMPY, ANGRY, HELLISH, DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH, TROUBLESOME, AGITATORS, USURPERS, GOSSIPERS, FIGHTERS, FLIPPANT, HATEFUL, HATERS, UNREPENTANT, SELF-CENTERED AND EGOTISTICAL.

BUT GOD WANTS US TO BE BETTER AND LEARN HOW TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AND COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER.

AFTER ALL GOD HAS DONE FOR US, HOW DARE WE OPERATE AS IF WE HAVE NO SENSE!

HE'S PROTECTED US, HE'S HEALED US, HE'S STRENGTHENED US, HE'S PROVIDED FOR US, HE'S KEPT US AND HE'S FED US.

AS WE GO FORWARD IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT GOD WANTS US TO LEARN HOW TO AGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER!

TRANSITION TO THE TEXT

THIS TEXT IS ABOUT TWO WOMEN, WHO PREVIOUSLY WERE APART OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S EARLIER MINISTRY. EUODIA (WHOSE NAME MEANS A PROSPEROUS JOURNEY) AND SYNTYCHE (WHOSE NAME MEANS PLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE).

THEY WERE EFFECTIVE WOMEN, PLEASANT WOMEN, THEY ASSISTED IN MINISTRY, THEY BLESSED THE MINISTRY, THEY REACHED OUT TO SINNERS, THEY PRAYED FOR THE MAN OF GOD, AND BECAUSE OF THEIR DEDICATION, THEY WERE INVALUABLE TO THE APOSTLE PAUL.

THIS IS NOW A FEW YEARS LATER, PAUL AND THESE WOMEN HAVE ASCENDED TO POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AND POWER IN THE LORD'S CHURCH.

YOU WOULD THINK THAT BY NOW THEY WOULD BE OPERATING IN THE CHURCH AS GROWN, MATURE BELIEVERS, ABLE TO ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH.

THEY SHOULD BE SHARING GREAT TESTIMONIES OF WHAT THEY'VE SEEN IN THE LORD.

THEY SHOULD BE GROOMING YOUNG WOMEN IN THE FAITH, BUT INSTEAD OF THEM BEING WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE THEM BE, THEY HAVE NOT PROGRESSED OR MATURE IN THE LORD.

INSTEAD OF GOING FORWARD – THEY'VE GONE BACKWARDS.

- 1. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR PRAISING GOD.**
- 2. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR LOVING GOD.**
- 3. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR GIVING TO GOD.**
- 4. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR SHARING WITH GOD.**
- 5. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR LIFTING UP THE MAN OF GOD.**
- 6. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR BEING VISIONARIES.**
- 7. THEY ARE NOW, NOT KNOWN FOR BEING SAINTLY CHURCH LEADERS.**

BEFORE WE JUMP ON THEM, SOME OF US IN HERE BY NOW, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, SHOULD HAVE MATURED IN THE LORD.

- 1. SOME OF US SHOULD BE MORE EXPRESSIVE IN WORSHIP.**
- 2. SOME OF US SHOULD HAVE FIGURED OUT BY NOW THAT SUNDAY SCHOOL IS FOR YOU.**

3. **SOME OF US SHOULD HAVE FIGURED OUT BY NOW THAT THE REASON WHY YOU'RE STRUGGLING IS BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR TITHES.**
4. **SOME OF US SHOULD HAVE FIGURED OUT BY NOW THAT THE REASON SOME FOLK AVOID YOU IS THEY ARE TIRED OF THE DRAMA.**
5. **BY NOW, YOU SHOULD BE FURTHER ALONG THAN WHAT YOU ARE.**

LET'S TELL THE TRUTH, SOME OF US HAVE GOTTEN BETTER THAN WHAT WE USED TO BE.

THANK GOD I'M NOT WHAT I USED TO BE. I ALSO AM NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE.

THERE ARE SOME MISTAKES I MADE IN MY 20S THAN I DO NOT PLAN TO MAKE IN MY 60S.

THERE ARE SOME MISTAKES I MADE IN MY 30S THAT I DON'T INTEND TO MAKE AGAIN.

PAUL SAYS, I PLEAD WITH EUODIA AND TO BE FAIR, I PLEAD EQUALLY WITH SYNTYCHE, TO BE OF THE SAME MIND.

APPARENTLY THESE TWO SAINTS HAVE BEEN ACTING LIKE SINNERS.

WE HAVE NO DETAILS ON HOW THEY FELL OUT, WHERE THEY FELL OUT, OVER WHAT THEY FELL OUT.

WE DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS CLOTHING OR A MAN OR A WEAVE IN THE STORE, BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED THAT CAUSES PAUL TO PICK UP HIS PEN AND SAY "LOOK, I HEARD WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON.

PAUL WAS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY BUT THE WAY

EUODIA AND SYNTYCHE TREATED EACH OTHER GOT TO HIM.

IF IT GOT TO HIM, AND HE WAS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY, IT APPARENTLY WAS SOMETHING THAT HAD THE POTENTIAL OF TEARING THE LOCAL CHURCH APART.

I'M NOT GOING TO WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM BUT I'M WONDERING WHY DIDN'T SOMEBODY IN THE CHURCH, WHO WAS THERE, SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THIS?

WHY WOULD THE CHURCH TOLERATE THIS TYPE OF BEHAVIOR, ESPECIALLY OUT OF TWO LEADERS IN THE CHURCH?

THEY WOULD RATHER WATCH TWO WOMEN FIGHT IN THE CHURCH AND TEAR THE CHURCH UP INSTEAD OF TRYING TO BRING SOME PEACE TO THE SITUATION.

I NEED TO SAY I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYBODY TEAR UP WHAT GOD IS DOING IN OUR CHURCH RIGHT NOW!

- 1. GOD IS DOING GREAT THINGS IN OUR LOCAL CHURCH FAMILY!**
- 2. HE'S SAVING, HE'S DELIVERING, HE'S MAKING WAYS.**
- 3. THE PROBLEM IS THAT SOME OF US ALLOW PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH TO COME IN AND TEAR UP OUR PEACE!**

WE PUT THE WRONG PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, WHO MAY NOT ALWAYS BE THE MOST SPIRITUAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. HERE'S WHAT I FOUND OUT:

- 1. IF YOU'RE MESSY IN THE WORLD – YOU'LL BE MESSY IN THE CHURCH.**
- 2. IF YOU TALK TOO MUCH IN THE WORLD – YOU'LL TALK TOO MUCH IN THE CHURCH.**

3. IF YOU ARGUE ON YOUR JOB – YOU’LL ARGUE AT THE CHURCH.
4. IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE TO HAVE THINGS YOUR WAY IN THE WORLD – YOU’LL ACT LIKE YOU HAVE TO HAVE THINGS YOUR WAY IN THE CHURCH.
5. IF YOU LIE IN YOUR HOUSE – YOU’LL LIE AT THE CHURCH.
6. IF YOU CUSS ON THE CAMPUS – YOU’LL CUSS AT THE CHURCH.
7. IF YOU SEEK POWER IN THE SORORITY – YOU’LL SEEK POWER AT THE CHURCH.

I UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN I COME TO CHURCH IT’S NOT ABOUT ME. IT’S ALL ABOUT GOD.

EUDOIA AND SYNTYCHE FORGOT THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT ABOUT THEM – IT’S ABOUT THE LORD. SERVING IN THE CHURCH IS NOT A RIGHT, IT’S A PRIVILEGE. WE DON’T HAVE THE SAME CRITERIA HERE AS THEY DO AT THE LODGE OR IN THE CHAPTER OR IN THE CLUB.

WE AREN’T LOOKING FOR BOSSY, CRABBY, ARGUMENTATIVE, UNPLEASANT PEOPLE TO LEAD IN THE CHURCH – WE’RE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO KNOW HOW TO WORK TOGETHER IN UNITY.

WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER IN UNITY GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED, THE SAINTS WILL BE EDIFIED, AND SATAN WILL BE TERRIFIED.

I HAVE SOME FRIENDS WHO ARE TREMENDOUSLY GIFTED – BUT I ALSO KNOW THEY HAVE NO BUSINESS IN LEADERSHIP!

I HAVE SOME FRIENDS WHO CAN SING, USHER, PRAY, READ THE BIBLE, BUT THEY CAN’T HANDLE LEADERSHIP.

PAUL SAYS THEY DON'T NEED ANOTHER CHURCH ASSIGNMENT – THEY NEED A YOKEFELLOW.

WHAT THIS WORD YOKEFELLOW MEANS IN GREEK IS THEY NEED SOMEBODY WHO CAN IMPREGNATE THEM SPIRITUALLY WITH A NEW ATTITUDE, A NEW DIRECTION, A NEW HOPE, AND PEACE!

PAUL SAYS I NEED SOMEBODY TO HELP THESE WOMEN! THIS CONCEPT REALLY TALKS ABOUT SEIZING THESE WOMEN, AND IT CARRIES THE CONCEPT OF CONCEPTION.

HISTORIANS MOSTLY CONCLUDE THAT IT WAS EPAPHRODITUS THAT PAUL WAS ADDRESSING TO STAND AS A YOKEFELLOW TO BRING PEACE TO THESE WOMEN!

SOME OF US NEED WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST A YOKEFELLOW.

PAUL COULD HAVE SAID TO THE PASTOR “HANDLE IT.” INSTEAD OF THAT, PAUL CALLS UPON ONE OF THE SAINTS WITHIN THE CHURCH BECAUSE MORE THAN THE PASTOR OUGHT TO BE MATURE IN THE LORD;

- **MORE THAN THE PASTOR OUGHT HAVE SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT;**
- **MORE THAN THE PASTOR OUGHT TO KNOW HOW TO FIND A SPIRITUAL, SCRIPTURAL ANSWER FOR ANOTHER PERSON.**
- **YOU COULD BE SITTING NEXT TO SOMEONE RIGHT NOW WHO COULD HELP YOU WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL ISSUES.**

1. **WE'RE MISSING THE MARK AS A CONGREGATION IF WE EXPECT THE PASTOR TO BE THE ONLY SPIRITUAL PERSON IN THE ROOM.**

2. WE'RE MISSING THE MARK IF WE EXPECT THE PASTOR TO BE THE ONLY PRAISER IN THE ROOM.
3. WE'RE MISSING THE MARK IF WE EXPECT THE PASTOR TO BE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE ROOM WHO CAN PRAY.
4. WE'RE MISSING THE MARK IF EVERYTIME WE'RE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING WE HAVE TO RUN TO THE PASTOR.
5. SOMEBODY HERE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SAY I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SING LIKE ANGELS, I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PREACH LIKE PAUL, BUT GOD CAN USE ME TO BRING PEACE TO SOMEBODY ELSE'S SITUATION.

IF THE GOAL IS TO RESTORE UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCH, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED SOMEBODY WHO IS FOCUSED, CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH AND SETTLED IN THEIR SPIRIT!

PAUL SAYS THAT THE YOKEFELLOW MUST BE LOYAL AND ABLE TO HELP THESE WOMEN!

SOME OF US ARE CRYING OUT FOR A YOKEFELLOW. SOME OF US NEED A YOKEFELLOW TO COME IN AND CALM DOWN SOME OF THE THINGS IN OUR LIVES!

I'M GLAD TO REPORT THAT IF YOU CAN'T FIND A YOKEFELLOW HORIZONTALLY, YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND A YOKEFELLOW VERTICALLY!

JESUS, OUR CHRIST, IS ABLE TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF MEN AND WOMEN.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT SOME OF US DON'T WANT TO BE CHANGED!

I'VE COME HERE TODAY TO DECLARE THAT I DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE YOU.

I WISH I COULD CHANGE SOME ATTITUDES IN HERE!

1. I WISH I HAD THE POWER TO CHANGE SOME NEGATIVE FOLK IN HERE.
2. I WISH I HAD THE POWER TO CHANGE SOME GOSSIPY FOLK IN HERE.
3. I WISH I HAD THE POWER TO CHANGE SOME HOOKED PEOPLE IN HERE.
4. I WISH I HAD THE POWER TO CHANGE SOME TROUBLED PEOPLE IN HERE.

WHAT I'M GOING TO DO IS PUT YOU IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD, BECAUSE I CAN'T CHANGE YOU BUT JESUS CAN.

HE'S GOT THE POWER TO MAKE A CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE!

THE REASON I KNOW HE'S GOT POWER IS THAT ONE FRIDAY HE DIED ON A CROSS.

THE SAME DAY HE WAS BURIED IN A BORROWED TOMB.

EARLY SUNDAY MORNING HE GOT UP WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HAND!

1. IF YOU LET HIM, HE'S GOT THE POWER TO CHANGE YOU.
2. IF YOU LET HIM, HE CAN CHANGE YOUR WAY.
3. IF YOU LET HIM, HE CAN BRING PEACE TO YOUR SPIRIT!

IS THERE ANYBODY HERE WHO THE LORD HAS CHANGED?

I WISH YOU WOULD HELP ME SAY HE'S GOT THE POWER . .

I'M NOT GOING TO WORRY ABOUT IT . . . HE'S GOT THE POWER!

I DON'T KNOW HOW – I DON'T KNOW WHERE BUT HE WILL CHANGE YOU . . .