

S.N. July 9, 78 P.M. - W.A.K.

"KEEP SHORT ACCOUNTS!"

Phil. 4:1

## INTRODUCTION

This is a most interesting subject because we live in a day when many times we find people are ready to quarrel and are unhappy in their experiences in life, and there are many people in this world who would not be happy if there were not something to complain about! I have often been amused at people who can run a commentary on all of the things that are wrong with every situation in the city, the nation, the church, and the state - including every activity in the church. These folks illustrate to me what an old lady once said in complaining about her health. She enjoyed poor health. One day when a neighbor noticed, that she was looking exceptionally well - and asked how she felt? the woman replied, who is me, I feel very well. I always feel bad when I feel well, because I know I am going to feel worse after I feel better.)

Now Paul has been giving us some insight into this little colony in Heaven located here on earth at Philippi. In the last two verses of Chapter 3 - he talks about looking for the Saviour. He has spent some time in dealing with those who were enemies of the cross. V. 18. And in Chapter 4, he is going to take up again a problem between those who had some problems.

Perhaps I ought to say a few words about V. 18 - those who were enemies of the cross. I touched on it very lightly in our last sermon. But there are people who somehow get into religion without letting religion get ahold of them. I remember reading how Lloyd John Ohgive told how he left the organized church. And he said, I decided that I would never enter the door of the church again.

He said, I had to go to a meeting at the church and some of the elders of the church got all the kids together - and decided that none would leave until they believed in God or got religion. And those who believed in God, stand up, the leader said. And those who don't - sit down.

Now this possibility that it might be what God wanted done, was certainly next to Godliness, so he thought. So this boy sat down. And he said he never forgot what the old elder said in shaking his finger at him. "Young man, if you don't believe in God, you are going to go where the buzzards are." Well, that might be better than being any place near where he was. So he says, I got up and left the church, and slammed the door behind me. Walked down the old street. But that night, he got to thinking, (my God the buzzards). And I cried and I ran all of the way home. But I reflected upon what happened. How stupid, I said, if that is religion, I have had enough of it. And he said I resisted such religion and such (God talk), by people.

You know quite often people use (God talk) and they say they know that God wants this done or that done. And he said it wasn't until he went to college and he met a group and he found out to his amazement - that you could live a life and believe in God, and have a relationship with God. And he said, I became involved in it. And furthermore he said, I am back in the church and I became a clergyman.

He said I took a trip on an airplane. And next to me I found a student. And the student asked me what I did for a living? I told him I was a communicator of life. That didn't satisfy him. No, he said, what do you do as a job. What do you have to do. Finally, he said, I admitted to him that I was a clergyman.

Awe listen he said, don't give me that God talk. I don't believe in religion.  
And neither do I responded this preacher. This amazed the boy. I told him my  
business was to introduce people to an abundant life. And then he said, we  
talked all the way to Chicago. The conversation never lagged. And the boy  
followed me all the way to the cabstand because the boy wanted life. And do  
we all. He said that he exchanged letters with that young man, and finally  
guided him into God's love.

Now Paul is expressing something of that enjoyment here as he writes to  
these people. This letter, to catch up with what is going on. But he is very  
heart broken that some of them are religious, but are not Godly along with it.

It is very much like Jude in V. 12 - there is instability in their lives.  
In 1950-57, in the Western part of the United States there was a drought. *Sand*  
storms and crops failed. Livestock died. Churches assembled to pray for rain.  
Clouds came, and they never looked so thick and so promising in those days,  
and they came close to the ground. But they did not turn loose of any rain.  
Week after week. And finally in '57 the rains came. I believe something like  
that today has happened in America. The prosperity and attendance and prestige,  
interest in church activities are declining. The message of the church is being  
ignored. And the hope for the future is being turned off. There are other  
people who turn out to rebell or revolt against it. But these clouds that Jude  
talked about were basically empty. There may have been some thunder, and of  
course clouds are important. But they are without substance. Instead of pouring  
out refreshing rain, upon the earth, they are profitless and disappointing.  
And inability to give what is needed.

Now we know that there are different types of clouds, that form the cumulus clouds. A massive cloud form that piles up like a mountain.

And then there are the stratus cloud. Which extends at low altitude - but they are carried about of the winds. A Christian should never be static - he should be ever growing.

The fact is, these people were without genuine faith and commitment to Christ. And they were unstable. Paul says they halted between two opinions. And they were on a merry-go-round type of thing. They had not yet personally become identified with Jesus Christ. And there were things that excited them, motivated them.

But they were unstable in their devotions. And instability, Paul found here, to be an enemy. They were like fruitless trees. The thing that Paul said they had, I guess we would call counterfeit religion.

You remember Jude, V. 4 said, there are certain men that crept in unawares. What does the word crept apply. Did the condition happen easily and unknown to anyone. How does one go about identifying them who are thus described. What is it to be done about it - after they had been identified. Are we taking ourselves as judges of men's salvation. How can we be sure that we do not belong to that class ourselves.

Now Paul like Jude, was talking about people baptized, registered, enrolled.

And were participating church members. They were wearing the uniform, they took the pledges, and he uses the term "enemy". That conveys one that has animosity.

They had built upon the goodness of men rather than the greatness of God. And there was spiritual let down and moral let down. And some of these were teachers who were sponsored by the church. The man who is in the church, or maybe in the pulpit, if he denies either by his preaching or practice that Christ is the Lord and the Saviour - he has forsaken the first order and the first business of the church.

For example, teaching Sunday School in a church. It is not unusual to find many many teachers in our churches. Some Sunday Schools have maybe 10 or 30, 50, 100 or even 200 depending upon the size of the congregation. People teaching in the Sunday School. Proclaiming the word of God and leading Bible Study every Sunday. Now this is a tedious chore - the church is responsible for seeing that every teacher is proclaiming Christ as the crucified, risen, redeeming Lord.

But what is implied here is that many teachers have crept in unaware. Because maybe the Pastor, or the Educational Director, or the Sunday School Superintendent or Director was eager to enlist a certain number of workers by a certain date. And he was not certain that all of these were true believers.

And when he is supposed to be opening the Bible, interpreting the Scriptures, and studying it with an open mind - he needs to have it interpreted for himself.

The church's teaching ministry does not end in the pulpit or in the classroom. It is extended out to the mission field. There are eternity bound souls, that ought to be taught.

Now I don't think that Paul tried to set any percentage of church members who had never been genuinely converted. We must be careful not to engage in a nose counting, plot dividing. Now this one looks like a goat to us. Well, it may be one of God's pure sheep. But we are safe in our territory when we point out that here are some personal and public fruits. That our percentage of church members who have had no real experience, every man, woman, and child in the church who has been converted - needs to be concerned about these things.

Because as Paul said, these that have crept into the church are potential trouble makers. They are church dividers and they teach hearsay. Who today denies the word of God. To raise up a generation of young people who have been baptized with water and not by Spirit, is to frustrate the goal of the church.

This big group of unsaved members at large, the word unawares - I think Phillip translates it, who have wormed their way in. Some of them have deliberately gotten into positions intent on liberating the masses from the nonsense of the old-fashioned religion.

Have you met such? Most of them are probably classified with the (nominal) members who are in the church. But they have set about and they have come in unawares, and due to the lack of their experience, they have joined the church. And because it is a (popular) thing to do, or because it contributed to their

family unity, or because their friends had done so, or their families or parents belong, or because they had some fear in life. And because that membership was a saving instrument. No matter how sincere, they have come in unawares. Most of them live out their lives still unaware of anything missing. So there is no real joy, no real assurance, no real spiritual power present in their lives. Others are shattered by some tragedy and they find no rock to cling too.

The unsaved church member needs the guiding hand of the spiritual Christian. He needs someone to explain and apply the Scriptures that he has discovered. He needs a Christian friend who walks daily with the Saviour. He needs the power of a Christian conversion. He needs a strong arm to help him in tragedy. To interpret God's will and to lead him from the valley of doubt, to the mountain of faith. He needs to come to the whole council of God. And be told over and over, "if thy shall confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," Rom. 10:9.

There needs to be a positive solution and a negative solution. You cannot excommunicate all of these unbelievers. The churches do have a responsibility to seeing that orthodox is maintained. Paul said, as we said before, so say I now again - "if any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that we have received, let him be cursed." Gal. 1:9.

The responsibility increases when we realize that there is a great deal of (counterfeit Christians) who are in the fellowship. And maybe been a long time in the church. Who needs to be won to Christ.

Now Jesus in the parable of the tares and the wheat, really ought to be applied here in the treatment of an unconverted member. They will not be converted, then the Lord of the harvest will do his own weeding out at the day of Judgement.

Now these have been enemies - and are doomed and condemned for destruction Paul says. Who have for a long time been heading straight for the condemnation that I shall give them.

7. The question comes up, how are you going to recognize these unconverted. What are the conditions of the counterfeits.

First ungodly. This term here is that Christ died for the ungodly! Rom. 5:6. And the ungodly need to be the object of our love, our prayers, and our witness. They are ungodly because they have no real reverence for God. They are the enemies of religion. They are without reverence for God. Without (time) or (place) for God. He may have his schedule filled with religious duties, and meetings - but God is not in his life, in his mind, and in his heart.

The deplorable condition is that he is without God! A person who is ungodly is simply ungod-like. He does not act like God, think like God, love like God.

But who does and who can. Nobody is perfect, we have discovered. Who can possibly say to us that he has lived as God would have lived, walked as God would



walk on this earth. Who can say that. Jesus, the perfect God man. And God is like Jesus. And Christ was God like. And so the ungodly person, is unChrist-like and he makes no attempt to pattern his life after Christ's likeness.

2 Second, there is unrighteousness in his life. The word lasciviousness. They abused God's grace and used every opportunity for immorality. Many many people are quite glad to hear about a new religion. A new type of church, a new way of worship. That speaks to them of grace rather than the law.

But the task of trying to live a righteous life never crosses their mind. There are those who say, we were happy to hear that Christ said - ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. But they seem to go deaf when they hear Jesus say, I have come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. Worldly church members rejoice when they read in Romans, "where sins abound and grace did much more abound." But they evidently are blind to the two verses later - "what shall we say then. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound. How shall we that are dead in sin live any longer therein." Rom. 6:1-2.

The professing of a Christian faith and denying Christian disciplines, that we are under the God of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

3 Third, you will know them because they are uncommitted. This describes the counterfeit. To accept Jesus Christ as a good man, is easy - even for the most ungodly. To include him as a great teacher is to be very agreeable. But to confess him as Saviour and to follow him as your master, in nothing short of total committment. Unless a man regulates his life according to Christ, he is

uncommitted. Unless his time, his talent, his money, his personality, his influence is surrendered - he is uncommitted. Someone has said, we are not asked simply to make up our minds about Jesus. We are asked to make up our lives. Jesus requires that we give absolute, complete surrender to him.

And this is what Paul is saying here, that these have turned out to be enemies of Christ.

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

The word, stand fast. Paul was expressing his enjoyment of the Philippians. And he was saying how are you really, how is your life, what is happening to you as a person.

One day a Doctor <sup>talked to</sup> a preacher about some information he got. He said, I got one of those strike it rich (sweepstake letters) from (Life Magazine). You have been selected to be a fortunate participant in a special offer that will make you the richest man in Princeton. Your name will soon be listed among the wealthy. All you do is take a six-year subscription to Life, and your name will be added to the drawing, you may win.

The man's answer was a gem. This is what he wrote. In your letter, you offered to make me the richest man in Princeton. I want you to know that I am the richest man in Princeton. In addition to this, I enjoy a quality of life so exciting, it makes Life Magazine like an old mother goose story. For all of those good reasons, I am asking you to remove my name from the silly contest.

A contest which cannot possibly do me any good because all that it offers is money. Who needs it when he has life. And I don't mean your magazine.

Life with a capitol "L" - that is what it is all about.

One thing Paul said, my brethren, dearly beloved, who were these people that he had such tender regard for. They were people who did not belong to his race or nation. He was a Jew and they were Gentiles. Until they were changed by the power of the Gospel, Paul preached unto them as pagans. He was cruelly beaten, jailed - but the love of Christ conquered all of that. And a Christian church was established there in that corrupt city. The victory of Paul's love can become your victory and my victory in love.

Note this, there is an exhortation. He said, that they were his joy and crown. This is not a crown of a king. But this is a crown that the victor wears in the games. One when he finishes his course. Paul's work was his concern. And they represented his winning. And Paul said, they are his crown.

What you are and what you do. Paul says, I will be victor in. This is a great idea. *Some person (done well) - (that is one of my boys)!* No Joy like being some one to chide & see them grow - crown - peak of athletic's ambition -

He adds, and stand in the Lord. Well, some of them weren't standing in the Lord. They are the ones that we have been talking about. These false brethren. They come around and upset them about their manner of eating and other things.

They were citizens of Heaven. And the figure that Paul uses here, he adds to it that they ought to be standing. It is often very hard to stand still. And attacks are said to be much easier than defense. But it is difficult to stand when you are being shot at. Eph. 6:11, 13, 14 - Paul commands as a soldier, this command. He wants them to be (immoveable). No matter if these false teachers come around and no matter if these people who are unbelievers have slipped in, you stand in the Lord.

Get the point here and the emphasis. It is not just stand, but stand in the Lord. The view here is that the dangers and the evils that may be upon the church, they are standing in the flesh and it will not over come. But their standing in the Lord, will be the power that overcomes.

*weaken, Only with Jesus Christ. Stand as soldier in shock of battle, Enemy surging down upon him. We may do wrong, later think of someone else later, only he or she had been there, it never would have happened. our safety is in the Lord!*

He next takes up the great issue of keeping short accounts. He is dealing next of all, V. 2 - with helping these women. And he comes to deal with the point of a misunderstanding. And exhortation to realize that the life is in Christ.

The first thing under that, he wants them to be united and helpful. Well, if you are going to realize that your life in Christ, you have got to be united and you have got to be helpful.

*It is interesting to note that women were playing a leading role in the church affairs -*

He is specific - he takes up the case of two good women.

Or someone has suggested, "sweet fragrance." Syntyche, <sup>fortunate,</sup> good luck or good future, is the interpretation of that name. These two woman really had excellent names.

Now Paul comes to talk - I do not know what the trouble is between these two woman. It may have been on the subject of perfection. Chapter 3:13, 16.

It might have been on the question of woman's rights. That creates quite a problem.

Men Talking one day - When such Denominations were started, one said Baptist go Back to time of John The Baptist, Other he really thought Baptist went back farther than that - even to the time of Abraham, who said to Lot, "you go your way & I'll go mine."

It might have been a matter of personal taste.

It might have been a trifle of a thing that brought about a slight bickering. Or it might have been some accidental friction between these two energetic Christians.

Now a slight breeze would cause no trouble in such a noble church.

tiny squall becomes a thundering storm.

But you know it happens often. I heard about a woman once who took offense because a dear friend of hers refused to speak to her on the street. But it turned out that the guilty woman was near-sighted and did not see her friend.

Now Paul is absolutely impartial with his exhortation as he comes here.

They expect to be in Heaven with Christ, and they are the best that he has got here on this earth. But these two good woman need help. And Paul is going to intercede at this point to bring about a reconciliation.

To say the least, they were acting a bit unlady-like. And Paul is saying, I beg you by name to make up your differences as Christians should do.

He wanted to get them back together again, and to leave off the bickering and the tif that had come about.

Paul says, you have got to get started with someone, somewhere. He is not discriminating between the two. He is not saying that one is less at fault than the other. But he is saying, you have got to start with one.

See, as he singles you out, first. Now he exhorts Euodias. And he exhorts the other lady. And perhaps he means that you may have some power with some of these, but to use all the influences that you have, that they be of the same mind to get together in these things in the Lord.

Now we know they are women, of course. They are not the names of men.

Now he would not name these two if they were not of importance. And leaders in the church. And if it was really disturbing the church. It seems that these two, we know right here, they had worked. They were fine workers.

And they were good workers. Now we don't know whether jealousy, prominence, or some other situation had come up. But there was a misunderstanding and there was some variance between these two ladies. And the situation was not good. They were fine leaders and they had done a lot of good work in the church. And now Paul wants them to be united and get together in the Lord.

They needed some help in getting together. They needed someone who could come in between the misunderstanding, to help them out.

I read a true story of where a minister sat up very late into the night. As he listened to a couple share with him the fact that they could not live together any longer. They seemed to be at odds upon every issue concerning their lives. The complicated factor was, that they deeply loved each other, and they wished that they could get along. And both of them professed to believe in Christ but they could not find the power to overcome their frustrations.

There was a great big wall between us, built by both of us, the man explained. It is so high, we can't hardly see each other any more. And my wife added, they both expressed the wish that there was some way to break down the wall and get together and get rid of these resentments. And finally she said, I guess we were never met to be together!

But the minister said, I don't believe that! He said, I went on to suggest, maybe they needed to dismantle that wall. And then he said, I suggested that there might be a possibility of climbing over the wall. And living on each

other's side for a period of time. What would it be like, he said, if you were to experiment in defending each other from the other side of the wall. They didn't think that would work. But they did agree on a month's experiment before they went to the lawyers. He asked them to take 1/2 hour each day during the experiment, and each one take 15 minutes each of uninterrupted time to talk about their hopes, their dreams for life, and what frustrated them in realizing them. Neither was allowed to comment or criticize the other in this period of a half an hour.

He said, I saw them at the end of the experiment and they were both amazed, at what they found on the other side of the wall and what they had come to see in each other. And he said, now we are ready to dismantle the wall. That was not easy for them either - it was a painful process. And the only way to come together and stay together in a truly satisfying relationship, they discovered was, to keep short account emotionally. They both wanted to make it work and they were eager to learn.

You know most people tend to hide their feelings. They repress their causes of depression. And these friends had gotten into a lot of trouble as husband and wife, because of the back-log on the ledger. Of unexpressed things. You know keeping short accounts will heal the emotional tension. The ledger should be cleared off each day. The (sun should not go down) on wrath or anger.

We all have a right to our feelings. Another person can deal with what and how he did make us and how it made us feel.



We have experiences that are emotional blast-offs. This is what Paul was concerned with with these two women in their relationship in the Philippian Church. He is trying to get them to stand fast in the Lord. And he went straight to the conflict - it was as if he was saying, if you want to remain strong healthy Christians, deal with your conflicts and deal with them quickly and in a decisive way. Think of how long these two women must have been at odds. It must have been quite a while. The news of their separation had reached Paul in Rome. And it would take quite a while for the news to travel from up there. By messenger all the way down to Rome from Philippi. And equally it took a long time for this letter to be returned by Epaphroditus. And these feelings had festered and it was a long account of grievance.

Now these woman had not lived up to their names or their calling in Christ. Prosperous journey or pleasant acquaintance.

Now Paul urgently said, you become reconciled.

And the spectulation as to the nature of the conflict was the fact that it is not clarified or broadened is an implication that Paul's admonition was very wise. He uses a strong word here. I beg you please. That means exalt, plead, urge. The two woman in the church to be of the same mind. I urge you then, make me completely happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being in soul and mind. The context and relationship with the Lord, was urgent - not only for the peace and the unity of the church, but the power that was available. Let me tell you something! The problems between people do not go away. Through just over-looking them. These past hurts and painful

encounters need some healing.

What about us today. With whom do we need to clear the hostility ledger.

Today is the day. How are you going to have a healthy relationship.

First, about my own feelings.

Second, to receive the Lord's forgiveness where the fault is mine.

Third, then clear the feeling ledger that I have hurt or who has hurt me.

Now there is gossip not confessed and it is tempting. We need to bear and keep short accounts within each day. And to settle these accounts before the sun goes down whenever humanly possible. With a face to face encounter. Now if you can't do it with that - do it with the telephone. And if you can't do it with that - do it with a letter. When that is impossible, I think what Paul is teaching here is - I want you to keep short accounts. With you and the people you live with.

You know the theme of Christian reconciliation is in every book of the Bible. The book of Romans is one of the best books on reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5:14-21

You know reconciliation means to change into a state of harmony.

Now this means like in business, to square accounts and balance the books. And this is what Paul was trying to do in the early church here. In Matt. 5:24, it says, be reconciled to your brother.

I Cor. 7:11, husband and wives need to be reconciled - each to the other.

Rom. 5:10 - remove the enmity.

Rom. 11:15 - there have been the rejection of Israel. The whole world needs to be reconciled to God.

V. 3 - Paul says, I beg you true yoke-fellow to help them, and to take over with them. We don't know who this yoke-fellow is. Some people say this is Paul's wife. There are scholars who will talk about a lot of foolishness and guesses about things. And that Paul had left his wife back at Philippi. And married the sister of Lydia or that he had married her. Some people say. But the best guess it is either Timothy or Epaphroditus. Because they knew about the church and now how is the church going to know about it. There is one fellow who is going to know about it, and that is Epaphroditus. Because he is right there with Paul and he is going to be the one to convey this letter to them. And when he comes there, he is talking about these women. There would be two men, Timothy and this man who would know about the situation.

*Mean "Benwine"*

And so Paul turns and says, you are going to be a true yoke-fellow. Who will assist in bringing healing to this situation. Help these people who are at odds. And do not stand by and watch people who hurt and disturb each other

and have a misunderstanding, and unresolved wound. He asked them through the power of the Holy Spirit to bridge over!

Did you know that we have all been called to be wound healers. And that is what Paul is calling upon the members here to do with these two women. In strong language. Help these women, lend a hand. In settling their difference. That there might be peace and unity in the church. When anyone is disturbed or separated from another, it is the concern of the whole fellowship.

You know the poison of discord, flows through the body of Christ, the church. And it cripples a church. And he wants here to have them together.

*It makes us think! - Suppose our life was to be summed up in one sentence, what would that sentence be? Known for one thing - Remember!*

Did you know that in some congregations there are people who sit on different sides of the sanctuary, and they neither speak to each other in any kind of meetings, because there are hurts, hostilities, and deep anger. And there are other members of the congregation who smile and are amused at this. But it festers like a thorn in the flesh of the congregation. And this is inconsistent with the preaching of the Gospel. The power of Christ heals differences. And if people would begin to pray for people who have problems like this, talk and encourage them, and exhort them with each other, until these wounds have been cleaned and the infection is gone.

Remember that simple, lovely prayer by Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace:  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.  
Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.  
Where there is despair, let me sow hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me sow light.  
Where there is sadness, let me sow joy.

Yes, I can be a healer!

There is still another thing I can do. I can be glad. Verse 4 says it: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." Will you try to remember that the man who said that was writing down his thoughts in prison?

You see the gladness of the Christian is gladness in spite of! In spite of fetters, and foulness, and friendlessness!

But the Christian's gladness is also gladness because of!