

Philippians

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 October 1991

Preacher: Shaw, Geoffrey Mark (1925-1997)

[0 : 00] The End The End The End

The First Verse in the Fourth Chapter of Philippians Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

And it is especially those words, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

I want to just notice that when the Apostle speaks these words to the church at Philippi, it is inescapable that the measure of his love towards them in Christ Jesus overflows.

Every desire and every thought and concern that he expresses. And I trust that we might be favoured in some measure to know that tender regard one for another as we are in Christ Jesus the Lord.

[2 : 54] It is a wondrous thing if in the light of God's truth, in the light of his mercies, and in the light of his grace, we can look upon one another not as what we are as men and women, but as those to whom the Lord has been gracious, in whom God's grace, in whom God's grace shines.

And what a difference it will make to our behaviour and our regard for one another. And this, I believe, is part of that which the Lord commands of us, but which we see but rarely, and I don't say that in criticism, but I do believe that there is that needful amongst those that fear the Lord in truth, whereby in this solemn day there is gracious encouragement by love manifested, so that the weakest might be encouraged and helped to stand fast.

There are many things that oppose the Lord's dear people, and there are some who feel their weakness more than another.

And by the words that we read here, there is, as it were, a revealing of the tenderness of the Apostle's heart towards the Church.

But let me remind you, it wasn't limited only to the Church at Philippi. We remember that when he took leave of the elders at Ephesus, he said, Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock.

[5 : 25] They weren't merely to think about themselves and look after themselves. They were to take heed unto themselves and all the flock. Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Well, what a difference it makes if we have that view, even of the weakest, the faintest, the feeblest of the Lord's people.

Not that we look upon their weakness and count it shameful, but that we look upon their weakness and see them as those who are purchased by his precious blood, and therefore dearly beloved.

And he says, For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

- [6 : 53] And now he speaks out of the fullness of his heart and the precious things of the Lord revealed unto him. And now, brethren, I commend you to God.
- And for the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.
- So, in noticing the disposition of the apostle's heart, first of all, these words, even as his words to the elders at Ephesus, must have touched their spirits for we know that they wept much as they said farewell unto him.
- For those things that he had wrought, those things that he had spoken, were dear and precious and the experience of the truths that he had preached, they had proved.
- And he bids them to stand fast, even as he bids the church at Philippi to stand fast. And we live in such a day when, surely, it is most needful that we are enjoined, even by the word of God.
- [8 : 18] So, stand fast in the Lord. This afternoon, I tried to speak a little of those unshakable, unmovable things of Almighty God.
- And you know, it's no good encouraging someone to stand fast, except the foundations are laid. There must be that upon which they can stand, and that which will support, and that which will perfect those very things in hand.
- God. And so, the apostle in this verse says unto the church of Philippi, so stand fast.
- And we need to go back unto the third chapter and see some of the things that he sets before them.
- The things that God hath ordered, the things that God hath provided, the things that God has manifested in due season.
- [9 : 35] And it is upon these things that he enjoins them to stand fast. Well, in the third chapter and in the third verse we read this.
- We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.
- Now, dear friend, it's no good seeking to stand fast if we merely have a notion concerning religion.
- notions, ideas and propositions in the head will not support your soul in that great day.
- if you and I are to stand and to stand fast and in that great day stand before the almighty, we have need of a day's man.
- [10 : 57] Job was brought to know his need. the things that Job spoke were not theories or notions in his head.
- There were things taught unto him that enabled him to say though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. And he stood upon that ground because he saw, he knew, and he believed.
- For he said, I know that my redeemer liveth. Now this was no notion upon which he and the Lord's living family stand fast.
- fast. It is the reality of the person and of the work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ revealed unto them and applied unto their hearts and consciences.
- Dear friend, this is what we stand in need of, each one of us, if we are to stand fast in that great day. the Lord hath made a covenant undertaking.
- [12 : 27] He says, and this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days. It isn't to set before them propositions.

It isn't to make a thing known and let them get on with it. He says that he will write. And when Almighty God writes, it is an indelible and an immovable print that is the consequence of his writing.

And he doesn't write it upon paper. He writes it upon the fleshy tables of their hearts. And this heart to flesh he has given them.

Now there's nothing to do with notions in any of those things that God has by covenant undertaken so to do. Now dear friend, do you and I know anything of this?

we read in John's gospel in the first chapter I think it's in verse 13 concerning those who truly believe and the word says this to them that believe on his name which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.

[14 : 19] Now dear friend if we worship God in the spirit the Lord hath wrought these things in us and for us. It has nothing to do with blood or with the will of the flesh or the will of man but it springs from almighty God himself.

Now if we worship God in the spirit it is because he hath wrought and because he hath given us of his spirit it's a divine faculty which the natural man does not possess but God gives it and I believe that where this is given the things that the apostle speaks in this verse we shall prove and have proved for he says they rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh dear friend do you stand fast or are the times when you think that perhaps you can trust your own mind your own intellect your own intelligence your own heart the apostle doesn't say that you can stand fast sometimes and waver at others he says so stand fast in the

Lord now everything that the Lord teaches us by his mercy and his grace will not permit us to have any confidence in the flesh you know that the apostle himself could call to mind so many grounds upon which he might have confidence perhaps more than any of us and yet many of us have many grounds according to these natural grounds that perhaps we could call out for ourselves but stand fast on this that which is of the flesh is flesh and that which is of the spirit is spirit and if we worship God in the spirit the flesh has no part in it if you and

I come into the Lord's house from time to time is it any good presenting our flesh is there anything that we can attain to by bringing the flesh but where the Lord hath wrought where his spirit abideth there is that wherein we may come rejoicing in Christ Jesus having no confidence in the flesh to worship him worship him in spirit and according to truth now the apostle goes through many things in this chapter and time won't permit us to examine them all or in any deep measure but

I trust that we might make these things clear in some little way for he sets before us also this his desire is to be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith you know that he grieved concerning his brethren they went about seeking a righteousness of their own and he encourages those to whom he writes to stand fast but to stand fast not in a righteousness of their own and he sets before them the manner of his own righteousness according to the law but he declares unto him that which is necessary for all the hope that he may have once had in his own righteousness he can count them as dung and he sees the excellency but also the necessity of the righteousness which is of

[19 : 32] God by faith now do you stand fast upon a sure and a certain ground of righteousness if you say my hope is in that righteousness what is it that the Lord has shown you concerning it and concerning your need of it one of the hymn writers says my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name on Christ the solid rock I stand dear friend you stand fast there amidst temptations amidst trials amidst anxieties that faith will be tried the psalmist said in his experience when my heart is overwhelmed within me lead me to the rock that is higher than

I do you stand fast upon that rock can you by experience speak of the height and the steadfastness and the glory and the excellency of that rock when the psalmist speaks of a rock that is higher than I I believe that he is not as thinking solely of something that towers above him and above all the trials round about him I believe the height that he speaks of is the height to eternal covenant purposes and nothing less than that high rock will be safe and secure for your soul's eternal prosperity it's there that we are led it's there that we are brought it's there that the

Lord shows unto us his orderings and his provision and in due season he makes us to see it and at the same time to make us feel our need of it and to fly unto it when the Lord exercises the hearts of his people when he shows us what's in our own heart and thereby we are exercised they've been there through the years but we've never been concerned we've never seen them for what they are but when the Lord stirs us up when the Lord searches it brings a lot of mire and he brings it and he presents it to us and we see it though it has been hidden so long and when that mire is disturbed and brought to our eyes to our knowledge and to our understanding the Lord also shows us the solemn consequences of those things when the psalmist says when my heart is overwhelmed oh there's such a searching under his truths and there's such a volume of sin of wickedness of filth there that the light of

God's truth brings out and shows unto us I often feel that the prodigal son when he came home when the light of truth shone into his heart it wasn't merely a superficial view that he had neither was the change superficial I believe first of all his heart was changed at one time he only wanted to be as far away from his father's house as it could possibly be but when he came to himself

I will arise and go to my father dear friend has the light of truth wrought such a work in you in spite of all those things that are there revealed there's a desire to return and how do we return well you know that not only was his heart changed but his sense of values was changed at one time the things of his father's house he used them and he used them to his own end and to his own will and to his own detriment he wasted them but now he counts those blessings those privileges precious and he sees that even the servants in his father's house are far more favored than he are your sense of values changed and altered and if they are the desire to return will come with a sweet acknowledgement of all our faults i will arise and go unto my father and i will say father i have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and i believe that's one of the important things he sees against whom he has sinned and primarily and firstly against the almighty now we can sin against our fellows and it's right that we should acknowledge and confess but dear friend do we always realize that primarily we have sinned against the almighty and what solemn consequences are upon us because of that sin and when he returned he came just as he was he was filthy he was in rags we don't read that he tried to improve himself in the way he threw himself upon his father's mercies and if you and

[27 : 37] I come we shall have no thought to righteousness in ourselves it will be to throw ourselves upon his mercy and look to him and wait for him that whatsoever things he is pleased so to grant us or to deny us we shall say that he is righteous in all his ways and when we come there and we acknowledge we've no righteousness of our own no confidence in the flesh and we ask for mercy oh what a sweet and precious word the Lord has left for us what an encouragement to go to stand fast upon the revealed truths of his covenant purposes if we confess our sin he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and he opens up the covenant purposes from all eternity and we see that before the world was before time before natural circumstance he had purposed the salvation of sinners with a righteousness that is acceptable to him dear friend you and

I need that high rock of a salvation that is acceptable unto the almighty otherwise we can have no ground to suppose that we shall ever dwell in his presence throughout a never ending eternity and he shows unto us how in his covenant love he hath so provided that righteousness through Jesus Christ through his taking of our flesh through humbling himself and making himself of no reputation becoming subject to the law made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law and then by the shedding of his precious blood hath put away our sin hath conquered sin and death and hell is risen again for our justification what a wonderful thing that almighty

God is pleased to reveal this wondrous providing and the blessings that flow from it in giving and imputing unto the sinner a righteousness which is his own so not only does he approve of it he puts it on as he put the coat of skins upon Adam and Eve so the Lord puts that robe of righteousness upon his own many times I going home on my own perhaps many miles from home if there's been a little sweetness in the word I've had occasion to sing and if I sing it's chiefly of two things thy mercy my God is the theme of my song the joy of my heart and the boast of my tongue and if it isn't that it's this unless the shadow of a spot should on my soul be found he took the road the saviour wrought and cast it all around strangely my soul art thou arrayed by the great sacred three in sweetest harmonies of praise let all our powers agree this is what the

Lord is pleased to show and to the poor and the needy to the tempest tossed to the afflicted the high rock of salvation and of righteousness through Jesus Christ the Lord I see the time is almost gone and we seem hardly to have come come unto the matter in hand I want to just mention this one thing and then I'll leave a few thoughts with you the apostle says in the 14th verse I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God but in pressing this is what he declares unto them forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before

I believe the Lord by his gracious word and promises though there are times when we are conscious of our nature of our weakness of our failings we feel the power of indwelling sin there is a looking above those things there's a reaching for the things that are before I know that there are many temptations I know there are many things that would draw us on one side but we are enjoined to stand fast set your affections upon things above and not on things on the earth it may be that particularly when we are young we have ambitions we look for this and that in the world we have our families and our responsibilities and sometimes we make excuse for looking at the things that are of the earth but the

[35 : 03] Lord bids us to set our affections upon things above seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you grace grace in grace in your heart and spirit pursue it stand fast in it or there may be many things of this world state that would for a little while have an alluring face but all of those allurements decay they are vain they shall pass away the things that are by God's grace afforded unto you shall never pass away never fail never decay they shall only grow and increase and afford spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ

Jesus and the Lord himself has declared go thy way forth is there a desire in any heart amongst us so to follow in that way to be in his presence among his people in his company fed of him go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock let no one dissuade let nothing intervene pray to God for grace and stand fast in his gracious word and in his commandment go thy way forth well I want to just leave these few thoughts then if we are enjoined to stand fast we stand fast upon the ground of God's orderings his provision and his appointments and we ought to stand fast in our judgment that is in our discernment that we be no more children tossed about with every wind of doctrine there's a necessity to hold it that truth which

God hath made known and which is fully and wonderfully manifested in Christ Jesus the Lord but it's also necessary that we stand fast in resolution also it may be that we hold the doctrines dear but dear friend we are not called only to hold them dear we are called to stand fast and so we need to stand fast in resolution and what I mean is this there was a time in God's order and purpose when Esther was caused to go in unto the king and it was unlawful but so great was the need so moved was her heart that she resolved

I will go and if I perish I perish now there must have been many things in her heart naturally speaking that would mitigate against those things and you will find times in your spiritual experience where everything in your own mind and heart will rise up and say it's not for you you can't do this you can't go there and especially when the weight and burden of sin lies heavy upon your soul the suggestion will be put forth and that most powerfully you daren't but dear friend you going to trust a deceitful heart or trust that which God has revealed of his covenant before the world was his purposes his ordering and his faithfulness and his mercy and his love and the salvation that is through

Jesus Christ our Lord and let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of

[42 : 14] God in Christ Jesus may he have his blessing amen after the benediction we will sing the doxology and let us now sing hymn 420 tune Die de matter 77 oh bless the Lord my soul let all within me join and aim my tongue to bless his name whose favours are divine his wondrous works and ways he made by

Moses known but sent the world his truth and grace by his beloved son hymn 420 singing he whom love us sing and listening to the m and and who along may we and in him have seen they the dot say THE END

THE END