

Communion with God in the Midst of Struggle

Key Verse: *“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*
—*Philippians 4:7*

Selected Scripture:
Philippians 3:3-4:9

touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”—Phil. 3:4-7

In accepting Christ as the basis for salvation, Paul counted nationality, prestige, education, and all other personal attainments as having no value when compared to the excellency and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Paul renounced any pretensions of self-righteousness under the Law. (vss. 8,9) He viewed his Christian course as being of paramount importance and realized that diligent effort was required to gain the reward of

USING HIMSELF AS AN EX-

ample, Paul warns other believers that there is no cause for boasting in human accomplishments. “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as

a heavenly life.—vss. 10-14

Paul then exhorts all mature Christians to devote themselves to following the path of consecration and self-sacrifice while also citing the need to avoid the example of unfaithful teachers who denied the efficacy of Christ's ransom sacrifice and also were engaged in satisfying earthly interests. (vss. 15-19) Believers who have the desire to retain God's favor will heed the encouragement to focus upon spiritual matters. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. 3:1-4

In view of this wonderful hope, Paul urges the brethren to stand fast in the Lord, while also imploring two sisters—Euodias and Syntyche—to bury any differences that existed between them so that the Lord's work might be further advanced. Paul also called upon a brother in the congregation—"yokefellow"—to intervene and assist these sisters in overcoming their difficulties in order to preserve the unity of the Spirit.—Phil 4:1-3

Our Key Verse indicates that if the attitudes of rejoicing, moderation, and thanksgiving characterize the life of the Christian, he will possess an inner sense of peace that emanates from the power of the Holy Spirit. Its possessors would then experience a sense of tranquility and trust in God even when surrounded by outside disturbances or conflicts. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (vs. 8) Advanced Christians whose characters are well developed will consistently have their minds dwelling on such matters. ■