Standing Firm in the LordSunday, January 8, 2017
Philippians 4:1-9

**I. INTRODUCTION: John Boy leaves Walton Mountain**When I was a kid I loved watching the Walton’s with my family. For all the people in your 30’s or younger, that was a TV show. It was about this family that lived in the mountains of North Carolina on a hill that they called Walton’s Mountain. And one of the very best episode was when John boy, the oldest of seven children was about to leave the safety and security of Walton’s mountain to go to college in the big city. And in that episode, just as John Boy was getting in his old truck to drive down the mountain and leave everything that he knows, his dad John senior shared for very powerful words: **Remember who you are!** What the dad was saying to the son was that you are getting ready to go into a world that is hard and it’s going to be vitally important that you remember where have come from. This family has formed you and you need to remember this family. This family has helped you to form your identity, you need to remember who you are in this family. This family has formed who you are in a certain way and means that you need to act a certain way. When you get down in that city which is drastically different than how it is on Walton Mountain, you need to remember how this family has formed you and who you are, or you will be lost. I believe that this is what Paul has been sharing with his family, the Philippian believers. Remember how you have been formed by the family of God, remember who you are in Christ and live your life accordingly, no matter how much the world changes around you, **remember who you are!**

**Philippians 4:1** 1Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

1. Once again, Paul demonstrates his love for the church at Philippi by addressing them as beloved brothers and sisters.
2. Paul sees them as equal in God and not as a church superior.
3. This is the love that every pastor should have for his flock.
**1 Corinthians 13:1** 1If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
4. Here, Paul also shows his affection by addressing them as his joy and crown.
5. People, not things—these friends, his children in faith, even with all their failings—are what stimulate him to this great joy.
6. He considers them to be the crowning reward for the work that he has done.
**1 Thessalonians 2:19** 19For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? 20Indeed, you are our glory and joy.
7. Paul commands the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord. Stand firm refers to a soldier remaining at his post no matter what happens around him. Let the enemy attack as it will, the soldier’s orders are clear: Stand firm!
8. Paul points back to everything he has written in the previous three chapter as the reason to maintain a firm foundation in the Lord. He points forward to the following verses to show how to stand firm

**II. SEEK UNITY AND PEACE
Philippians 4:2-3** 2I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

1. We stand firm in the Lord by restoring unity in the church.
2. Euodia and Syntyche were evidently to people in the Philippian church who needed to develop a harmonious relationship.
**ILLUSTRATION:** The grizzly bear is the deadliest animal in the forest. It can terminate the life of any other creature with one swipe of its paw. Most of them are gone from our North Cascade National Forest but if you are extremely blessed you may still see one from a great distance. But there is one animal in the forest that the grizzly bear will not attack. They even allow this animal to share a meal with them. The animal I am talking about is the skunk. The grizzly bear does not like the skunk, but he has decided it is better to live in peace, rather than to create a stink! If the truth be known, there are skunks in every church. And since we are all skunks at one time or another, it makes sense for us to grant one another grace and strive to be at peace, so far as it depends upon us.
3. By reminding them of their relationship to Christ, he reminded them that they had much in common.
**Philippian 2:1-2** 1Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.
**Philippian 2:3-4** 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**III. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS
Philippians 4:4**4Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

1. The joy of Christians is not based on agreeable circumstances, instead it is based on their relationship with God.
2. We will face trouble on this world.
**James 1:2-3** 2Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

**IV. BE GENTLE TO ALL PEOPLE
Philippians 4:5** 5Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

1. A person who is gentle is willing to sacrifice his or her own personal rights to show consideration to others.
2. He is near in location and time.
3. The Lord’s return could occur at any moment, Paul uses this fact to motivate the Philippians.

**V. BE PRAYERFUL, NOT ANXIOUS
Philippians 4:6-7** 6Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1. Peace in the heart will follow praying about what concerns us. Joy replaces anxiety—anxiety comes from focusing on your circumstances.

**ILLUTRATION:** author Andy Andrews wrote in his book “The Noticer” that only 8% of what we worry about is a legitimate concern. He states that:

40% of the things we worry about will never occur.
30% of the time, we worry about things that have already happened.
12% of our worry is about needless imaginings about our health.
10% are worries about what people think.
8%, “legitimate concerns.”

I am not sure how scientific any of this is, but if it’s at least close, the only way to rid our mind of this needles worry is to pray and lay everything at the feet of Christ.

**VI. MEDITATE ON EXCELLENT THINGS
Philippians 4:8-9** 8Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

1. Wholesome conduct will follow wholesome thinking.

 **VII. CONCLUSION: Remember who you are!**