PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9 GREEK EXEGESIS

An Exegesis Paper

Presented to

Professor David Alan Black

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for

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PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9 GREEK EXEGESIS

Step 1: Survey the Historical Context

In an effort to best exposit the gospel truths from the Greek text to the audience, David Alan Black’s 10-step exegesis proves valuable. This exegesis will adapt such a model in a survey of Philippians 4:1-9 that intends to produce a hermeneutical outline fueled by Greek exegetical analysis. As with any initial survey of a text, the analysis of context is critical. Regarding its historical setting, several important questions may be asked. First among these includes the question: Who authored the letter? As Carson and Moo summarize, “the letter claims to have been written by Paul, and no serious doubt is raised against the claim.”¹ The Tübingen School’s F.C. Baur made the only objections to Pauline authorship worth noting during the 1840s, and more recently objections were made by A. Q. Morton and J. MacLeman’s computer analyses-based protests.² Regarding Baur’s critiques, Morna Hooker called them “entirely subjective—the letter did not conform to what he expected from a Pauline epistle.”³

Although Pauline authorship is widely accepted, the same cannot be said about the document’s unity. Kent summarizes the critiques waged against the unity of Philippians as being brought about on several grounds: (1) the use of “finally” at 3:1, (2) the change in subject matter and tone at 3:1 or 3:2, and (3) Polycarp’s use of the plural ‘epistles’ in referring to Paul’s

communications with the Philippians (*To the Philippians*, 3.2)."⁴ Hooker responds to the literary solution by stating as a solution it hardly solves anything, but rather compounds the problem by begging for an explanation as to why an editor would leave behind such sloppy editorial work.⁵ It is easier to attribute the changes in subject to Paul than to an editor.⁶ In addition, both chapters share various Pauline terms and ideas used throughout the letter.⁷ As O’Brien concludes in favor of Philippian unity and against the interpolation hypothesis, “it can be argued that the evidence is not ambiguous but supportive of the letter’s integrity, a conclusion endorsed by at least one recent exponent of rhetorical criticism.”⁸

On the question of where the letter was authored, again we enter into a realm of much disagreement. The traditional view, held by scholars such as Luter, Hooker, and Kent, argues “the circumstances and wording of Philippians best fit with the two-year confinement of Paul mentioned in Acts 28:30-31. Further, the early Marcionite Prologue (c.a. A.D. 170) states that Philippians was sent from Rome.”⁹ Critiquing the traditional view are scholars such as Carson, Moo, and Keck, who argue that the approximately 800 mile distance between Rome and Philippi, and the Philippians requirement of several journeys, makes a closer city like Ephesus more likely.¹⁰

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⁹ Luter, “Philippians” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, 1036. The argument in favor of Rome rests upon: (1) Understanding ‘praetorian guard’ (1:13) and ‘Ceasar’s household’ (4:22) as referencing to government headquarters in Rome, (2) Support for the Roman location as early as the 2nd century, and (3) the imminence of death.
¹⁰ Carson and Moo, *Introducing the New Testament*, 108. If the Roman hypothesis is to be favored, the letter is to be dated around 61-62, and if the Ephesus hypothesis is preferable; then it was likely written in the mid 50s or early 60s.
As for Philippi itself, its Greek colonist founders from the Thasos Island originally named the city Krenides around 360 AD. The city would later be captured and renamed after Philip of Macedon in 356 AD.\textsuperscript{11} Romans would later conquer Philippi in 42 BC due to its strategic location along the \textit{Via Egnatia}, which connected Eastern Roman provinces to Rome.\textsuperscript{12} The colony itself was quite privileged, and would even receive the citizenship-granting official title of \textit{Colonia Iulia Augsta Philippensis}.\textsuperscript{13} To the church at Philippi is also awarded the honor of being the first known Christian congregation in modern Europe.\textsuperscript{14}

The church’s origin is located in Acts 16:6-40. After Paul receives his ‘Macedonian Vision’ in Acts 16:8-10, he responds by traveling across Aegean and towards Philippi. Paul would have likely found a notable group of Roman citizens and other gentile residents. Given both the biblical and archaeological witness, it would seem the number of Jews quite small, given the lack of a synagogue and its requirement of Jewish male leaders.\textsuperscript{15} Paul’s relationship with the church was overtly warm and tender, calling them in 2:16 and 4:1 his ‘joy’ and ‘crown’, and the object of his boasting on judgment day.\textsuperscript{16} Although this warm relationship is apparent throughout, it appears certain Philippian needs prompted Paul to pen his epistle. In addition to expressing his gratitude for the Philippian’s financial gifts, updating them on Epaphroditus, and informing them on his present state, scholars have long wondered whether the letter contains a central purpose to its structure.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Luter, "Philippians" in \textit{Evangelical Commentary on the Bible}, 1034.
\item[13] \textit{Ibid.} 1034
\item[15] Hooker, \textit{The Letter to the Philippians}, 471. “No archaeological evidence has been found for a Jewish presence in the city”
\item[16] \textit{Ibid.} 469.
\end{footnotes}
Step 2: Observe the Larger Literary Context

Traditionally, scholars have argued that the prevailing theme of the letter is one of joy and thanksgiving, and that the letter itself was without form and purpose. 17 Clearly, Philippians is the genre of a letter, and it contains the classic contemporary features of an initial salutation, body, and concluding greetings. It is also notably personal, using the first person “over one hundred times, showing great rapport.” 18 Although the resounding note of joy and thanksgiving is prominent, recent scholarship has been rejuvenated by linguistical and rhetorical contributions. As O’Brien notes, “the epistle, while possessing the characteristics of a personal letter, has been carefully constructed.” 19 In his analysis of its structure, D. F. Watson has argued that the epistle is “organized and written according to the principles of Greco-Roman rhetoric.” 20

In addition to scholars acknowledging against Deismann and Lightfoot that there exists an intended and organized structure as evidenced in rhetorical finds, Scholars have also noted the existence of a central literary theme supported by the epistle’s macrostructure. In “The Theme and Structure of Philippians,” Robert swift has suggested that the “partnership in the gospel” (1:5) is the central theme of Philippians. 21 Luter agrees, stating:

“Partnership in the gospel” (1:5) is both the unifying theme and theological hub of the letter. The intimate concept of partnership or fellowship (Gk. koinonia) speaks of a common bond in furthering the gospel (1:5; see 4:3, 15), the church’s corporate “fellowship with the Spirit” (2:1), and the need for all to be conformed to Christ’s death and resurrection (3:10-11, 15). 22

17 On a traditional understanding of the prevailing theme as joy, see the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia’s article on “The Epistle to the Philippians”. On earlier scholars such as Deissman and Lightfoot on seeing Philippians as “artless and unpremeditated”, see O’Brien’s summary, 35. More recently, Carson and Moo confess “there does not seem to be one driving theme that we could identify as the purpose of this letter,” (Carson & Moo, 109).

18 Luter, “Philippians” in Evangelical Commentary on the Bible, 1037.

19 O’Brien, The Epistle to the Philippians, 38.


22 Luter, “Philippians” in Evangelical Commentary on the Bible, 1036.
Using discourse analysis to evaluate the macrostructure of the letter, David Alan Black has arrived at a similar conclusion, stating “It is evident that “unity for the sake of the gospel”—the only thing that Paul urges as the only (μόνον) needful thing (1:27)—is a permeating, interlocking theme in Philippians.” Adapting a theological interpretation of the letter of Philippians, N.T. Wright has also arrived at supplemental conclusions, stating “its chief and largely unremarked value for theological interpretation is the way in which it hammers out a Christian view of what it means to live within a pagan society.” Whether on rhetorical, textlinguistical, or theological interpretive grounds, there seems to be some growing consensus on the emphasis of living in unity for the sake of the gospel, and such a purpose will be assumed in this exegesis.

After using discourse analysis to develop a comprehensive outline of the epistle’s “macrostructure”, Black produces “a division of the letter into 24 pericopes that, as independent units of meaning, together constitute the entire discourse.” Commenting on this outline, Black acknowledges the rhetorical nature where he states:

This outline shows that Paul reacted to the Philippian situation by putting forward an argument in two parts (1:12-2:30; 3:1-4:9), proving the need for unity and why it should be exemplified in the church. The juxtaposition of positive and negative advice indicates that Paul is using the opposing rhetorical categories of persuasion and dissuasion, a characteristic strategy of deliberative rhetoric.


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Refutatio, V. 4:1-9 Peroratio, VI. 4:10-20 Narratio, and VII. 4:21-23 Epistolary Postscript

His analysis is convincing, and this exegesis will assume both the purpose of the epistle as grounded on 1:27’s call for gospel-unity, and its structure as being rhetorically argumentative. Having surveyed the historical and literary context of the epistle, a detailed Greek exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-9 may now commence. For organizational purposes, we will assume the textual unit consists of four exhortation-based parts: (1) Bridge – 4:1, To Steadfastness, (2) Particular Exhortations – 4:2-3, To Unity in the Cause of the Gospel, (3) General Exhortations – 4:4-7, To Joy and Harmony in the Midst of Difficulties, and (4) Final Exhortations – 4:8-9, To Godly Patterns of Thought and Conduct.

Step 3: Resolve any Significant Textual Issues

The next step of the exegetical task is addressing any significant textual-critical issues that affect interpretation. Although several minor textual issues exist, two primarily affect the passage’s interpretation. The first includes substituting the word καὶ for νὰὶ in 4:3. The translation of the text would then be altered from “Yes I urge you” to “And I urge you”. The distribution of the external evidence is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Byzantine</th>
<th>Alexandrian</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>νὰὶ</td>
<td>Byz</td>
<td>WH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ</td>
<td>s 462</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

On this textual variant, Meztger concludes, “the Textus Receptus, in company with 462, erroneously reads καὶ. All other witnesses, as it seems, read νὰὶ.” The acceptance of νὰὶ seems preferable on the grounds of the external evidence outside of the Textus Receptus. A second

27 Ibid. 196.
28 Debate exists as to including 4:1 with 4:2-9. Kent, O’Brien, and Black include it, while Luter, Hooker, and Silva 4:1 do not.
29 Textual Unit outline borrowed with modification from David Alan Black’s Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek, 191.
variant effecting translation of 4:3 includes alternative readings to “τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου” (“the rest of my coworkers”). The variants substitute it with “τῶν συνεργῶν μου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν” (“my coworkers, and the others”), or simply “τῶν λοιπῶν” (“the others”). The distribution of external evidence is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Byzantine</th>
<th>Alexandrian</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου]</td>
<td>Byz: K L 88 256 263 365 424 436 1319 1573 1877 1912 1962 1984 2127 Byz (1st) (I) Lect syr* syr* sy** n* goth slav Chrysostom Theodore* cz</td>
<td>Alex: p* * A B I* P * (6) 33 81 104 181 326 330 451 459 1175 1241 2492 cop* WH Alex/Cæs: Origen Alex/West: 1739 1881 Alex/Byz: 075 0150 2464 West: D F G 614 629 630 1852 2200 2495 it* it* it* it* it* it* it* it* it* it* vg Ambrosiaster Jerome Pelagius Victorinus-Rome Cæs: arm geo2 Eusebias</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τῶν συνεργῶν μου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν]</td>
<td>Byz: p* * vid it</td>
<td>Alex: p* * vid iz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τῶν λοιπῶν]</td>
<td>Byz: p* *</td>
<td>Alex: p* * vid it</td>
<td>geo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the variant, Meztger states that “because of scribal inadvertence two early witnesses (p16*vid κ*) read τῶν συνεργῶν μου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν (‘. . . with Clement and my fellow workers, and the others whose names are written . . . ’).”31 G. F. Hawthorne agrees where he explains that κ* and p16vid have a slightly longer text “because of scribal inadvertence”.32 Both the external and internal evidence supports “τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου” as the original rendering.

**Step 4: Determine the Meaning of Any Crucial Words**

The fourth step to our Greek exegesis is to determine the meaning of any significant words. Out of the 104 verses in the epistle, various names for Jesus are used over 50 times.33 In addition to the Christo-centricity of the passage, it opens up with a note of Paul’s fondness for the Philippians. Paul calls them “χαρὰ καὶ στέφανος μου,” his “joy and crown” (4:1). J. B. Lightfoot, H. A. A. Kennedy, K. Barth, J. Gnilka, O. Merk, and J. F. Collange understand this joy to be future-oriented. As for the word for crown, it is notable that στέφανος (wreath, crown,

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31 Ibid. 617


33 Luter, "Philippians" in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, 1036.
prize, adornment, or pride) is used instead of διάδημα (crown, in the sense of sovereignty). To Paul, the church is both his present joy and his future prize.

Another word worth mentioning is the present active imperative verb στήκετε (stand firm, 4:1). Black notes an interesting inclusio formed “by πολιτεύσεσθε . . . στήκετε (1:27) and πολίτευμα . . . στηκετε (3:20-4:1).” The verb likely opens up each of the two main argumentative sections, and what follows is what the church is supposed to stand firm in. The verb παρακαλέω (to appeal to, to urge, to encourage, to request, 4:2) then begins the series of particular exhortations. Paul uses the rebuke a total of two times, once with each woman, and its usage here “tells us a great deal about the seriousness of the Philippian problem that Paul should find it necessary to take such a step.”

In addition to urging these women to reconcile their divisive differences, Paul calls upon γνήσιε σύζυγε (genuine yokefellow, 4:3) to help the two women reconcile. The identity of the once-used σύζυγε has been widely debated, with scholars genuinely identifying it as (1) some particular unnamed person, (2) as a proper name, Σύζυγε, or (3) as the intended church audience as a whole. Although the third view as argued by Silva and Hawthorne have some commendable qualities, the second view seems preferable. Firstly, the name is found within a list of proper names, and a proper name is thus to be expected (Εὐοδίαν, Συντύχην, σύζυγε, Κλήμεντος). Secondly, Paul has used proper names before in a manner that appeals back to the

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37 In J. B. Lightfoot’s classic, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians*, he identified it as Epaphroditus. Hooker agrees with this interpretation. Others have proposed Luke, Lydia, and even Paul’s “wife”. Arguing in favor of it being a proper name is Rutherford in the ISBE, Kent, and O’Brien. Silva and Hawthorne read it as Paul’s way of “inviting the various members of the church to prove themselves loyal partners in the work of the gospel,” (Silva 193).
names definition, as seen in the wordplay with Onesimus in Philemon 1:11.\textsuperscript{38}

Another word worth investigating is ἐπιεικὲς (gentleness, graciousness, 4:5). Hooker argues that although it means gentleness, “it denotes generosity toward others and is a characteristic of Christ himself (cf. 2 Cor 10:1); the NEB’s ‘magnanimity’ and the REB’s ‘consideration of others’ catch its meaning.”\textsuperscript{39} Silva also agrees, helping bring out the fullness of the word when he says “Paul expects believers to be guided by a frame of mind that does not put priority on personal rights.”\textsuperscript{40}

**Step 5: Analyze the Syntax**

The fifth step to our exegesis is analyzing any important syntactical issues. Chief among these are the usage of the conjunction ὥστε and the adverb οὕτως in 4:1. Normally, ὥστε means “so that” and indicates result, effect, or consequence. However, in this incident the usage is “designed to ask the readers to look back and to take action in light of what has just been said . . . in what way are they to stand firm?”\textsuperscript{41} O’Brien expands on this double-duty usage, claiming that “as in 2:12 ὥστε (‘therefore, so then’), together with the equivalent of ἀγαπητοί μου, here introduces an independent sentence with a verb in the imperative mood (στήκετε). It is an inferential conjunction that spells out the consequences of the preceding paragraph.”\textsuperscript{42} The ὥστε then functions as a bridge between the preceding and current text, while οὕτως (so that) “points them in the opposite direction (cf. BGD)—not backward now, but forward and onward to

\textsuperscript{38} John Rutherford, “The Epistle to the Philippians” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Edited by James Orr. (InternationalStandardBible.com, 1939). “The meaning therefore is probably, ‘I beseech thee also, true Synzygos,’ i.e. I beseech thee, who art a genuine Synzygos, a colleague rightly so called, a colleague in fact as well as in name. It is obvious to compare the way in which the apostle plays upon the name Onesimus, in Philemon 1:11.”

\textsuperscript{39} Hooker, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 540.

\textsuperscript{40} Silva, *Philippians*, 194.

\textsuperscript{41} Hawthorne, *Word Biblical Commentary: Philippians*, 177.

\textsuperscript{42} O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 475.
undertake immediately those things he is about to introduce with a flurry of imperatives."

Another syntactical feature worth noting is the prominence of the preposition ἐν. Paul calls the Philippians to στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ (4:1). The ἐν preposition is repeated throughout the literary unit, as well as within former sections, and seems to tie the preceding and proceeding units with a shared emphasis of standing ‘in Christ’. I addition to the notable repetition, the emphasis sown throughout is on Christ’s central role in our unity and humility. Paul uses the preposition ‘in Christ’ (or a variation thereof) nearly 216 times. We can then expect that whatever follows within the literary text, Christ is central to the exhortations to unity.

A third syntactical element worth mentioning is Paul’s positioning and usage of ταῦτα λογίζεσθε and ταῦτα πράσσετε (4:9). Although each ὅσα throughout 4:9 is grammatically dependent on the first ταῦτα, we find the phrase coming after. We should then read it as saying, “‘pay close attention to these things, namely the things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and admirable.’” While the definite relative pronoun ἃ takes up the former ταῦτα of verse 8, it is dependent upon the later ταῦτα πράσσετε. It is also interesting that we find πράσσετε in a present tense, as if to say: ‘keep on doing/practicing these things’. The four aorist active indicatives dependent upon πράσσετε also seem to have some pattern, with ἔμαθεν καὶ παρελάβετε (you learned and received), and ἠκούσατε καὶ εἶδετε (you heard and saw), stressing Paul’s teaching as inherited by the Philippians, and Paul’s modeling as witnessed by them.

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43 Hawthorne, Word Biblical Commentary: Philippians, 177. Or, as O’Brien expands, “The admonition to ‘stand fast in the Lord’ is linked by the adverb ὅτως (‘in this manner, thus, so’) to the preceding paragraph (3:17-21). At the same time a forward reference is not excluded, for the verse clearly has a bridging or transitional function,” (O’Brien 476).


45 O’Brien, The Epistle to the Philippians, 500.

46 Silva, Philippians, 198.

47 Ibid. 198: “Second, he emphasized the sound instruction the Philippians have received with a fourfold reminder: ‘learned . . . received . . . heard . . . seen.’ With such modeling before them (cf. also 1:30; 3:17) the Philippians have no excuse for improper behavior.”
Step 6: Determine the Structure

The sixth step of our Greek exegesis is to determine the deep structure of the passage.

This is evidenced in the following structural diagram, as well as the following translation:

![Structural Diagram]

Therefore my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, in this manner stand firm in the Lord, friends:

I urge Euodia, and I urge Syntyche, to live in harmony in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, genuine yokefellow, help these women wholabored with me in [the work of] the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of myfellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Rejoice in the Lord! I’ll say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known among all the people. The Lord [is] near! Be anxious about nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, letyour requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses allunderstanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren: whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is righteous,whatever is sacred, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute—if [there is] anyexcellence and if anything worthy ofpraise—dwell on these things. What you learned and received, and what you heard and seen in me, keep on practicing these things. And the God of peace will be withyou.

NOTE: The deep structure seems to reveal (1) 4:1 functions as a bridge towards what thePhilippians are to stand in, as consisting of(2) Particular exhortations with the two women, (3) General exhortations regardingbehavior and prayer, and (4) final exhortations summarizing his previous appeals.

Step 7: Look for Any Significant Rhetorical Features

The seventh step of our exegetical process is to evaluate any significant rhetoricalfeatures. Within 4:1-9 we find plenty. Besides the earlier mentioned rhetorical structure, we find various examples of rhetorical flourishes. They can be summarized and evidenced as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anaphora: Refers to the rhetorical repetition of forms with the same endings and in similar positions. This is noted in 4:8 and the repeated and paralleled usage of ὅτι. “The introductory particle, τὸ ὄντον (‘in addition’), and the vocative of address, ἀδελφοί (‘my brothers’), are immediately followed by six parallel clauses of two words, each of which begins with δότα (‘which things’) and contains an adjective in the neuter plural,” (O’Brien 499).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ἐσθιε ὅτι ἀληθής, δότα σεμνός, δότα δίκαιος, δότα ἄγνως, δότα προσφιλής, δότα εὐφημικά, ταῦτα πράσσατε οὐ καὶ ἐμμεθείτε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ προσότατε καὶ εἰδέτε
|
| Homoeoteleuton: Refers to the rhetorical repetition of similar sounding endings in parallel or adjacent words. “There is a deliberate play on the endings (homoeoteleuton) of these adjectives: two end with η, four with α. Note also v. 9, where five verbs end in –οτε or –ετε.” (O’Brien 499). |
| ἐσθιε ὅτι ἀληθής, δότα σεμνός, δότα δίκαιος, δότα ἄγνως, δότα προσφιλής, δότα εὐφημικά, ταῦτα πράσσατε οὐ καὶ ἐμμεθείτε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ προσότατε καὶ εἰδέτε
|
| Metonymy: Refers to the rhetorical usage of figure of speech to call something by a word that is not its name but closely identifies it with a concept (Exp: the term ‘Hollywood’ used in reference to American Cinema). An example is found in 4:1. “Here Paul, with a deep sense of gratitude, states that the Philippian are his joy. χαίρετε, by metonymy, describes that which causes joy or is the object of joy (cf. 1 Thes. 2:19-20; Lk 2:10).” (O’Brien 475) |
| Χαίρετε ὅτι αδελφοὶ μου ἔκαστοι καὶ ἐπαινότεθι, χαίρε καὶ στέφανος μοι,
|
| Polysyndeton: Refers to the rhetorical repetition of grammatically unnecessary conjunctions. “Suddenly Paul changes the sentence structure to conditional clauses—‘if anything is…’—a rhetorical device that forces the reader to exercise his own discernment and choose what is ‘excellent’… and praiseworthy’” (Kent 152). |
| εἶ τις ἁρις καὶ εἶ τις ἐπαινός,
|
| Repetition: Refers to the rhetorical repetition of words, phrases, or ideas. “Paul uses four different words in reference to prayer. . . . This variety does not indicate an attempt to identify four discrete types of, or elements in, prayer. Apart from the occurrence of eucharistia—which certainly refers to the distinct aspect of thanksgiving and which appears to receive some emphasis . . . the variation has a stylistic motive, reflected also in the triplet ὅτι καὶ ἐπανάληθεν καὶ ἐπανάληθεν . . . and in the fourfold repetition of πάντα (παντί, all; in the forms παντακόσιον [v. 4], παντί [v. 5], παντὶ [v. 6], ἐπανάληθεν [v. 7]).” (Silva 195). |
| Χαίρετε ὅτι (ἐν κυρίω) ἔφυγον,

| Υποκλίθει / πάντας, πάλιν χαίρετε,

| τὸ ἐπικείμενον ἑπάνω τε θεοῦ καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ ἑπάνω (μετὰ εὐχαριστίας)

| καὶ ἐφήθη τῷ θεῷ ὁ προφήτης· πάντας ἑπάνω καὶ τῷ νομότατον ἑμῶν (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).

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**Step 8: Observe How Any Sources Were Used**

The eighth step of our Greek exegetical task is to determine how any sources were used. One specific section as an alleged source initiates the most discussion. This section concerns the interpretation and source of the listed virtues in 4:8 (ἀληθῆ, σεμνά, δίκαια, ἄγνως, προσφιλής, εὐφημικά). Hawthorne and others interpret the section as Paul referencing a list of traditional Greco-pagan virtues found within “the Philippians cultural background, that is, to their familiarity with current pagan morality.” This interpretation seems appealing, given the earlier play on the Philippian citizenship, however the surrounding context proves it unnecessary. Silva

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48 Silva, Philippians, 197.
succinctly refutes the understanding of the list a borrowed Greco-pagan virtues by concluding:

Paul’s very use of the citizenship motif is intended to draw the Philippians attention’ to their higher Christian allegiance, and that is surely the case here as well. The idea that at this point in the letter Paul descends from such heights and asks his brothers merely to act like well-behaved Greek Citizens can hardly be taken seriously. Given the broad context of the epistle as a whole, the narrower context of 3:2-4:9 . . . and the immediate context of verse 9 in particular, we must understand Paul’s list as representing distinctly Christian virtues (though we need not deny that many non-Christian citizens exemplify such virtues in their lives).49

Step 9: Determine the Key Thought of Your Passage

Having surveyed the historical and literary structure, and having addressed and analyzed any major textual, lexical, syntactical, structural, and rhetorical elements, we may now conclude with determining the central truth of the passage: Paul particularly exhorts Euodia and Syntyche to reconcile their differences for the sake of the gospel, and calls upon the church to aid in this reconciliation. In addition to urging Euodia and Syntyche towards “unity for the sake of the gospel” (1:27), Paul provides various general exhortations to guide Christians in “standing firm” for the Gospel’s sake (4:1). A homiletical outline may now be developed from these thoughts.

Step 10: Derive a Homiletical Outline From the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Stand Firm in Gospel Unity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme:</td>
<td>God desires that we stand firm in Christ for the sake of the gospel by being united, joyful, and holy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Outline: | I. Introduction: How does a Christian stand firm in Christ, and deal with issues of disunity and danger? (4:1)  
II. Body: Standing Firm:  
  a. Be United for the Gospel (4:2-3)  
  b. Be Joyful in the Gospel (4:4-7)  
  c. Be Holy for the sake of the Gospel (4:8-9)  
III. Conclusion: God Calls us to be united, joyful, and holy, but also promises his peace and presence (4:7, 9) |
| Sermon Summary: | Although the church of Philippians was the object of Paul’s boasting, it too had issues. Apparently, as so often happens, disunity took root within their midst. Driven by his great affection for the church, Paul picks up his pen to author a letter urging for unity for the sake of the gospel by standing firm in Christ. After presenting Christ, himself, Timothy, and Epaphroditus as models to be emulated, Paul enters into this particular problem of disunity by urging two women in the church to reconcile their differences with the church’s aid. In addition to dealing with disunity, Paul provides us with general exhortations to equip the church to live united, joyful, and holy lives for the sake of the gospel. |

49 Ibid. 197.
Bibliography


