



# Blessings of Unity



## SERMON SERIES IN PHILIPPIANS

**IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**SERIES: THE BLESSINGS OF UNITY**  
**TITLE: TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL**  
**SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:2-3**  
**DATE: NOV. 16, 2025**

### INTRODUCTION

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Today we conclude our brief 3-week series on “*The Blessings of Unity.*”

In Week 1, we explored how gospel partnerships can foster some of the deepest friendships. There is a unique joy we experience when we work together to advance the gospel—in each other’s lives and in the world.

Last week, we looked at the *source of unity*. Since Christ humbled Himself for us, we can humble ourselves toward one another. Since we are recipients of Christ’s love and mercy, we can extend that same love and mercy to others.

This week, we’re looking at a specific conflict Paul addressed in his letter to the Philippians. Evidently, two beloved and influential women in the church were in disagreement. Paul urges them to reconcile and calls on a “true companion” to come alongside them. He entreats them to pursue unity. As we study the

passage, we'll learn how we, too, can pursue reconciliation for the sake of the gospel.

## Text

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### Philippians 4:2-3

[2] I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

[3] Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

## Explanation

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### Who were Euodia and Syntyche and Clement?

We must begin by admitting we know very little about the individuals named in this passage. Outside of these verses, Scripture does not reference Euodia, Syntyche, or Clement again. There was a well-known early church father named Clement who lived in Rome and wrote around AD 96, but this is a different man named Clement. Presumably, the Philippian church knew these three individuals personally.

It's encouraging to reflect on how seemingly *ordinary* people—whose stories we don't fully know—played significant roles in gospel ministry alongside Paul. They weren't apostles, but they made a lasting impact. The fact that their names are recorded here reminds us that we don't need a biography written about us to make a meaningful difference for Christ.

### What was their conflict?

We also don't know the nature of the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. Paul provides no details—no timeline, no cause, no blame. We can assume that Paul heard about the conflict from Epaphroditus and that the church at large may have been aware as well.

## **Paul Publicly Addresses Their Conflict**

It's worth noting that Paul does something here he rarely does: he calls out two individuals by name, urging them to reconcile. Typically, when the apostles mentions people by name, it's to greet them or commend them.

There are a few exceptions:

- In 3 John 1:9–11, the Apostle John refers to Diotrephes, who “likes to put himself first and does not acknowledge our authority... and talking wicked nonsense...”
- In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul mentions Demas, who deserted him “because he loved this present world.”
- Paul also rebuked Peter publicly for withdrawing from eating with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11–14).

But even in serious cases—like the immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5—Paul doesn't name the offender. So for Paul to mention Euodia and Syntyche by name is significant. He likely did so not to shame them, but because of the high regard in which he—and the church—held them. They were respected, mature believers who had served faithfully. Perhaps omitting their names would have felt impersonal or even dishonest.

Paul says they “labored side by side with me in the gospel.” That's a powerful statement. To labor with Paul meant enduring travel, opposition, hardship, and possibly imprisonment. Though we don't know the details of their ministry, it's fair to say these women were faithful servants of Christ. Paul isn't trying to humiliate them; he's expressing confidence in them—and calling the church to come alongside them in love and support.

This conflict reminds us that even mature believers can find themselves in disagreement. That alone doesn't mean they are weak or immature Christians. The true test of maturity is not whether we experience conflict—but how we handle it when it arises.

## **The “True Companion”**

Paul appeals to a “true companion” to help mediate. But who is this person? We're not told. Some speculate it was Epaphroditus, mentioned earlier in the letter. Others suggest it could have been Luke since some scholars deduce from Acts that Luke traveled with Paul and may have remained in Philippi for a

while.<sup>1</sup> Some even propose that *Syzygus* (the Greek word for “companion”) was the person’s actual name. Still others believe Paul was addressing the church as a whole.

Ultimately, we can only speculate on the person’s identity. Nevertheless we can draw out a few important principles about the role of a peacemaker that the true companion was asked to fulfill:

1. *Peacemakers are often needed* to resolve conflict—and there is no shame in seeking one.
2. *A mature peacemaker* is essential. They must be respectful, good listeners, able to facilitate communication, and equipped with biblical wisdom.
3. *Peacemaking is honorable*. Paul calls this person a “true companion”—a worthy and noble title.
4. *True friends help resolve conflict*. They are intend companions. True friends are those who don’t take side quickly, and are cautious towards one-sided gossip or even slander.
5. *Peacemaking is a humble task*. The best peacemakers work behind the scenes, aiming not for recognition but for restored relationships. Perhaps that’s why Paul leaves this person unnamed—to emphasize humility and the quiet dignity of their role.

## The Goal of Reconciliation

Paul’s hope and goal is that Euodia and Syntyche would “agree in the Lord.” This echoes the call to unity found in Philippians 2:1–5:

“If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...”

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars speculate this since Luke is the author of Acts and there are moments when he uses “we” to describe Paul’s journeys. Thus, Luke could have included himself when he refers to “we.”

Despite their disagreement, Euodia and Syntyche had a bond far stronger than whatever separated them—they both knew and served the Lord. They had labored for the gospel together.

Paul's charge isn't just about easing tension. It's about *gospel advancement*. He wants the Philippians to see beyond themselves and align their hearts with God's mission.

### Discussion Questions

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- Is conflict embarrassing to you? Are you afraid of conflict?
- Can conflict be seen as an opportunity rather than a frustration?
- Have you ever experienced a relationship becoming stronger after a conflict?
- Do you think you could be equipped to serve as a peacemaker? Why or why not?
- When should we step in to help resolve a conflict versus minding our own business?
- What qualities make someone a good peacemaker?
- What challenges make peacemaking difficult?
- What stands out to you most about how Paul addresses these two women?
- How can unresolved conflict hinder gospel advancement?

### Conclusions/ Applications

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## CHURCHES WILL HAVE CONFLICT

In all of Paul's letters, he had to address some form of conflict. Every church today has elements of conflict involved. We'd be living in a fairytale if we thought Immanuel won't experience conflict. Narrowing it down even further, we should probably expect occasional conflict even within our Sunday school class. It really is inevitable.

The reason is that we are all sinners, and at times we will sin against one another. There will also be mistakes, misunderstandings, and miscommunications. The true test of a church's maturity is not the absence of conflict, but how quickly and respectfully it seeks to resolve it.

We must resolve conflict because the gospel advances more effectively when we agree with one another in the Lord. In fact, sometimes our testimony can be the very fact that we do resolve conflict when it arises.