

“Peace & Reconciliation in the Church”

Dr. Ritch Boerckel

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Scriptural Text: Philippians 4:1-3, ESV

¹ Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer

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.

About an month ago, my son, Daniel, made a comment I did not know, at first, how to take. Daniel is in his last year at the United States Air Force Academy. He said to me, “Dad, we had a speaker today in assembly who reminded me so much of you.” At that point, again, I did not know how to take that comment, whether it was good, bad, or ugly. He did not comment whether this person was wise or foolish, knowledgeable or ignorant, good looking or goofy looking. He did not comment at all. He just said, “We had a speaker today who reminded me so much of you,” and that was pretty much it. We then went on to another topic.

Later he sent a video, by way of Facebook, to Kimberly and me of this particular speaker. As I clicked on that video to listen to hear who this guy was who reminded my son so much of me, I discovered it was Mark Welch, a four-star general and the Chief-of-Staff of the United States Air Force; he is the top dog.

I realized Daniel gave to me one of the greatest compliments I had ever received in my life. I listened to the forty-five minute presentation and I thought maybe Daniel is relating how similar the lengths of our talks are. But, one thing became crystal clear through General Walsh’s presentation was his conviction of this special privilege he felt of being a part of the United States Air Force. He focused upon the Air Force of being people and not an institution.

His speech highlighted some of the people of the Air Force, both past and present, who sacrificed comfort, health, and even their lives for one another and for their nation. He wanted the young cadets to know they were building off of an heroic heritage, a heritage they had inherited from other young men and women. He urged the cadets to follow these brave examples of six decades of airmen who lived before them.

He said, “I came into the Air Force because I loved airplanes. I stayed in the Air Force because I came to love the people. What makes the Air Force great is not the airplanes, not the missiles, not the satellites. They are all cool, but it is the people. That is what makes the Air Force the best in the world.” He concluded his counsel to these young cadets with these words, “Before you walk out of this auditorium, I want you to think of the value of the people you are sitting beside. Let me make a suggestion, value everybody. Understand everybody in this business is critically important to what we do. They all bring something different you do not have. They all matter. And, here is a really corny comment for you: even though I have not met you,” and he pointed to one in the audience, “I would die for you and I am naïve enough to believe you would did for me, too. That is why we wear the uniform. If I am ever defenseless and in mortal danger, I know Zach Reiner’s buddies,” one of the fellows he talked about earlier in his speech, “are coming after me. If I am ever wounded and trapped, I know Mongo and Sunshine and the PJ’s will find me and they will bring me or my body home.

He concluded by saying, “My name is Mark Welch and I am an American airman, just like you!”

That was a kind of “pump-you-up” kind of talk. It was the kind of presentation that made me wish I was in the Air Force as well. As I listened to the general’s speech, I thought longingly and lovingly of the church of Jesus. I thought, “The Air Force is a great institution, but the church is greater.” Everything he said about the

Air Force is true of the church, and much more. Our mission is greater. Our love is deeper. Our commitment is stronger. At least, that is how God designed us to be. This is the church's potential. Each believer possesses this great and incredible privilege of being a part of Jesus' body. We are grafted into something much bigger than ourselves. The church is not an institution, it is people set apart by God, people in the past and in the present who have given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and to one another.

Remember Jesus words, in John 13,

³⁵ *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

That is what the church is about. Do you believe that we, as a 21st Century American church, can capture this kind of brave, committed love for one another? Many have grown cynical about this so that the church is little-to-nothing. Beloved, I want to urge you, do not give up the ideal God has presented to us through the power of His Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

As a pastor, I paraphrase General Walsh's comments to apply to the church: Before you walk out of this sanctuary, I want you to think of the value of the people you are sitting beside. Let me make a suggestion, value each person. Understand everybody in this church is critically important to God's mission, God's calling, and God's glory. They all bring something different we do not have, but they all matter. Here is a really corny comment for you: Even though I perhaps do not know all of you deeply and well, I would die for you and I am naïve enough to believe you would die for me, also. That is who we are in the body of Christ and that is why we confess the faith together.

This letter to the church in Philippi has been a message calling us to spiritual unity and deep spiritual relationships with one another. The central idea was set before us in Chapter 1, when Paul wrote,

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel...

He continues this theme of the importance and fundamental nature of the church being that of deep spiritual relationships in Chapter 2,

¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

And then, he sets Jesus before us as an example of One who loves selflessly and sacrificially,

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus was willing to give Himself out of love for the benefit of others. Jesus shows He loves us and He will die for us and He did.

We will, first, consider the foundation for communion, spiritual unity, in the church. The Apostle Paul writes in our text,

¹ Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

In reading that verse, Paul is excessive in the words he uses to describe his affection for this church. Paul is communicating to these precious people in Philippi, “I deeply and genuinely love you and I am not bashful about saying so.”

Notice the words in Verse 1, “My brothers whom I love and whom I long for...my joy...my crown...my beloved.” Paul is going to enter into a confrontation regarding a conflict within the church, but before he does he communicates to the church he deeply loves them.

The principle Paul is setting forward, by way of example, is: love is foundational to the vibrant communion of any church. Love is primary to the very life of the church. He will write to the church in Corinth, which has huge problems with conflict. I am reading from a translation called “The Message.” It is a loose translation but I like the way the words flow,

1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. ² If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, “Jump,” and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. ³ If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.¹

That is what the church is: we are bankrupt without love. Paul is raising love as the banner for spiritual unity and communion. Love is that flag that flies from the church and from under which we all stand; love, first, for God and then love for one another. Paul is modeling for us a love which is selfless and a love which is sacrificial. He is not merely saying nice words. It is easy to talk loving words, but Paul is living out what he writes.

As he writes, remember, he is in prison and why is he in prison? It is because of love, love for God and love for God's people. He was bold to proclaim the truth even though he was threatened with imprisonment and he was threatened with death. He still did it because of love and because, he said, it was worth it for the benefit of the body of Christ.

I delight in reading the reports of the brave love the early Christians demonstrated. This is one of the characteristics of the early church of which the pagan Romans were overwhelmed by. It is reported the Romans, considering the Christians, even with contempt, would say, “Behold, how they love one another! Look at that. Is that not unusual? Look at how they love one another.”

I have been reading a couple of early Christians from the 2nd Century. The first is Justin Martyr.² This is how he described the love of Christians for one another, “We, who used to value the acquisition of wealth and possessions more than anything else,” does that remind you of anyone, “in the world, now we bring what we have into a common fund and we share it with anyone who needs it. We used to hate and destroy one another and would refuse to associate with people of another race or country, but now, because of Christ, we live together with such people and we pray for our enemies.”

Another 2nd Century church leader, Clement³, describes the Christian this way, “The Christian impoverishes himself out of love so that he is certain that he may never overlook a brother in need, especially if he knows

¹ “The Message”. Eugene Peterson, NavPress, 1993.

² Justin Martyr, also known as Saint Justin (c. 100 – 165 AD), was an early Christian apologist, and is regarded as the foremost interpreter of the theory of the Logos in the 2nd century. He was martyred, alongside some of his students, and is considered a saint by the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the Eastern Orthodox Church. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

³ Clement of Alexandria, c. 150 – c. 215. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

he can bear poverty better than his brother. If he suffers any hardship because of having given out of his own poverty, he does not complain.” Clement is telling us if he can bear being in bear bones circumstances, he would rather live that way than another.

The Apostle Paul is remarking to this group of believers saying, “I love you,” and his command in Verse 1 is, “stand firm”. This command bubbles out of his love for the men and women in the church in Philippi. This reminds me of a parent’s command to their sixteen year old son or daughter, as they are taking the car keys and driving out on a Friday night to be with a youth group or some other group of friends. What do parents say, and you know what they say if you have had a sixteen year old take off with your keys, “Drive safe.” Why do we say that? It is because we, as parents, know the hazards out there on the road, hazards that can crush our teenager and we love them and we do not want that to happen, so we say, “Drive safe.”

The Apostle Paul loves these young believers so he says, “Stand firm.” Why does he say that. It is because he knows the hazards that are on the road in this world. He knows they are all around and there is a multiplicity of dangers that could crush them and grind them to dust. He tells them, “Stand firm. Keep your eye on the ball. Keep your eye on your faith. Keep your eye on Jesus. Stand firm. Be courageous. Be strong in the Lord. Do not collapse under the pressure of persecution. Do not collapse under the pull of this world’s temptation. Do not get knocked down. Do not be defeated by your flesh or by the Devil. Do not totter in living out a life worthy of the Gospel. Do not teeter in your love for one another. Do not begin to waiver because once you begin to waiver you will fall and the weight of sin will crush you. Instead, resolve to hold onto love, not allowing internal quarreling to pull you off of your mission.”

The principle we learn to stand firm is: love within the church requires a commitment and say, “I am going to stand firm by the members of the church in love. The temptations are such we will be pulled off and we will begin to teeter and totter and we will fall down if we do not stand firm and focus with resolve to remain in love for one another.”

Very few people in the church make it their goal to come into conflict with another in the church. I have met very few of those. There are some feisty ones who seem to enjoy that, but I have met very few people who join a church with the mission of getting into conflict with other people and stirring up trouble. Most are well meaning, yet even in the best of churches and among the best of members conflict happens. That is why we must ready ourselves to stand firm in the Lord, so we are able to love one another when we are tempted to not love one another.

Loving one another is easy when we are smiling and we may not know one another very well and we have not rubbed against one another the wrong way. What happens when we do rub against one another in the wrong way? Paul tells us to stand firm, pursue peace when the flesh wants to dig in and not let the other person win in the conflict. We are to stand firm so we can be humble and receive insults, intentional or unintentional, when our pride demands we stand up and defend our self. We are to stand firm.

The church in Philippi is an awesome church. It is a church of which you and I would want to be a part. No other church received as much glowing and lavish praise from Paul as the church in Philippi. He found so little cause in this church for dissatisfaction and the Apostle who started this church. This is a group of people who suffered for Jesus’ sake. This is a group of people who gave sacrificially to support the Apostle Paul. This is a group of people who loved Paul personally, so much they helped him in prison by sending one of their own, Epaphroditus, to go and encourage Paul. This is a group of people of whom Paul said, “You are my joy and you are my crown.” This is a church which did things right, yet, here, in this revered city, is trouble, yes, trouble, my friends, that is right, right here in this revered city.

The trouble comes in the form of conflict between two women. What is the big deal? People are in conflict all of the time. Why would two women members not getting along be such a big deal? Is it really a big deal? Paul says, “Yes,”

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

Paul is not writing a private letter to two individual women. He is writing a public letter to the entire church. Think about this for a moment: Paul knows when this letter arrives in Philippi, it will be taken up by the overseers, the elders in the church, the pastors, and then they will take it to the assembly and read it out loud.

Here we are, in the church service, hearing Paul's letter for the first time. One can imagine Euodia and Syntyche probably sitting in separate parts of the sanctuary, or in the meeting room; one is down front and the other is across the way. They are listening to a glowing report of how much Paul loves them, how he began a good work in them which will continue until the Day of Jesus Christ, how they are partners in the Gospel and they rejoice in the Lord. It is a great message and people are probably "amen"ing and "amen"ing and "amen"ing it.

Then, all of a sudden, the elder stops and pauses a little bit. He may clear his throat because he must read the entire letter. He says, "Paul writes, 'I entreat Euodia,' " and all of a sudden Euodia sits up, " 'and I entreat Syntyche,' " and she sits up, " 'to agree in the Lord.' " Imagine the moment.

What do we know about this conflict between these two women. We do not know much and all we know is what Paul writes for us in his letter. We have no other information. He does not tell us the cause of the conflict between these two women, only that there is conflict.

We do know these two women are true Christians and they possess a real relationship with Jesus because their names are "written in the book of life", Paul tells us. We know they are personally active in the church. They are not passive pew sitters. They work hard in the church to advance the Gospel. They have labored side-by-side with Paul for the sake of the Gospel. Beloved, the best of God's people can become unwitting agents of the Devil in fomenting conflict. These were two of the best. They were not two of the worst.

We know these women are hurting. They recognize the conflict exists. The whole church recognizes that. No one is surprised. We know this fight is not private. We know Paul does not take sides in the conflict.

Who is right on the basis of Paul's words? Can we tell which one is more right than the other? No, we cannot. He writes with such objectivity we do not even know whether it is Euodia or Syntyche who has the greater cause. He indicates neither of these women is living in some serious, open, willful sin. If they had been, Paul would have dealt with the sin.

We know this conflict is very personal and it is focused on two specific people. It is likely, within the church, others were taking sides. Some were along side Euodia and others were along side Syntyche.

The principle is: conflict between two individuals within the church threatens the life of the whole church. That is how important this is. How so? There are three specific ways.

First, conflict among believers robs joy from Jesus' church; peace within the church multiplies it,

Philippians 3:1a Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.

This command is absolutely impossible to obey as long as we are willingly engaged in conflict. Love and joy are conjoined twins. They are never separated. They are always together. That is the reason why Paul will say, in his letter to the Galatian church,

^{5:22} But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...

It is not the "fruits" of the Spirit, by the way. It is the works of the flesh which are strife, anger, and sexual immorality. These are individual and different, but the fruit, singular. There is only one fruit, because one cannot have a part of the fruit of the Spirit and not have the other parts. These are all tied together because they are all one fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace. These are tied together and cannot be separated from one another. If we do not have one we do not have any of them truly.

Here we find one conflict is robbing not only these precious women, but it is robbing the whole church of joy. It is robbing them of love and peace and joy. The presence of strife is always the evidence the flesh is controlling us.

Second, conflict among believers robs witness from Jesus' church; peace empowers this witness,

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...

I believe Paul is already thinking about these two women as he writes Verse 14. If we do not do things without quarreling we will not be lights in this world. We will rob the church of its mission and the ability to be fruitful in bringing others to Christ, and I believe this is particular to the children raised in the church.

Children who are raised in the church hear the messages of love and joy and peace, yet they do not see it lived out in their homes and in the church, and they will ask the question, "Does this Gospel really have any power at all? If it does not have power in my own home with my mom and dad, and if it does not have power in the church I am attending, how can it be true?" That is a good question. By our actions, we are robbing the church of the ability to have a powerful witness to the world.

That is why the early church was so powerful. The Romans would look at them and say, "Man, they love one another. Look at how they love one another. They are sacrificing for one another."

Finally, conflict among believers robs glory from Jesus' name; peace proclaims His glory. Paul had already, personally, set an example for the church in choosing to be mistreated so that Jesus would be exalted. Remember, in Chapter 1, Paul talks about people who are proclaiming Christ out of envy and rivalry and how they are trying to inflict him in his imprisonment. Yet, what does he say,

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

He will take all of the suffering upon himself as long as Jesus receives the glory. He is not going to get into a big conflict with these folks because that would rob Jesus of His glory. He will suffer.

Paul is telling these two women to live in peace with one another. If you have ever been in conflict, you know how hard that is. It is hard to want to begin it, yet it is easy to protest, "Hey, wait a minute, Paul, pastor, elders, whomever, it is too hard! You do not know what has transgressed between us. You do not know what has happened. You do not know the words said or the actions taken. It is just too hard."

Yet, does not that complaint ring hollow given Paul's suffering? It is too hard! Really? Is pursuing peace with a brother or sister harder than being put to death? That is what may happen to Paul. Is pursuing peace really harder than living one's life in a prison cell with the thought one may never, ever get out?

Why was Paul in prison and why was his life in danger? It was because Jesus is worthy. Jesus is worth dying for. Jesus is worth being imprisoned for? Beloved, let us not allow the Devil or our flesh convince us Jesus is not worthy of us taking the initiative to pursue peace with a person with whom we are in conflict. Jesus is worth losing everything if our loss leads to His glory. Can we believe that?

Paul will write again, to the church in Corinth, about believers in the church who are suing one another and taking one another to court,

1 Corinthians 6:1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?... ⁵ I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among

you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, ⁶ but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?

Why is this such an appalling thing to the Apostle Paul? It is because he is saying, “Don’t you see what you are doing in the name of Jesus? You are putting the name of Jesus to public shame. The whole world looks and says, ‘Look at those goofy people who follow Jesus. Jesus is nothing.’” Paul goes on to say,

⁷ To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?

It does not matter what happens in the courts, they have already been defeated because the one, central purpose of life, of enjoying God and bringing Him glory, is lost. If we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven and we are not living for it in this world, why not lose some stuff here in order to pursue peace for the glory of Christ?

Let us consider the pursuit of peace in the church. The principle we learn is: we must work to resolve conflict between members in the church so the church can thrive in joy, fruitfulness, and worship. We cannot leave well enough alone; we must be willing to do the hard work of pursuing peace,

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

Imagine the arguments and immediately jump into the mind of these two women as they hear their names read, “You do not know how bad she hurt me, Paul. If you would you can understand why we cannot be friends.” “Hey, I simply do not trust her and I want to keep my distance. Love is a gift and trust has to be earned and I do not trust her.” “She is not safe for me to talk with anymore. I am setting up a boundary with her and I will not talk with her again.”

Perhaps it is the more honest complaint, “I just do not want to. I do not care if I ever see or talk with her again. I am that hurt and I am over her.”

What do you do when you find yourself in deep conflict with another Christian in the church? What do we do when these emotions, thoughts, and feelings rise up? Some simply go and move to another church, but there is no glory in Christ in that. Instead, here are two callings from God from this passage.

First, God calls each person involved in the conflict to take the initiative to pursue peace. Paul is saying, “Euodia and Syntyche, this is, first, about you. What are you going to do? What I want to encourage you to do is to agree in the Lord, to come together.” The Apostle Paul is not asking that these two agree about the problems they have experienced. They will probably will never come from the same perspective on these things. But, what Paul wants them to agree about is not necessarily the problem, but he wants them to agree in the Lord and about the Lord. He wants them to agree in the Lord about sin, righteousness, Jesus, salvation, forgiveness, Heaven, the church, its mission and its calling and its opportunity, eternity and its value, this world and its temporal nature, the cross, the resurrection, the purpose of life, and agree in the Lord. If we come to agreement in the Lord, we come to realize our conflict runs contrary to everything treasured and valuable. Paul urges us and entreats us to take the initiative.

Let me give you a list as to how to take the initiative. We do not take the initiative by talking with our friends as to how the other person has hurt us, but I believe that is likely what happens. That is how our flesh responds.

First, get your mind and heart right before the Lord by meditating upon the cross of Jesus. It is the cross of Jesus that humbles us. It is the cross of Jesus that makes us treasure Him above everything else. The cross reminds us our goal was not personal exoneration, but it is worship. We need to, first, get our heart right before the Lord by meditating upon the cross of Jesus and keep the cross in view of the conflict we are having.

Second, pick up the phone and ask for a meeting. And, of course, ask in humility and gentleness. That is what it means to take the initiative.

Third, lower the drawbridge. By that I mean, “How can I keep the other person from thinking I am there to attack their castle?” Ask humble questions and not accusing questions. Ask questions, such as, “I really desire to understand more about how I may have hurt you and how I may have contributed to this problem. Could you help me with that?” That is a “lowering the drawbridge” kind of question versus the kind of question, “I really want to talk to you about how you have hurt me and what you think about it.” The castle is under siege.

Fourth, prepare your heart to respond with grace filled words instead of unwholesome words.

Five, be eager to ask the other for forgiveness.

Six, be willing to talk about the painful details without accusing the other person of sin.

Seven, forgive or forbear. Proverbs 19 says,

¹¹ Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Forgiveness is extended when the other person asks for forgiveness, but forbearance is to be extended in all circumstances.

Eight, do not expect complete reconciliation from one conversation. Look for a series of small steps of progress. God can do a miracle and He has done that in the past. Allow your expectation to be, “Out of this conversation I expect a little movement forward.”

Finally, pursue a godly mediator. The second calling we find in Verse 3 is: **God calls mature spiritual members to help others pursue peace,**

³ Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women...

We do not know who this “true companion” is, he is to help these women. Sometimes, people in conflict need outside help from spiritually mature people in the church. That is what Paul is asking for. Jesus said,

Matthew 5:9 “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*”

He expects us to be peacemakers within the church. God calls us to be spiritually mature in intervening in other’s conflicts. That is scary and that is something my flesh never wants to do. I look at two people in conflict and I say, “I hope they get along because I do not want to enter into it. It is a big hassle and potentially a bomb that will blow up in my face.” But, God says, “Ritch, that is not your prerogative to decide whether you will do that or not. It is My prerogative whether or not I call you.”

If you are a spiritually mature individual and you see two people in the church who are in conflict and you recognize that conflict is jeopardizing the power of the witness of the church and it is jeopardizing joy within the church and it is jeopardizing the glory of Jesus within the church, and the Holy Spirit is prompting you, you need to get involved to entreat them and help them to get along. It is important to exercise your faith and say, “I must ask them to see if they will meet with me and we must talk, together, to see what the Lord will do.”

In closing, I have two questions by way of application. First, I encourage you to ask yourself this question: Am I in conflict with anyone in the church? It is tempting to think of conflict as a small thing or an isolated thing, but Philippians 4 tells us it is not. It is a significant thing and a soul-damaging thing as well as a church-

damaging thing. If you are in conflict and you say, “Yes, I am,” I want to entreat you to go to that person and seek agreement in the Lord.

Please know, there are spiritual shepherds here, both men and women, who are ready and willing to help you. You are not alone in this.

The other question I want you to consider is a question that comes from the very last phrase of Verse 3,

³ ...whose names are in the book of life.

Scripture teaches us God has a register of all those who are His, who are redeemed, who are His children, who are citizens of Heaven. Everyone who is a citizen of Heaven, every person who is redeemed, that name is in that Book of Life. Those who are not redeemed, those who not secure and have the wrath of God remaining upon them as a result of their sin, these names are not written in the Book of Life. Do you know whether or not your name is written in the Book of Life.

Much of Scripture speaks about this Book of Life, but Revelation 20 speaks about it most clearly and this is a scene at the Final Judgment,

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done...¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

^{22:27} But nothing unclean will ever enter (into Heaven), nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

There are books which reveal the guilt of people, but then there is this “Book” and those who are unsaved are judged by God according to what is written in the “books”, every worthless thought, every worthless deed, every worthless attitude, everything in defiance of Jesus’ glory. It is all there and a person who is outside the grace of Christ will be judged according to what is written in the books, and everything is written in the books. What a fearful thing that is.

Is your name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? How can one know? The answer is by a right relationship with the Lamb. It is His book and the Lamb is Jesus. When the Bible calls Jesus the “Lamb” this is a reference to His sacrifice upon the cross. It is to all of those who have placed themselves under the blood of Jesus Christ, who have said, “I need Jesus’ sacrifice for myself. My sins are so great, if I stand on my own before God I will be condemned forever and thrown into the Lake of Fire. That is what I deserve, but God, in mercy has sent a Lamb to die upon a cross and to be raised the third day. I am placing myself under His blood and underneath His sacrifice.” God promises all those who would come to Jesus will not be cast out, but they will be received.

Is your name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? If not, call out upon the Lamb today and receive the pleasure of forgiveness and eternal life.