



Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

The Joy of Knowing God's Peace!

Philippians 4:1-7

Message #13 of 16 – S1000

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Sunday Morning Service

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The Joy of Knowing God's Peace!

Philippians 4:1-7

Opening Comments

- **Before we get started – stand up and greet someone around you**
- Turn to **Philippians 4**
- Today, we continue our series through the book of **Philippians – Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!**
- There are some verses that have blessed people for thousands of years
- Those verses, loved, cherished, memorized, tattooed, and painted on the walls of homes have been a source of strength and hope for millions
- Verses like **Jeremiah 29:11**

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

- One of my favorites **John 15:13**

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- And probably the most famous verse of all **John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- By themselves verses like these are powerful and meaningful
- One of the reasons we study through the Bible systematically, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse is because no verses are meant to be understood apart from the context of the verses around them
- A verse taken out of its natural context can easily be misapplied or misinterpreted
- The verses we are looking at this morning include some that will be very familiar to you
- Let's read our verses for the day and then pray **Philippians 4:1-7**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing God's Peace!**
- The church in Philippi (Macedonia) was founded by Paul and many of the people in the church were people he led to Christ

- The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians from Rome where he chained to a Roman soldier awaiting trial
- It was written as a response to a gift of support the Philippian church had sent to support Paul while he was in Rome
- The context for chapter four is chapters 1 through 3
- In this letter Paul communicated his affection for the Philippians
- He also encouraged them to continue in their faith
- There is an emphasis on unity in this letter
- Paul also makes it clear that his main purpose in life was to know Christ better and to take that knowledge out for the gospel of Christ
- And all through this letter is the unmistakable tone of joy
- This section continues that theme
- **Philippians 4:1**
- It is hard to imagine a stronger expression of affection than here
- Twice ‘beloved’ – ‘longed-for brethren’
- They were a source of joy for Paul
- ‘crown’ - they were the practical evidence of his faithful ministry
- ‘stand fast’ – Paul’s desire was that they remain faithful to God
- The church in Philippi was a good church, but that doesn’t mean it couldn’t be better
- **Philippians 4:2-3**
- Paul singles out two women in the church
- Euodia and Syntyche were likely active, important members of the church in Philippi.
- There seems to have been a conflict between them.
- Paul is making a personal plea to each of them to get past their difference for the sake of the gospel.
- Try to imagine what it would have been like to be sitting in the Philippian church when this letter was read in front of everyone.
- Unity has been a consistent theme throughout the letter to the Philippians.
- We are all one in Christ, and therefore unity is mandatory within Christ’s church. **Galatians 3:28**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- That is especially true for the leaders and key servants in the church.
- There are many speculations about who this ‘true companion’ was.
- The most likely scenario is that he was the one to whom the letter would be delivered and the one who would have read it to the church. Probably the leading elder of the church.
- This was a call for the church leadership to be involved in the process of reconciling these two important women in the church.
- In the rest of our text, we are going to see four commands and one promise
- **Command #1 – Rejoice in the Lord!**
- **Philippians 4:4**
- Paul told them the same thing at the beginning of chapter 3
- ‘Rejoice’ is in the form of a command.
- This must be a command because human nature often drifts to grumbling and complaining and arguing and fighting.
- This would also help if we were tempted to fear, anxiety, and worry.
- Regardless of our circumstances, there is something to rejoice about.
- The key to this is the phrase ‘in the Lord’
- Apart from Christ, joy is hard to find **John 16:33**
These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.
- As we will see later in our text, joy and peace are connected
- ‘Again, I will say rejoice!’ – The repetition of this command points to the reality that continual rejoicing is not easy to accomplish.
- It is not easy, but it is possible – ‘in the Lord’
- **Command #2 – Be Gentle**
- **Philippians 4:5**
- The Greek word translated as ‘gentleness’ here is difficult
- It has also been translated in other versions as reasonableness, moderation
- It could mean lenience, graciousness, or forbearance
- It might have been better if Paul had said, let your Christlikeness be known to all men as all of these reflect the nature of Christ **2 Corinthians 10:1a**

Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ...

- All four commands in this text are connected
- The ability to rejoice in the Lord always is by letting the world see Christ in your life
- Paul includes his justification for these commands – ‘The Lord is at hand.’
- This can also be translated, ‘The Lord is near’. ‘near’ could mean close by or it could mean coming soon. Which does the apostle mean?
- It was common for him to refer to both and so both can be meant here.
- Jesus is coming soon, and He is always near to His people.
- That truth should be cause for rejoicing always and motivation to gentleness (Christlikeness).
- Before we go to verses 6 and 7, we need to understand clearly that they are connected to verses 4 and 5
- Our ability to obey the third and fourth command and experience the promise are contingent upon the first two commands
- The more you are obeying the first two commands – rejoice and gentleness – the easier it will be to obey the next commands
- Command #3 – **Be anxious for nothing**
- **Philippians 4:6a**
- That command comes straight out of the end of verse 5
- You could read it like 5b ‘so’ 6a
- ‘Be anxious for nothing’ = don’t worry about anything.
- Because Jesus is near, we have nothing to worry about.
- Paul was literally waiting to find out if he would live or die at the hands of the Romans.
- If anyone was acquainted with the temptation to be anxious it would have been Paul.
- Paul was not speaking from an ivory tower safe from the ravages of life – he was chained to a Roman soldier and facing a possible death penalty.
- We live in times of rising gas prices, threatened food, water, and power shortages, recession, and many other things.
- Paul’s command to be anxious for nothing applies as much today as it did 2,000 years ago to the Philippians.

- Jesus said the same thing **Matthew 6:25**

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

- If you are rejoicing in the Lord always and walking in gentleness, you will be better equipped to stop worrying about anything because you believe the Lord is at hand – He is right beside you and He is coming soon to get you – what is there to worry about?
- Anxiety is the attempt to carry the burden of the present and the future
- Paul gives us Command #4 to deal with that – **Pray**
- **Philippians 4:6b**
- Instead of worrying – pray
- Prayer is yielding oneself to God and placing all our cares at His feet and trusting Him to act on our behalf or on the behalf of others
- God already knows everything that we are going to pray about.
- So then, why do we need to make them known to Him?
- It is how we humble ourselves before God cast our cares upon Him **1 Peter 5:6-7**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- By doing this we are also declaring our absolute dependence upon Him.
- One of the keys to effective prayer is in the phrase ‘with thanksgiving’
- Faith thanks God, not only for what He has done, but also for what He will do.
- When you pray, thank Him for answering your prayers in advance.
- That doesn’t mean He will answer them when you want Him to or how you want Him to, but He will answer – let Him know you believe that **Maxie Dunnam**

“The way to be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful about everything.”

- Four commands – Rejoice in the Lord always – Be gentle, like Christ – Be anxious for nothing – In everything pray
- Firm in the knowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is at hand
- The promise in verse 7 is the fruit of obedience to those four commands
- The Promise – **The Peace of God**

- **Philippians 4:7**

- ‘peace of God’ – This is the peace that God Himself possesses.

- Jesus talked about this peace **John 14:27**

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- ‘guard’ – like soldiers guarding a city.

- Imagine a city with four gates and soldiers guarding those gates

- The stronger the gates and soldiers are, the more secure the people in the city will feel, even if there are threats outside

- The strength of the ‘peace of God’ that we experience is in direct proportion to our obedience to the four commands – Rejoice in the Lord always – Be gentle, like Christ – Be anxious for nothing – In everything pray

- If you leave one of the gates undefended, there can be no peace

- If you are not rejoicing in everything – instead, whining, complaining, and fighting with others – gate is open – no peace

- Or, not growing in Christlikeness, not gentle – instead, walking in sin, or being mean, abusive, or indifferent to others – gate open – no peace

- Or, being anxious or worrying – gate open – no peace

- Or, not praying – instead trying to solve your issues yourself instead of trusting God – gate open – no peace

- Leave even one gate open, and your peace will slip away

- Strengthen those gates through faithful obedience and your heart and mind will be guarded by the ‘peace of God’ an impenetrable fortress of peace

- Peace is something most human hearts and minds are starved for

- Paul has just told us that this peace we long for is promised to those who faithfully obey God’s commands

- Rejoice in the Lord always – Be gentle, like Christ – Be anxious for nothing – In everything pray, with thanksgiving

- Firm in the knowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is at hand

- And then rest in the peace of God

- **Pray**