



Philippians

Living in the Joy of Knowing Christ!

The Joy of Knowing God's Thoughts!

Philippians 4:8-9

Message #14 of 16 – S1001

Sermon given on June 19, 2022



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Joy of Knowing God's Thoughts!

Philippians 4:8-9

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!**
- Verse 8 may be one the most demanding verses in the Bible.
- It focuses on the main battleground of our spiritual lives – the mind!
- Paul tells us what we ought to be thinking about, which by extension tells us there are things which we should not be thinking about.
- Saying no to your own mind is one of the hardest things we will ever do!
- There is a saying, ‘We are what we think!’
- This is not the ‘power of positive thinking,’ it is the ‘power of right thinking’.
- I am not certain who coined this phrase, but the biggest problem most people have is ‘stinkin thinkin’.
- Their minds are focused on the wrong things
- In verses 1 to 7, Paul gave four commands: rejoice, be gentle (like Christ), do not be anxious, and pray.
- The promise attached to those commands is that the peace of God will guard the heart and mind.
- Verse 8 is what our minds are to focus on through the peace of God.
- The following things will enhance our peace.
- Failure to do these things will diminish our peace.
- If you are anything like me, you want more peace, not less
- Let’s read our verses for the day and then pray **Philippians 4:8-9**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Joy of Knowing God's Thoughts!**
- Throughout Paul's letter to the Philippians, he has challenged to think differently than the world and think more like Christ **Philippians 2:5**

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...

- Verse 8 presumes there is a standard of morally right thought and behavior.
- Without a moral standard there would be no basis for us to evaluate ourselves in these categories.
- For us to meditate on those things which are true there must be a basis for determining what is true and for determining what is not true.
- This is a challenge in a culture that is seeking to obliterate all standards of morality and replace them with an unrestrained expression of self-will
- Rarely do we see that more clearly than in June when everything is about pride in perversity
- Paul gives us a list of six ‘whatever things’ to meditate on
- He will continue by saying these things are virtuous and praiseworthy
- He will then conclude with what the result of this kind of thinking
- Let’s look at each one

- **Philippians 4:8**

- First – **Whatever things are true**
- Pilate asked Jesus, ‘What is truth?’
- Simply, truth is what God says is truth, either in the revelation of His character and nature, or in His written Word, or in His greatest expression of truth – His Son Jesus **John 14:6**

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

- Another aspect of truth is that which pertains to reality, which God created, ordained, and controls
- Water is wet, gravity pulls things toward the earth, a man is a man
- The opposite of true things is false things
- If it is true that a man is a man, then it cannot be true that a man is a woman
- Truth doesn’t care about our feelings, our culture, or what the vocal minority is saying

- Paul encouraged us **2 Corinthians 10:5b**

...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...

- Before you allow any thought to have any influence upon your life, actions, emotions, and faith, you need to evaluate it based upon this list
 - First – Is it true? We reopened the church to public services early in the ‘pandemic’ because we sensed that what we were being told was not true – we were right
 - Before you allow a thought to take up residence in your life – is it true
 - Second – **Whatever things are noble**
 - Noble - honorable, pertaining to what is worthy of respect
 - The things that go viral on social media are almost always the opposite of noble
 - Before you act upon a thought, ask yourself, if Pastor Randy knew what I was thinking, would it cause him to respect me more or less?
 - And you ask that question after you have answered the question, is it true?
 - Someone or something that is dishonoring to God and His Word is not worthy of respect.
 - Pride parades are dishonoring to God because they are parading their sin for all to see.
 - This is a call to live lives that are dignified and aspire to being worthy of honor and that begins with our thoughts
 - Third – **Whatever things are just**
 - The word ‘just’ is similar to right or righteous and includes the idea of justice
 - Before you entertain a thought, you should ask, is it right for me to think like this?
 - I was speaking to someone this week and I asked them, ‘Is it right to express anger?’
 - I could tell by their hesitation that what I was about to say was different than what they wanted to say **James 1:19-20**
- So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**
- The BLM riots were not just, it was not right or righteous
 - Even if their cause had been just, their actions were not
 - Fourth – **Whatever things are pure**

- The Greek word translated pure has the same root as the word ‘holy’
- ‘pure’ = ‘not tainted with evil’.
- Paul is calling us to eliminate sin from our thoughts.
- I started by saying, we are what we think
- Paul tells us to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ
- One of the steps to having victory over sin is to reject sinful thoughts
- Before you let a thought seep into your life, ask yourself, is this sin? Would God call this sin? Does God’s Word call this sin?
- Will this make me more holy or less holy?
- The next one is interesting
- Fifth – **Whatever things are lovely**
- ‘lovely’ = morally attractive and pleasing
- Before you allow a thought to live in your mind and heart, ask yourself – is it beautiful? Does it reflect the beauty of God’s perfection? Will it cause others to respond in an attractive way?
- Sixth – **Whatever things are of good report**
- If someone could see that thought, would they praise you for it?
- Would they give a good report regarding that thought?
- Would they admire you for that thought?
- Because we are fallen beings, unworthy thoughts will come into our minds
- Even though we are saved, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we will have untrue, dishonorable, unrighteous, impure, ugly, or unworthy thoughts
- What Paul is telling us is that is not what we should be thinking about
- God is calling us to virtue or goodness or excellence and to live lives that are worthy of praise
- We should live lives that the people around would describe us as virtuous and worthy of praise, but most importantly, we should look for God’s praise – it is the only praise we can trust
- My great desire when I stand before my Lord Jesus Christ is to hear from Him **Matthew 25:21**

His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your lord.’

- Our lives will be the fruit of our thoughts

- Paul says we are to meditate on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report
- Those things are found in this book – the Bible
- The more this book saturates your heart and mind, the more your thoughts will be like the ones Paul describes here
- And you will more quickly catch the ones that don't belong in your mind or heart
- Last week's message ended with the peace of God guarding your heart and mind in Christ Jesus
- This message ends with peace also
- **Philippians 4:9**
- Paul offers his life up as an example of what he said in the previous verses
- He was practicing the four commands in verses 4 to 6
- He was rejoicing in the Lord always – he was being gentle, like Christ, he was not anxious for anything, and he prayed
- All with the realization that the Lord was at hand
- He was experiencing the peace of God that surpasses understanding
- And he was taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and meditating on the things that were true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report
- Paul is saying, you learned these things, received them and heard and saw them in Paul
- Your right response is to do the same things
- Verse 7 ended with the promise of the peace of God
- Here we have the promise of the presence of the God of peace
- Our Father in heaven is the God of peace and He gives His peace to his people – quoted this last week **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.
- When we do what Paul is teaching us here, we can experience a peace that the world will never understand
- We won't understand it either, but we don't have to understand it to rejoice in it and walk in it

- These things are lived out in the thousands of little choices we make as we walk through this life.
- Every choice is a chance to think, do, or say what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, worthy of praise.
- A small choice at a time, based upon good thinking will lead to the God of peace being with you and the peace of God guarding your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.
- God's peace and presence are His gifts to those who love Him and seek Him with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- As we go forward in this crazy, broken world, we can be at peace
- And when we are at peace, we can be ambassadors of peace
- Most of the world around us is far from God
- The Bible teaches that if you put anything in the place that God deserves in your life that you make yourself an enemy of God **James 4:4**

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- God didn't create humans to be His enemies – He created them to be His children
- And so, He sent His beloved Son Jesus out of heaven to be born into this world as a human so that He could make a way for people to be at peace with God
- You cannot have the peace of God if you are not at peace with God
- Jesus is the way to be at peace with God
- You appropriate that peace through faith in the work that Jesus did on the cross to pay your penalty for your sins
- Once you have turned from your sins, received Christ as your Lord and Savior, all your sins are forgiven
- You are no longer an enemy of God, but one of His children
- And then the peace that surpasses understanding is available to you
- And as you obey God's commands – more peace
- As you meditate on the right things – more peace
- Every day with Jesus and His Word – more peace
- And as you experience more peace – more joy - **Pray**