

Sermon Notes

Confidence and Contentment

The Bible Reading

Philippians 4:4-23.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for

me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²¹ Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who

are with me send greetings. ²² All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (NIV)

A prayer

Almighty God and loving heavenly Father, guide me and teach me about you from your Word. Help me and others to see the wisdom and value of living life according to your word the Bible; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

The Bible Study

Questions:

Read Philippians 4:4-9

1. What does "peace" mean to you? What did it mean to Paul? (Consider Romans 5:1-5, 16:20.)
2. Verses 7 and 9 begin with the word "And...", which connects the promises with what comes before. What are the preconditions attached to the promises about God's peace?
3. Apart from medical conditions such as generalised anxiety disorder or panic attacks, what are the main sources of your

anxiety today? It has been said that, "Worry is the failure to believe the promises of God in his word." How true is this with regard to your worries?

4. Paul gives prayer as the remedy for worry. What are the different aspects of prayer that he mentions? How do each of these help combat anxiety? Why is thanksgiving so important? To what extent is your prayer life marked by thanksgiving?
5. Reflect on the eight areas to think about and practice laid out in verses 8-9. How will focussing on these promote peace of heart and mind? How will you make sure you think like this more and more?

Read Philippians 4:10-23

6. Where do people look for contentment? What brings you contentment? How does forgetting either that God is sovereign, or that God is good, cause us to lose Christian contentment?
7. Do you think it is harder to find contentment in Christ when times are hard, or when times are good? Why? How exactly did Paul learn to be content in his variable circumstances? Are you learning the same thing?