

PEACE

Riverside Youth Bible Study

March 22, 2020

Philippians 4:4-9

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.

These are a selection of the parting words Paul has to offer in his letter to the Church in Philippi. Immediately before this passage, he is urging two leaders of the church: Euodia and Syntyche to “be of the same mind in the Lord.” Basically, he was asking them to try and get along because he knew they were going to come up against a strong opposition and would have to work together to spread the good news of the gospel.

Right now, we as humans are all trying to work together against a pandemic- a common enemy. We are having to make sacrifices and tough choices in the midst of a situation unlike any we have experienced before in our lifetimes. Let’s take a look at the advice Paul gives to the Philippians.

v.4 tells us to “rejoice in the Lord always.” No matter what, we can always find joy in the blessings of God. There are always things to be thankful for, even if they’re hard to find. Try making a list of three things that you can find joy in at the moment- three blessings in your life, even if they seem small.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Of course, we must also acknowledge that this situation is full of stress and anxiety for many people. It’s normal to be scared and anxious, and there’s nothing weak about admitting your fears. God wants you to bring those fears before Him and allow him to sit with you there. We cannot have peace until we acknowledge the storm. “In every situation, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God.” Name the things that are bringing you worry or causing anxiety at the moment:

The goal with acknowledging the things that bring you anxiety is that by giving them over to God, the weight on your own shoulders will be lessened. This is the peace of God that will guard you in the middle of the storm. God may not be able to clear the storm from your life, but He will bear the burden of the weight on your shoulders if you let Him. Put your trust and faith in God's ability to carry you through whatever might come your way, and allow the peace of His spirit to wash over you.

The last couple of verses encourage you to focus on "*whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable.*" Let's all just admit that this one will be difficult to do in the middle of a pandemic. Let's also remember, that Paul and the early Christians were experiencing persecution and even being killed for their beliefs when Paul wrote this letter. It is more important than ever to try and focus our attitude and attention on the good things life has to offer us in the here and now, even in the middle of terribly tough times. Make a list of three things you are looking forward to about this next week.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Finally, list 1 thing that brings you great hope about the future.

1. _____

My prayer for you this week comes from Romans 15:13 –

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.