

Phil. 4:4-9

So Far:

- Paul been a Christian for about 30 years
- planted church in Philippi about 11 years before
- been gone from them about 4 years
- Paul under house arrest – awaiting trial
- writing to people he loves and longs for
- just finished instruction on dealing with a conflict
- winding down the letter – giving important instruction

Phil 4:4-9 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 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. 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.”

1. The Impossible Command vs.4-5

- expressing the ideal - Rejoice always
- we hear this with some skepticism
 - Jesus says – ‘in this life there will be trouble’
 - Jesus promises – ‘you will be rejected for your faith’
 - we read about persecution, difficulty, loss, sorrow
- Paul emphasized this twice – rejoice, again I say rejoice
- adds the word always – really
- is this something we conjure up?
- heart posture or attitude that pervades life

- evidenced in your interactions – ‘let your gentleness be evident to all’ – clearly witnessed and seen.
- another translation – reasonableness
- gives me the image of:
 - not railing against circumstances
 - not thrashing and pleading for easement of situation
 - not lashing out against those around you
- living with a resolved heart – full of rejoicing
- don't miss the words – the Lord is near
 - power for this is close at hand

2. Pattern for Living This Reality

- training for job – repeat actions that will be needed in an emergency. Aware of potential crisis – ingrained responses ready to be rolled out in case!

- Paul sets out a pattern that is essential for living this way

a) Deal With Anxiety

- ‘don’t be anxious about anything’ – really, anything?
- human tendency to worry – ‘how will I’, ‘what about’
- Jesus was clear on worry – Matthew 6:25-34

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

- clear instruction that anxiety, worry is a issue we need to deal with
- for me – a trust issue, am I dealing with this or is God
- Can I trust Him to do what needs to be done?
- Paul gives us a pattern to ingrain in dealing with this

b) by prayer and petition

- difference between talking to God and telling God
- not simply a thought hurled at heaven
- petition speaks of persistence – waiting on God
- in every situation taking time to communicate with and listen to almighty God

c) 'with thanksgiving'

- funny, I usually start with outlining my displeasure so God will be clear about where I am approaching from
- part of the pattern – looking for what God has done, remembering who He is, seeing His hand in the situation, and giving thanks
- if it is your pattern, you will find it changing your requests from the initial approach
- I love that I can start with honesty – I am anxious and stressed out aboutI really need help.....oh yeah, thanks for all the faithful help so far, in fact it seems better already!

d) 'make your request known to God'

- not everyone else

- now that alignment has happened – what are you asking God for specifically. What are you trusting him for in the thing causing anxiety?

- 1 Peter 5:6-7 ***“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”***

- God loves you and is your source of help – you can come to Him, and trust his response! Remember the Matt. Passage – He knows what you need!

e) 'peace of God that transcends understanding'

- hard to explain that which we can't rationally explain
- gift of the Holy Spirit – given by God to us
- John 14:27 **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”**
- shalom – not an absence of difficult circumstances
- inner at rest, wholeness, well being
- gift of God in our lives – so deeply trust the care and resources of our Father we can be at rest in all things
- can't explain it only invite you to experience it

f) 'guard your hearts and minds in Christ'

- heart is where convictions and actions born
- heart is where desire and passion come from
- are to love the Lord with our whole heart
- mind where perspective is born
- mind is where we can be deceived – lies take root
- guarded from:
 - despair in your circumstance and situation
 - depending on your own solution & resources
 - sin in your panic and pain
 - taking wrong paths to ease your journey

So What

1. The Impossible Request is actually possible

- we can train to be disciples who rejoice always!
- not conjured up but a real heart posture and experience
- with evident trust and gentle actions

2. It Takes Serious Training

- take anxiety seriously – need to identify, address, deal
- learn prayer and petition, and put them to practice
 - take things to God and entrust them there
- make thanksgiving an essential part of this communication

- refine and present your request.

3. Discover the Peace that comes from entrusting to God

- gift of the Holy Spirit
- promised by Jesus
- real and experienced

4. Know this is Essential for your Protection

- for your heart and mind to be guarded