

- I) V15-22 INTRO: See that no one renders evil for evil but always pursue what is good
- II) Paul has been giving commands related to being at peace *in the church*
As we saw, In V13 he ordered them to be at peace *among themselves*
- III) Up until this chapter, Paul had basically been commending the health of the church
He spoke of their faith, love, patience of hope, Spirit filled power, and faithfulness
He commended their steadfastness under affliction and persecution, their evangelistic efforts, rejection of idolatry, and patient waiting for the return of Jesus
- IV) He spoke of his fatherly concern for them, their love for him and his deep love for them
As he wrote, he exhorted them to live in a way that pleases God, to live sexually pure lives, to lead a quiet and productive life and to encourage one another to live for Jesus
- V) V12 With this in mind, they were to *recognize* their hard working leaders
- VI) **RECOGNIZE:** To appreciate; to value; to highly esteem
- VII) These spiritual overseers taught them, cared for them, visited them, protected them
They should be honored for their labor and love
- VIII) Instead of resenting them as intrusive, they should be valued for their work
These leaders loved the sheep, and because they did they should be loved in return
- IX) The fact is, they were actually gifts given to the sheep for their good
Eph 4:11-12 He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some *pastors* and *teachers* for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ
Jer 3:15 I will give you shepherds *according to My heart*, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.
- X) Because of this, they should be esteemed highly for their works sake
1 Ti 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.
- XI) By submitting to the Lord and proper biblical leadership, peace should be the result
The unruly, fainthearted, and weak members should be exhorted and encouraged
This will ensure that peace will exist in the church, in the midst of such pressures
- XII) The following instructions are once again to *the whole church*
They follow logically after his command to *be at peace* amongst themselves

- I) **HIS THOUGHT:** *In the face of discord* within the church, be careful not to seek to retaliate
This is something to avoid at all costs
- II) Few things *undermine* the gospel of peace more than warring church members
Church wars and factions are carnal and worldly, and are destructive to our mission
This is one reason Paul would command Christians to pursue peace with one another
Eph 4:3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the *bond of peace*.
- III) **PAUL:** Had to deal with disunity *many times* in various churches
One interesting occurrence is noted in his letter to the Philippian church
- IV) Paul would write letters to churches, and the pastor would read the letter to the church
The people would gather together, and the pastor would announce and read
- V) Imagine how it sounded when he read this letter from Paul and came to this part
Phil 4:1-2 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.
I wonder if they left the church because Paul was judgmental and embarrassed them?
- VI) **V15 WITH THIS IN MIND:** Paul writes See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone
Do not seek to retaliate against those whom you think have harmed you
- VII) **IMPORANT:** We are addressing life in the church and situations that believers encounter
This is not addressing the use of reasonable force in protecting yourself or others
There are times when self-defence and the defence of others is a virtue and proper
- VIII) There is a time to respond to evil with force, like when Jesus cleared the temple
Jn 2:13-17 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."
- IX) **IN THE CHURCH:** Peace is to be sought for and worked for
It is something to be desired and preserved
2 Co 13:11 Finally brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you

- I) It is obvious that pursuing peace in the church should be done
But pursuing peace is not to be restricted to church life
- II) Notice that Paul wrote pursue what is good both for *yourselves* and *for all*
- III) Pursuing peace with people *in general* should be the rule of life
Ro 12:17 Repay *no one* evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.
Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness without which *no one* will see the Lord
- IV) Refusing to hold a grudge and seeking vengeance is not something that comes naturally
This is accomplished by *valuing* how much God has forgiven you
Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.
- V) If we know that we have been forgiven, we are to be ready to extend forgiveness to others
Lu 17:3-4 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."
- VI) Forgiveness is especially important in marriage: the failure to forgive results in hardness
- VII) So what should my attitude be towards a believer who is difficult for me to be around
Col 3:13-14 *bearing with one another*, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; *even as Christ forgave you*, so you also *must do*. But above all these things *put on love*, which is the bond of perfection.
- VIII) V15 Pursue (reach for, strive for) what is *good* both for yourselves and for all
We pursue what is kind, beneficial, just or generous not only for us, but also others
- IX) Our way of life is to be the kind that blesses all people, including non Christians
Gal 6:10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone-
-especially to those in the family of faith.
- X) V16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks for this is the will
He continues by giving us three commands: Rejoice, pray, and be thankful
- XI) Instead of living in anger, we now rejoice because we know that things will work out
What is the one thing that I have learned over the years: it all works out for good

Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

I) This *attitude of rejoicing* motivates us as believers

Ps 13:5 But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation

Ps 40:16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"

II) The unique quality of Christian joy is that it does not depend on circumstances
Our joy does not depend on the things that we are dealing with at the time

III) Our joy comes from the Spirit, Who produces the fruit of joy
It results from knowing that the Lord is in control and trusting His power and presence

IV) SECOND: Pray without ceasing

V) Prayer is an outcome of a consistent fellowship with the Lord
It reveals dependence on Him, and intimacy with Him

VI) *Knowing* that God hears us brings us comfort and joy as we cry out to Him

VII) As we go through things that discourage or concern us, we have joy knowing He hears
Jer 33:3 Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

VIII) The Lord began teaching of answered prayer early in my walk with Him
Ps 39:12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, And give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears
He saved my parents and saved my mom and dad and sisters

IX) In in my walk with Him, He began showing me how He intervenes
Outside of Santa Maria
Central School: provided a place to meet
Suburban breakdown: please bring a Christian to be of help

X) Our Christian faith turns our thoughts away from ourselves, and to the Lord
1 Jn 5:14-15 This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask *anything according to His will*, He hears us. And if we *know* that He hears us, whatever we ask, we *know* that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

XI) V18 *IN EVERYTHING* GIVE THANKS:
Notice, *in* everything, not *for* everything

- XII) As Christians, we come to understand that whatever comes our way strengthens us
Ro 8:31 What then shall we say to these things If God is for us who can be against us
- I) The knowledge that God is for us gives us the ability to be thankful
- II) QUOTE: To the Christian who really trusts his Father's providence, and believes that his prayers are heard, every moment's occurrence will be just that which he has prayed for—the fulfillment of our Father's will
- III) God's will is simply put: that in everything we would give thanks
Thankfulness is not an obligation, or a duty is a continuing possibility
- IV) In every joy, and even in every sorrow, the thing that keeps us going is trust
It is the knowledge that is working in and through everything we go through
- V) We learn to give thanks when we have a strong faith that God is in control
Though we may find ourselves confused, or struggling we trust Him in everything
- VI) When Job went through his terrible trial, his wife could not take it anymore
The pain her husband was going through was just too much, and she spoke up
Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"
- VII) She wasn't angry because he remained with integrity, or held to his faith in God
It appears that she was upset because his faith did not get him relief from his pain
Her advice, just seek God to take you out of your misery: you have no hope
- VIII) We learn much from his response to his wife
Job 2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
- IX) He did not understand what was going on then, but later on he did
Jas 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.
- X) To these Christians enduring persecution and affliction, Paul counsels joy and prayer
Phil 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.