

# True Peace

**Intro** – Of all the books of the Bible written by Paul, this is the only one that he isn't correcting behavior or addressing major issues. He is writing them for the sole purpose of encouraging them and so, we too can be encouraged as well. Let's dive into the last chapter to discover what encouragement Paul has for us...

**4:1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.**

In the first verse you can see how Paul has a special interest in Phillipis. He refers to them as his joy and crown and longed-for brethren. However, we read in verse two that there is a little conflict that needs attention.

**4:2,3 I implore Eudias and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.**

Paul is encouraging the church to help these two women to come together and solve their differences. Paul instructs the Philippian church to step in and help the two to "be of the same mind". What do we all have in common? What is this "Same Mind"? It is the Spirit of God, we are all Children of the Father. They had forgotten what it was to be a part of this family. They allowed their own viewpoints to cause division instead of seeing the greater common we have in Christ. We are part of God's family and we have many differences too. In this room you'd be surprised at the differing viewpoints and opinions. Galatians 3:28 reminds us that we are neither Jew or Greek, Bond or Free, Male or Female – we are all one in Christ.

**4:4-6 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

Rejoice in verse 4 is repeated for a reason – to show emphasis! The word Chario (khaareeo) here means to experience God's grace and be conscious of it. Paul is commanding us to rejoice always – be mindful of what God has done and is doing for you. Right now, I want you to think of a time when you experienced God's presence or grace in a big way. How does that make you feel?

I can think of many of these times. One that comes to mind is when my daughter Samiah was born. What we discovered three weeks before, was that our child was losing blood and needed a blood transfusion. Two-weeks later, Samiah needed another transfusion. Now, we were very concerned and the Medical staff didn't know exactly what was causing the bleeding. After a week of tests, they had no idea what was going on. The decision to do exploratory surgery was an easy one – there wasn't much more that could be done. The outcome of that surgery was the removal of two golf-ball sized cysts from her intestines and two months of recovery. There were many moments that I felt the grace of God in this experience. First, the dr that performed the surgery was a sub for the regular surgeon who was on vacation and ended up being the #1 natal-gastrosurgeon in the U.S. who worked only once in a while. Praise the Lord! Second, what if I didn't live in the city with the best hospital in the U.S? Praise the Lord! And the list goes on!

Paul knew that when we recall what God has done we grow in faith and then His peace comes in and abides in our hearts and minds. Why should I worry when I know that He who made everything and who wants the best for me and is on my side? If He did it before, He can do it again! I would suggest making a list on your phone or somewhere of what God does for you in your life. And, each day take it out and either write something down or if you have nothing then read some of your best "grace moments" and reflect on God's goodness!

**4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things**

Paul now addresses what I call “Stinking Thinking”. Just like discord can overshadow the peace in a church like I mentioned earlier – stinking thinking can overshadow the joy and peace in our lives. Paul knew what science is just now discovering about appreciation. Psychology Today lists 7 scientifically proven benefits of gratitude. Better Relationships, Improved Physical & Mental Health, More Empathy, Better Sleep, Improved Self-esteem and Greater Resilience. When we practice appreciation, we build capacity which allows us to have the ability to act like the person God created us to be. It allows us to keep people more important than problems. So, when my child spills their milk on the table I realize that they are more important than the mess on the table. It increases the chances that we will do what Pastor Mike called Responding as opposed to Reacting last week.

### **Conclusion**

Paul cared for the Philippian church. He wanted them to experience the peace that he had. Paul learned this peace the hard way – he had hardships for sure! 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 lists a few – five times flogged, stoned and left for dead, imprisoned, shipwrecked, robbed, betrayed, a night and day treading water or floating at sea. And now he’s imprisoned once again and not certain of what his earthly future would be, and is writing to them how he is currently in a place of joy! Any normal person would be depressed and full of anxiety! In this current “light affliction” he reveals the “secret” to the Philippians of how he makes it through hardship. What a gift to his friends and to us!

Are you currently in a place that you’re searching for joy? Often, we look to other places or experiences but those only give a short time of happiness and not lasting joy. Paul knew that true lasting joy only comes from God and remembering who’s we are. We are his children whom He loves and part of His family.