

## August 25

**Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV)** <sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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.

Each day brings more disturbing news as the COVID virus continues to infiltrate our lives. We continue to see verbal and physical fights over how to deal with this problem. The vaccine is good; the vaccine is bad. The vaccine is science; the vaccine is a weapon of the enemy. In addition, we are watching Afghanistan fall. This side blames the past administration. The other side blames our current administration. Respected leaders are accused of wrongdoing only to point fingers at someone else. Police and first responders are quitting at an alarming rate because they are both praised and vilified. Peace, peace, but there is no peace.

Amid such turmoil and confusion, Paul gives some amazing instructions. Instead of complaining, we are to rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS. Despite the news from the world, Paul reminds us that God is always blessing us, protecting us, and guiding us. Thus, we always have reason to praise. Plus, we can also come to Him in prayer, knowing that His ear is attentive to our cries. However, Paul's next admonition is what spoke to my spirit. Instead of thinking about all that is wrong in this world, we are to think on the things that are true, admirable, praiseworthy, noble, pure, and lovely. Jesus told us to pray that His kingdom would come to earth just as it is in heaven. Thus, within His kingdom, we will find truth – a truth that is never hidden or modified. We will discover noble deeds that are worthy of our praise. We will see love in action. Why? Because we are to put into practice all that Jesus has shown and taught us. When we think on these things, we lift up our spirits and the spirits of others. We focus on the leadings of the Holy Spirit instead of the world. This does not mean we bury our heads in the sand. Instead, it means we lift them up to the Lord, acknowledging that He is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow.