

# FINDING PEACE Sunday School- August 22, 2010

## Unifying Topic: GROWING IN JOY AND PEACE

### Lesson Text

I. Peace Amidst Controversy (Philippians 4:2-7)

II. Peace Through A Christlike Mind (Philippians 4:8-9)

III. Peace Through Encouragers (Philippians 4:10-14)

**The Main Thought:** Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:9, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Many people grow restless under the demands life makes on them. How can we have peace and joy in life? God's peace and joy are rooted in following God's way.

**Lesson Aim:** To encourage believers to work through difficulty and to find peace through prayer, meditation, and thanksgiving.

**Life aim:** To teach believers how to grow and develop peace irrespective of their circumstances or situations.

- 4:2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.
- 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.
- 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.
- 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
- 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
- 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
- 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.
- 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.
- 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.
- 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.
- 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
- 4:14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

### **HISTORY:**

Paul had warned the Philippian Christians about Judaizing false teachers who want to lead them away from grace and back into law. Paul himself had many things to his credit in terms of Judaism, but he threw all away and chose to rely on Christ instead. Forgetting what lies behind, reaching to what lies ahead, he pressed toward the goal to win the prize. The Philippians were to do the same.

### **Chapter 3:17-21**

**3:17** Paul's reference to the Philippians calling them brethren is asking them to imitate him and observe those that are setting the right examples and being models before them. Thousands of converts had looked to Paul as their teacher and model for the Christian life. His example still inspires us to Christlike service. We influence people by how we live and by what we do.

- If we follow good and do good, it encourages others to do good.
- If we follow bad and do bad, it sets a pattern of bad before others. It even causes some (in particular, the young and immature) to think that since we did it and still got along fairly well, they can do the same and get along fairly well too.

**The point is this:** the life we live sets a pattern for others to follow. This says something of critical value: we must live lives on the highest plane possible for others. It also says, we must mark those who walk as examples and follow after the great traits of their lives, by dissecting those traits and applying those traits to our lives. Every believer should follow Christ with so much commitment and diligence that he will become a dynamic example for others. Every believer should be able to say follow me—follow my seeking to be like Christ. We are all teachers in some degree—teaching

children, family, friends, co-workers etc. Our life must back up what we profess, or else we will cause people to stumble and fall. As we take note of others that are doing the same, it will shape and inspire us.

**3:18** Earlier Paul had spoken rather harshly about the legalistic teachers who oppose the gospel of the cross. Now with tears he tells them again that there are those who walk (live) among them who are enemies of Christ. They say that the word "*walk*" used to refer to Christians in verse 17; it also refers to church members in verse 18. Again, who are the enemies of the cross? There are many who walk as the enemies of the cross—no matter who they are, whether within or without the church. Unquestionably, the enemies of the cross are many.

1. **3:19** Their end is "*destruction*" (*apoleia*). The word means perdition, destroyed, or slayed; to lose one's well-being; to be wasted and ruined and given a worthless existence. It does not mean that a person will cease to exist. It means a person will be destroyed and devastated and condemned to a worthless existence. He will suffer waste and loss and ruin forever and ever.
2. Their god is their "*belly*" (*koilia*) meaning their appetites and sensuality, their desire for the physical pleasures of this world. Physical and material gratification is their god. The point is this: when a person has a craving and an appetite for such things, those things become their god. The craving begins to consume his thoughts, energy, and effort. Before long, his craving is taking up so much of his energy that he has very little if any time for God or for anything else.
3. Their glory (meaning what they boast in and depend on) is their shame;
  - They boast in their sin and shame
  - They boast in and pride themselves
    - in their comfort   ▪ in their drunkenness   ▪ in their gluttony   ▪ in their conquests   ▪ in their sex
    - in their partying   ▪ in what they eat   ▪ in what they have purchased   ▪ in how much they have
    - in their authority and power
4. They set their minds on earthly things.
  - The worldly things also include the commendable things that are accepted by society such as:
    - Religious and spiritual pursuits   ▪ self-development programs   ▪ rules of virtue and morality
    - The pursuit of ambition or success   ▪ employment and jobs and business

Philippi was a Roman colony. Citizenship was an important subject to them because people born in Philippi were automatically Roman citizens. **3:20** The word "*conversation*" (*politeuma*) means citizenship in this context. Paul further reminds the Philippians that they are heavenly citizens with a glorious eternal hope, therefore, should not be misled by these enemies of the cross. Heaven is our real home and our real culture. Here on earth we are travelers passing through. When we were born again, our primary concern shifted to the things of the kingdom of heaven. During this life, we Christians have dual citizenship. In this physical body we are citizens of a particular earthly government, and we should live as good citizens. But in the spirit, our citizenship is heavenly.

1. The believer's life is to be heaven-centered, for his citizenship is in heaven.
  - a. The Philippian believers know exactly what it meant to live in one place and to be a citizen of another place. They knew exactly what it would mean to live upon the earth and...
    - i. dress as a citizen of heaven and not of the earth
    - ii. speak as a citizen of heaven and not of the earth
    - iii. engage in the pleasures of a citizen of heaven and not of the earth
    - iv. live by the laws of heaven as well as the laws of earth
    - v. worship the God of heaven and not the religions and gods of this earth
  - b. Believers are to live as citizens of heaven and not of this world.
2. The believer's life is to be focused upon the return of Christ.
  - a. He is to be constantly looking for the Lord's return
  - b. The word "*look*" (*apekdechometha*) means to yearn, to eagerly look and wait for Christ's coming.
3. The believer's life is to focus upon the glorious body he is to receive when Christ returns.
  - a. The human body is vile and shameful (subject to disease, death, and decay).
  - b. **3:21** The Lord Jesus shall change the believer's body and fashion or make it just like His glorious body. The word "*fashion*" (*summorphon*) means the permanent, constant and unchangeable being of a person; receiving a spiritual body (like Christ's resurrected body).
  - c. By the mighty power of God.
    - i. All things are subject unto Him.

We are to wait with eager expectation for the Second Coming of Christ. The hope of Jesus' return makes a total

difference in our outlook on life. This is the normal attitude of a citizen of heaven.

### **Chapter 4:1**

Paul had a strong yearning to see the brethren face to face. They were his joy because he had won them to Christ and they will be his crown of reward or wreath of victory at the Second Coming. He tells them... So he tells them to stand fast in the Lord.

1. **The first step to peace is standing fast.** This verse is a transitional verse between what has been said and what is about to be said. Paul has just said...
  - a. there are enemies of the cross of Christ
  - b. the believers citizenship is in heaven
  - c. the Lord is going to return and take us out of this world into heaven, transforming our bodies.

The word "*stand fast*" (*stekete*) means simply to stand firm, persist, and persevere. It is the picture of a soldier standing fast against the onslaught of an enemy. He refuses to give ground no matter the pressure and strength of attack. He does not flinch; he is not unstable and he is never defeated. This is the same for a Christian believer—they are to stand fast no matter how great the trial, the pressure of the temptation or the influence, offer, and allurements made by others.

Paul really cares about the brethren. But how does a believer stand fast when the temptation to surrender is so appealing and the trial is so terrible? Where can the believer find the strength to stand fast? There are two places:

- i. There is the believer's source of strength—the Lord Jesus Christ. Note the words "*stand fast in the Lord*." He must be living and moving and having his being in the Lord; that is, he must be...
  1. Praying, talking, and sharing with the Lord all day long.
  2. Keeping his thoughts upon the Lord; the glorious salvation, hope, and mission He has given believers.
  3. Serving and ministering for the Lord, bearing testimony of Him and meeting the needs of those who hurt and need help.

The point is this: the believer who walks; prays, and keeps his mind and thoughts upon the Lord is the believer who stands fast in the Lord. Common sense tells us this: We are in whatever we are thinking, talking, and walking. Very simply, think and talk about Him. Then our walk will also show that we are in Him.

- ii. There is the encouragement—the minister or brother who love and care about his fellow believer. Note what Paul, the minister says to those he deeply care about, those under his care:
  1. my dearly beloved brothers
  2. whom I long to see.
  3. my joy and crown.

The point is this: nothing encourages us any more than knowing that we are loved and cared for by others. The love of others stirs us to live like we should and to stand fast against temptation and trial. Believers are to...

- stand fast in the faith (1Corth.16:13);
- stand fast in the liberty of Christ (Gal.5:1);
- stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phili.1:27);
- stand fast in the Lord which is the secret of peace (Phili.4:1);
- stand fast and hold the teachings or doctrines that have been taught (2Th.2:15).

### **LESSON:**

## **Philippians 4:2-7 Peace Amidst Controversy**

**4:2-3** The plea is for all quarrelers to agree in the Lord. The source of the disturbance in the church was due to two prominent ladies in the church: Eurodias and Syntyche. Paul pleaded for the two ladies to get their minds together "*in the Lord*." Eurodias mean "*prosperous journey*" and Syntyche means "*pleasant acquaintance*." There is no time for arguing and divisiveness. The need is for a true friend, a "*yokefellow*" to step in and help any who are quarreling. The word "*yokefellow*" (*sunzuge*) is thought by some to be a proper name given to some Christians when they were baptized; someone deeply respected by the people of the church. Therefore, "*yokefellow*" means a person who pulls and works cooperatively with others. Paul was that very one who cared; who was thought to be the one who could solve the dispute and bring about reconciliation; who admonishes them to be of the same mind in the Lord and think the same thing. Peace and unity must be preserved.

2. **The second step to peace is agreement and unity.** There is no peace if people are...
  - arguing • bickering • biting • brawling • wrangling • disputing
  - dissenting • grumbling • criticizing

The quarrelers were co-laborers in the gospel. They had helped Paul and Clement and others in the church. They

needed to be serving in the gospel, not arguing and differing. Another thing was that their names were in the Book of Life. They were true believers who had slipped back into a life of sinful divisiveness. Most churches have one or more "yokefellow", persons...

- who love and care deeply for others.
- who are always helping and ministering to others.
- whom God has gifted and appointed to be ministerial helpers to the flock.
- who are highly respected and esteemed by most in the congregation.

It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for His kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause. But there is no excuse for remaining unreconciled.

**4:4** the Christian is not gloom but glorious. Paul exhorts them to keep on rejoicing. Remember Paul is in prison and the church is having a problem, yet Paul tells them, that they are to walk about rejoicing in the Lord. We talked about this same thing in Chapter 3. But Paul's attitude serves to teach us an important lesson: our inner attitudes do not have to reflect our outward circumstances. Paul was full of joy because he knew that no matter what happened to him, Jesus Christ was with him. Several times in this letter Paul urges the Philippians to be joyful.

3. **The third step to peace is rejoicing in the Lord.** This is a continued and repeated thing. Joy drives out discord and is contagious. Christians rejoice because they are in living union with Christ. Ultimate joy comes from Christ dwelling within us because the one who dwells within us will fulfill the final purpose for us.

**4:5** We now come to the fourth step to peace and an attitude to cultivate. The word "*moderation*" (*epieikes*) is translated as gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness. This is the opposite of stubbornness and thoughtlessness.

4. **The fourth step to peace is a strong gentleness.**

The exhortation not only deals with believers with the church, but with unbelievers. The point is: we must be gentle and forbearing in dealing with believers and unbelievers. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat unbelievers as well as believers with a loving gentleness and nothing to do with harshness.

- Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn.
- Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost.
- The desperate need of the hour is for us to reach out with the gospel, in a spirit of love and gentleness.

Why? Because the Lord is at hand (near). He is coming and when He comes, everyone of us will only hope that He will treat us with gentleness. Only if we are forgiving toward others will the Lord be forgiving toward us.

**4:6** Paul gives a charge: be "*anxious*" (*merimnate*) about nothing. The idea is that the believer is not to worry or fret about a single thing. The word "*nothing*" (*meden*) means not even one thing. Humanly speaking the Philippians had every reason to worry and be anxious;

- They were suffering severe persecution (Phili.1:18-19)
- They were facing a disturbance in the church, some disunity and quarreling (Phili.1:27, 42)
- They had some carnal members within their fellowship, some members who were prideful, super-spiritual, and self-centered (Phili.2:3-4; 3:12)
- They were facing some false teachers who had joined their fellowship, and the teachers were fierce in attacking the cross of Christ (Phili.3:2-3, 18-19)
- Some of the believers were having to struggle for the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter (Phili.4:19)

In the midst of such circumstances, the only way a person can keep from worrying is to receive an injection of supernatural power. This brings us to the next step to peace. The remedy for anxiety and worry is...

5. **The fifth step to peace is thru prayer.**

The four words used for prayer show exactly how prayer is the answer.

1. The word "*prayer*" (*proseuche*) refers to the special times of communication with God; set times that we share in periods of devotion and worship.
2. The word "*supplication*" (*deesis*) refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs; we pour out our soul to God; struggle when facing times of deep and intense need. Therefore, we come and lay out before Him as a child: crying, pleading, and begging for His help, comfort, deliverance and peace.
3. The word "*thanksgiving*" (*eucharistia*) means that we thank and praise God for all that He is and for all that He has done for us all day long as we walk and move about.
4. The word "*requests*" (*aitemata*) means specific and definite needs. Our praying is not to be general, but specific. We are to lay before God exactly what is needed and we are not to fear that we are being too detailed with God or bothering God. Neither are we to hold back from asking because we

fear He will not answer something so specific. Too often believers fear—not receiving the answer to a specific request; fear that it will show how weak they are spiritually if the request is not granted.

Note what scripture says: "*In everything*" pray like this—use all four ways of praying and use them to pray about everything in order to receive the promise—peace.

**4:7** The "*peace of God*" goes way beyond all that we can even ask or imagine; it excels and surpasses everything we could have hoped for. One may have peace with God without having the peace of God. Peace with God is dependent upon faith, and peace of God is dependent on prayer. Peace with God describes the state between God and the Christian, and the peace of God describes the condition within the Christian. "*Peace*" (*eirene*) means to be bound joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to have a sense, a knowledge, a consciousness that God will...

- provide
- guide
- strengthen
- sustain
- deliver
- encourage
- save
- give real life both now and forever.

A person can experience the peace of God only as he walks and moves about in prayer. Why? Because only God can deliver man through the most severe circumstances and tragedies of life, only God can infuse assurance and security within the human soul. The wonderful promise of the peace of God is two-fold.

1. First, the peace of God passes all understanding; which surpasses all power of human reason or comprehension (Eph.3:20). It is a mystery. God does not promise that He will give us a full understanding of those matters we bring to Him in prayer. He only promises to give us peace. This is a state of being where you are calm in the heart and mind despite the fact that turmoil and strife are raging around you. It is a peace that is divine in origin. It is a peace that cannot be disrupted by the problems, disturbances and difficulties of life. Inner friction of soul often results in outer conflict with people. The peace of God in the Christian will keep peace in the church because it's bigger than our emotions. Our consistent communicating with God does it.
2. Second, the peace of God keeps our hearts and minds. Paul mentions the heart. He is referring to the seat of our emotions. The heart is the place from which our feelings come. When Paul mentions the mind, he is referring to the place where we do our thinking. The word "*shall keep*" (*phrouresei*) is a military word meaning to garrison, to keep guard and protect. When Paul wrote these very words, he had a Roman guard on either side of him. They were "*standing guard*" over the man of God. Paul says that God's peace is like a guard that protects the heart from wrong feelings and the mind from wrong thoughts!

## Philippians 4:8-9 Peace Through A Christlike Mind

**4:8** Finally, brethren, whatsoever...

### 6. The sixth step to peace is thru positive thinking.

Peace comes through positive thinking. The word "*think*" (*logizesthe*) means to consider, reflect, and ponder. The idea is that of focusing our thoughts until they shape our behavior. The truth is:

- What we think is what we become.
- Where we have kept our minds is where we are.
- Our thoughts shape our behavior.
- What we do is what we think.

A person who will center his thoughts upon the world and its things, will live for the world and its things: money, wealth, lands, property, houses, possessions, position, power, recognition, honor, social standing, fame, and a host of other worldly pursuits. A mind set upon the world and the flesh is what leads to anxiety and worry, emptiness and restlessness. This was the stress of the former point (v6-7). A worldly mind never knows peace, not the peace of God. The point is this: when a person accepts Jesus Christ, his mind is renewed by the Spirit of God. Once a person has been converted to Christ and becomes a new man, he is to focus his thoughts upon the good things of life and upon God. Sinful and negative thoughts disrupt and destroy peace. For this reason, the believer is to struggle to conquer his mind and thoughts.

### 1. The charge is to think and practice positive thinking.

- a. "*Whatsoever things are true*" (*alethe*): real and genuine. Many things in the world seems to be true, but they are not; they are false and deceptive, an illusion, escapism. What we put in our minds determines what comes out in our words and actions. Keep your mind upon things that are true and there will be no room for evil, no room for worry, no room for fear, no room for vengeance, no room for confusion and trouble. A mind filled with and led by the Word of God is a stable mind!
- b. "*Whatsoever things are honest*" (*semna*): honorable, worthy, revered, highly respected, and noble. Things of character, of things honorable of persons or deeds. *Barclay says: "The word really*

*describes that which has the dignity of holiness upon it, but it is on the things which are grave and serious and dignified that the Christian will set his mind."*

- c. "Whatsoever things are just" (*diakia*): right and righteous behavior; Upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commandments of God—whatever conforms us to do the will of God. The believer is to keep his thoughts upon his duty toward men and God—upon doing what is right toward both. A mind filled with just and righteous thoughts will know peace.
  - d. "Whatsoever things are pure" (*hagna*): morally clean, spotless, stainless, chaste, undefiled, free from moral pollution, filth, dirt, and impurities. Clean, chaste, modest, and free from carnality. The believer's mind and thoughts are to be pure thoughts.
  - e. "Whatsoever things are lovely" (*prosphile*): pleasing, winsome, kind, gracious; things that excite love and kindness and pleasing to the believer, which is to please God. The believer's thoughts are not to be thoughts of unkindness and meanness, grumbling and murmuring, criticism and reaction. We are to focus on things that are lovely—that build people up, not tear them down.
  - f. "Whatsoever things are of good report" (*euphema*): refutable, high-toned, worthy things; things of the highest quality; speaking things that are good and encouraging.
  - g. "If there be any virtue (excellence) and if there be any praise (in any thought), think on these things." Anything that encourages moral excellence and that is praiseworthy, then THINK, right now, on these things!
2. The source or power for positive thinking is twofold:
- a. There is the Word of God. Paul says that he had preached and taught the very virtues of positive thinking to the Philippians and that they had learned them. What Paul had preached and taught was the will of God; therefore, the source or power for positive thinking comes from the Word of God.
  - b. There are noble examples. Paul says that he lived as a testimony before the Philippians. Therefore, they could follow his example because he kept his thoughts and life upon the very virtues of positive thinking.
3. 4:9 There is the energy and power of self-effort and discipline. Note the word, "*Those things ...do.*" The believer is expected to control and discipline his mind. Note the result of positive thinking: the God of peace shall be with the believer.

## Philippians 4:10-14 Peace Through Encouragers

This passage deals with stewardship, in particular the giving of money to meet the needs of ministers and missions for the spread of gospel to the world. Paul was in prison facing the death penalty. The Philippians had heard that Paul was standing fast and continued to preach the gospel to everyone who visited him. The church was stirred to do two things: to take up a love offering and to send a man, Epaphroditus, to minister to Paul's needs.

**4:10** The Philippians had sent a love offering and Paul's cup of joy overflowed. He rejoiced in the Lord; not in the gift. Their giving was received and their giving flourished. Note the words "*flourished again*" (*anethalete*) means to revive again. It is the picture of plants and flowers sprouting, shooting up, and blossoming again. The key word is *again*. When the church had been founded, the believers had supported Paul and his mission work on a regular basis. But for some reason they had dropped their mission support. Why had they stopped sending support to Paul is unknown? Paul just passed over the issue by saying that he knew they cared for him, but they had just lacked opportunity to support him. However, the point to see is: they picked up the support of Paul once again, and their giving flourished and blossomed anew.

**4:11** The church's giving was not necessary, but it was needed. God will take care of His dear servant even if churches do not adequately care for the man-of-God. This has been part of the sufferings most ministers have to bear in order to carry the gospel forth to a world in desperate need. Note three things:

1. **4:11-12** God teaches His servants to be content, no matter the circumstances. Note the word "*learned*." Paul did not always know this precious truth. We are not born contented nor do we gravitate instinctively toward contentment because it is a virtue that has to be learned. Paul had to learn to conquer circumstances and not to let circumstances worry him. He said, "*I know how to be abased (made low) and I know how to abound (be prosperous) everywhere and in all things.*" Paul was in prison and in chains; in want and in hunger. But note: he had learned contentment. The word "*content*" (*autarkeia*) means to be self-sufficient; to be completely detached from circumstances and still be in circumstances. You might be saved and have much in this world and still not be content. Contentment is a Christian virtue, a mark of Christian maturity.
2. **4:13** God teaches His servants that they *can do all things through Christ who strengthen him* (4:13). Christ does not do everything for the believer; neither does the believer do everything for himself. The believer declares, "*I can*", and gets up and faces the circumstances head on. It is then that Christ steps in and infuses

strength into the believer while the believer is tackling the problem. Then he can say "*I can do all things through Christ.*" *Because Christ gives me the strength to do them!*"

3. **4:14** The minister needs daily provisions; the gospel needs to be supported; so that, it can be carried around the world. Money and support are greatly needed. God can do the job without us; God can bypass us and put us on the shelf just like a useless book. But He wants His people to give generously. When they do, they perform a work that is well done, that is commendable and noble.

## SUMMARY:

Two Christian sisters prominent in the service of the church had a conflict. It was so serious that Paul had to write about it in a letter to the whole church. It is not the fact of disagreements which is the problem, but our failure to resolve them. Whole churches have split over what began as a problem between two people. Paul wants these sisters to resolve their conflict when he began to beseech them to be of the same mind in the Lord—out of the reverence for Christ and through the power He gives us to love and forgive. Jesus teaches us to settle offenses as quietly and quickly as possible before we are damaged and the poison spreads to others. One task of leadership is keeping peace in the flock. Even their names were written in the Book of Life because they were still His!

Rejoice because of Christ. Knowing Him is a constant source of joy; receiving what we ask in prayer gives joy; the assurance of His protection and help gives joy. The repetition shows us how important it is to rejoice in the Lord. One thing that stands out about the mature Christian in a conflict is their peace and self-control, which brings us to Why?—"The Lord is at hand"—not the time to not forgive! "*Let your self-control be known...*" Fear and worry are not appropriate when we have the kind of God we have. We have no problem that He does not have an answer for. Prayer is our alternative to fear and worry. When we start to be troubled, we can choose to quiet our soul, remembering God's promises, His love for us, and how He has helped us before. Thanksgiving should be apart of every prayer. Have you realized that it is impossible to be thankful and miserable at the same time?

Now the peace of God can come in—through prayer. Paul writes to his friends in the church in Philippi and tells them the peace of God passes all understanding.<sup>1</sup> Whenever we fully trust the Lord, there comes a peace that is past the understanding of those who have never experienced it that will keep our hearts and minds. That peace will be a guard which will keep the heart and thoughts holy and pure. Ultimately, the peace is that sense of His presence; the awareness of oneness with the compassionate One, who is bigger than our imaginations and our solutions. Paul tells us to fix your thoughts on six steps to that peace: what is <sup>2</sup>True - In speech; Honest - In action; Just - With regard to others; Pure - With regard to yourselves; Lovely - And what's more lovely than truth? Of good report - As is honesty, even where it is not practiced. If there be any virtue - And all virtues are contained in justice. If there be any praise - In those things which are deemed worthy. *Think on these things; meditate on them - That ye may both practice them yourselves, and recommend them to others.* This spiritual exercise of healthy, positive thinking is all important in living a healthy and peaceful life. Through prayer, allow the peace of God to guard your hearts from anxiety. Follow and imitate Paul's example because he lived what he preached and preached by his living.

Paul had received a love offering from the Philippians. He rejoiced when they were able to care for him again; not to hint that he was in great need, for he could do all things through Christ. Paul's expression of thanks overflowed—expressing joy and gratitude for the gift they had sent by way of Epaphroditus. To Paul it made no difference whether he was freed or bound to a soldier, whether the day was hot and humid or bleak and frigid, whether the Philippians sent a gift or failed to make contact. He is thankful, even though he was quite content with the "state" or condition he found himself in, for he knew that their gift really blossomed to their account. They had discovered that giving sacrificially enriches the giver. This "*contentment*" was something he had learned. The lesson of contentment was one he learned by degrees in varying circumstances; lengthy trials and discipline. In all things he continued to be strong by the One who infuses the power.

God wants us to have true peace by putting into practice what we have learned. These things are written to us so that the God of peace will be with us and in us. Not simply peace... but the God of peace. The question is how do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the peace of God ruling and reigning within our souls? Ultimately this is about God dwelling in us. **"Pause Everyday Appreciating Christ's Embrace!" –PEACE!**

**APPLICATION:** Trusting God is the opposite of worry. Pray about everything, meditate on the Word of God, and finally, the peace of God will come.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/CEpAdvent3.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/wesleys-explanatory-notes/philippians/philippians-4.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/wesleys-explanatory-notes/philippians/philippians-4.html)

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>