

Peace (5) Within

Text : **Phil. 4: 4-7**

(Also read : **Matt. 6: 25-34**)

INTRODUCTION :

A. This is the final lesson in our 5 part series on the general subject of peace.

1. By no means has it been an exhaustive study.
2. We will revisit the subject from time to time.

B. Thus far we have observed :

1. Man's greatest need is for peace with God.
2. Peace between nations will only be possible when Satan is ultimately defeated.
3. Peace between people is possible when both desire it and both pursue it.
4. Peace within the church should be the norm. *Christ demands it.*

C. This lesson will examine the concept of peace within the individual Christian.

1. A positive relationship with one's self is fundamental to all other relationships.
2. Love thy neighbor as thy self is predicated on a right relationship with one's self.
3. The absence of inner peace manifests itself in a host of antisocial behaviors.
 - a. Road rage
 - b. Political current climate

D. Americans spend billions seeking peace with themselves.

1. People try to avoid being alone with their thoughts.
 - a. They keep noise in their ears.
 - b. They seek to stay busy.
2. For years psychologists were popular.
 - a. People sought to find a cause for the lack of peace in their hearts.
 - b. Surely someone in their past traumatized them if they could only remember it.
3. Psychiatrists are now in vogue.
 - a. Surely there must be a pill to cure any problem, real or perceived.
 - b. The drug "Lexapro" has been prescribed to 13 million patients.
 - c. Other anti-anxiety medications are also prescribed : Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft, etc.

**Our text today gives God's prescription for peace within.
It's available and free for all, but it's found only in Christ.**

I. Vs. 4 God's first prescription is "Rejoice in the Lord always".

A. Rejoicing is not a response to circumstances.

1. Rejoicing does not require that someone else make you happy.
2. Rejoicing is not acting in an optimistic way.
 - a. It is not brought about by the power of positive thinking.
 - b. It is not having the ability to put on a happy face.
 - c. Many portray happiness, but inside they have no joy. (**an act**)

B. True rejoicing occurs ONLY "in the Lord."

1. Joy emanates from one's relationship with the Lord.
 - a. **One's perception of a storm is a lot different looking out of the window than it is looking in the window.**
 - b. **We all face the circumstances of life, but in Christ we view them from a different perspective.**
2. How could Paul and Silas sing while in prison after having been beaten ?
 - a. **Acts 16: 22 f**
 - b. They viewed persecution for Christ as an opportunity to glorify God. (*perspective*)
 - c. Peter and John counted suffering for Christ as a privilege. **Acts 5:41**
3. Whatever comes, the Christian understands that God is in controls.
 - a. The man of faith knows the end of the story. **Heaven, eternity with God.**
 - b. Confident : "*This isn't good, but God will make something great out of it.*" **Rm 8:28**

C. Many in the world seek pleasure to make their unhappiness go away, but as soon as the pleasure stops, the unhappiness comes back.

1. Chasing after pleasure does not yield positive fruit in one's life.
2. Pleasures choke out spirituality, faith and joy.

Luke 8:14- The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

D. The joy of the Lord produces positive fruit in a Christian's life. (**Gal 5: 22**)

1. It gives the Christians the strength to face whatever Satan throws his way.

Neh. 8:10- "... the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Cf - **Phil 4: 13**)

2. Those who know joy are healthier.
 - a. Studies prove laughter and a positive attitude promote healing and longer life.
Prov. 17: 22- A joyful heart is good medicine,
But a broken spirit dries up the bones.
 - b. God loves me and His love should reflect in my countenance and outlook.
Prov. 15: 13- A joyful heart makes a cheerful face,
But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.

- * Rejoicing is a command to be obeyed, not a response to circumstances.**
- One who refuses to obey until he gets what he wants is a rebel.
 - If we don't know how to obey, we must be willing to learn.

II. Vs. 5a Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. (Let Your light so shine ...)

A. To be gentle in spirit requires a good deal of spiritual maturity.

1. The word (*epieikes*) means to be mild, to be fair, to be nice, to be tender in dealing with others.
2. It refers to the way one treats an infant. We don't have to think to do it.
3. Our Lord was described as so gentle He wouldn't break a bruised reed. (**Matt. 12: 20**)

B. In order to qualify for leadership in the church, one must mature to gentleness.

1. Elders ... **I Tim. 3: 3**
2. Preachers ... **I Tim. 6: 11 , II Tim. 2: 25** (**Careful with babes in Christ**)
3. Members ... **Tit. 3: 2** (*Christians are nice to other people, even mean ones.*)

C. God is the source of gentleness.

1. **James 3: 17-** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
2. "Without hypocrisy" indicates that it's the way we are, not just the way we act.

III. Vs. 5b Always be aware "the Lord is near."

A. God is always with us.

1. Jesus said He would always be with us.
Matt. 28:20- teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
2. Our Lord understands what we are going through.
Heb. 4:15- One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

3. God knows exactly how hard it is for us.

Psa. 139: 1-16 Vs. 16- Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your books were all written The days that were
ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

* **God who formed us watches over us as a loving Father His child.**

- B. We also live knowing that God is near in the sense that he could return today.

James 5: 7-8 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The
farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient
about it, until it gets the early and late rains. **8** You too be patient;
strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

* **We can be at peace knowing a loving God is watching over us until He comes.**

IV. Vs. 6a “Be anxious for nothing” ,i.e., Don’t worry about anything.

- A. God’s not saying don’t be concerned about anything,
but not to harbor destructive anxiety.

1. We must care about some things.

a. Example : We must be concerned about the health of our personal faith.

b. **II Cor. 13: 5-** Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine
yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves,
that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

2. Paul endorsed being concerned for the welfare of the church.

Phil. 2:20- For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely
be concerned for your welfare. (*Epaphroditus*)

- B. Anxiety is an expression of doubting God. **ONE MUST TRUST GOD !!**

1. Remember our reading : **Matt. 6: 25 -34** (*summarize*)
2. Worry is atheism in practice. (**It is a parasitic cancer that eats away faith.**)
3. For a Christian to worry is to blaspheme God. (**God, I don’t believe you !**)

- C. Worry is a waste of time.

1. Mark Twain is quoted as having said :

*“I am an old man and have known great troubles,
but most of them never happened.”*

2. If what you are worried about cannot be fixed,
don’t spend time worrying about it.

If what you’re worried about can be fixed,
don’t spend time worrying about it .. go fix it.

D. Worry is one of the most common sins that entangle Christians.

Heb. 12: 1- ... let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

* **Where there is worry, there can be no peace.**

V. Vs. 6b Instead of worrying about anything, pray about it.**A. God gives prayer as a substitute for worry :**

Phil. 4: 6- Be anxious for nothing, **but** in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

B. Prayer affirms one's faith in God.

1. One prays to God because he believes God exists and that He hears him.
2. There is no reason to pray if one does not anticipate God will hear and respond.
3. To fail to pray is to reject God.
4. To worry after praying is to deny the power or the love of God.

C. "Supplication" is a cry for help.

1. God here instructs us to let him know when we have a problem or a need.
2. God sincerely wants to be included in your life.

I Pet. 5:6-7 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, **7** casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

- a. When something is "**cast**" it is thrown out of one's grasp.
- b. Once we have given our cares to God, we must not reclaim them again.

D. Our supplications are cast on Jesus with thanksgiving.

1. Grateful that we have access to the throne of God.
2. Grateful that we can trust Him to care for us.
3. Grateful that we have the opportunity to glorify Him by our trust.

CONCLUSION :**A. God promises that if we will do these things, His peace will guard our hearts.**

1. **Vs. 7-** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- a. The peace “**will guard your hearts**” like a sentry standing guard at the gate.
 - b. Worry and anxiety are not permitted to enter.
2. One must do these five things in order to receive this gift of peace from God.
 - a. Rejoice in the Lord.
 - b. Mature into gentleness.
 - c. Live in the nearness of Christ.
 - d. Stop worrying. *Trust God*
 - e. Pray about everything. (*Peace is the fruit of faith !!*)
 3. Anyone who truly wants peace in his life will do these things.
 - a. Many want others to make them happy, but such can never be.
 - b. Making the right choices about attitudes will produce the fruit of peace.
- B. Those who believe peace is a result of circumstances spend their lives seeking improved circumstances.**
1. Circumstances are not the problem.
 2. Attitudes based on beliefs are the problem. **FAITH – In Him we live and move and ...**
 3. The unrest that so many people are feeling is a result of wrong attitudes. *surrender trust God*
- C. If you will practice the five things set forth in this lesson inner peace is guaranteed by God.**
1. The struggle to lead a life pleasing to God is won or lost within the heart.
 2. **Prov. 23:7- For as he thinks within himself, so he is.**
- D. Only those in Christ can have the peace that comes from God.**
1. **Isa. 26: 3- The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You.**
 2. It is in Christ that one establishes that peaceful relationship with God.
Rom. 5:1- Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 3. The peace in Christ “surpasses all comprehension.”

INVITATION : Are you in Christ Jesus ?

Lesson Tests : (NASV)**Philippians 4: 4-7**

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! **5** Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. **6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6: 25-34

25 “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? **27** And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? **28** And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, **29** yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! **31** Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ **32** For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for *your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.* **33** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.