

Living with Peace
Philippians 4:2-9

Intro:

We live in such uncertain times. It seems to me that there is such restlessness in our world today. Whether it's the American political climate, the controversy over national health care, drama over celebs, or even international political tensions, current times are stressful! It's easy to get caught up in the tension, in the stress of it all.

Aside from all of the stresses that are outside of our immediate sphere of reality, we all deal with our own stresses. If you're still in school, you're probably stressed about where the money is coming from. If you're done with school, maybe you're still stressed about where the money is coming from! We all deal with issues that bring a lack of peace in our lives! Relationship issues, financial issues, health issues, health care issues, family, job, future, all of these can envelope us and keep us up at night.

I grew up with the word "stress" being thrown around all the time. Whenever my mom was stressed out, she would live in this agitated, depressed, sick state, to the point that she would literally get sick! Lack of peace is terrible, and we all desire peace at our deepest level!

Transition:

As Paul is beginning to close his letter to the Philippians, (remember that he just wrote about living forward, pressing on in the faith, not being bullied or led astray by those who would impose the law) he spends some time teaching us ways to live in peace. Later in Chapter 4, he kind of recaps his thesis and then gives his final close, but right at the beginning of chapter 4, we're going to see that he challenges us to Pursue the Peace found in Jesus, and commit ourselves to that peace. And I believe that as we affirm Paul's writing here and put it into practice, we can have

peace in our lives. (It may even challenge where we place our values or what we really find to be important.)

Read: Philippians 4:2-9

I. Live Rejoicing! v. 4

***It's usually always intentional when a Biblical author makes a repeat – "Rejoice... again I say REJOICE!"**

***Paul wanted the Philippians to understand that in the midst of their hostile environment, in their doubt and fear, that they can and should rejoice!**

***And their rejoicing is IN THE LORD! – It's the Lord that is the source of their joy, comfort, and assurance in the midst of this hostility!**

***It's our comfort and assurance in the Lord that helps us rejoice when fear grips our hearts, or when doubt and struggle set in.**

***Rejoicing in the Lord is so counter-intuitive when we are faced with reasons to stress or complain! It's a paradox!**

***It's the same backwards thinking that James gives us when he says "Count it all joy when you meet trials of various kinds... FOR YOU KNOW THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES STEADFASTNESS. AND LET STEADFASTNESS HAVE ITS FULL EFFECT, THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE, LACKING IN NOTHING!"**

***Rejoicing is counter-intuitive, but it's the very thing that can settle our stress and can usher in peace and trust and confidence in the perfectness of our Lord!**

II. Live Reasonably! v.5

***This is a verse that I don't think I've ever heard quoted as a stand alone verse, but what a great verse! LET YOUR REASONABLENESS BE KNOWN TO EVERYONE.**

***Wow! It's so good to be charged to live reasonably!**

***Have you ever dealt with someone who is just always unreasonable?**

They don't rationalize well, they aren't patient, they don't compromise, they refuse to believe another way than their own. Unreasonable people are tough to deal with!

***It may be that Paul is giving this charge in light of the apparent conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. Maybe these two women were unreasonable with each other and with the church (even though he affirmed their commitment to Jesus). So in light of that, he tells us to be reasonable.**

***Regardless, reasonable living is peaceable living!**

***I've worked with an individual that just seems to be so unreasonable! He was never a yes person, always a "no" person and wanted to make sure that he was on the strong end of the power struggle. We all knew that he was an unreasonable person, especially when it came to his doing his own job! And it made for a very uncomfortable work environment, and un-peaceful work environment! Interestingly, others in that work environment that lived reasonably were much easier to get along with, and were peaceful!**

III. Pursue Peace Directly from Jesus: v.6-7

***Perhaps one of the most quoted verses in the NT.**

***The implications are thick –**

- **Be anxious for NOTHING**
 - **Oswald Chambers: Do not be anxious is a negative COMMAND based on the idea that anxiety betrays a lack of trust in God's care and is a species of "unconscious blasphemy" against him.**
- **IN EVERYTHING...**
- **WITH PRAYER (general prayers)**

- **WITH SUPPLICATION** (humble petition – specific needs)
- **WITH THANKSGIVING** (with gratefulness – keeps the memories of God’s hand at work in our lives)
- Requests be **MADE KNOWN TO GOD** (you gotta pray - verbalize)

***Peace of God in our hearts and minds – deepest type of peace!**

***This peace comes directly from God himself! (*of God* – from God)**

***Our peace from God comes as a result of our having peace *with* God through Jesus. So, we can trust that God is supplying our peace in the deepest sense –**

- Peace I give to you, **MY PEACE** I leave with you, not as the world gives...
- Peace in the midst of the storm, “Peace, be still.”
- Isaiah 26:3-4 – You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock!

IV. Focus our efforts on Gods Peace – Our minds and actions: v. 8-9

***Paul sets this as a “final charge” for living with Peace – setting our course in our minds and our actions –**

***Set your minds (think on these things)**

- Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise...

***Set your actions (practice these things)**

- What you have learned and received and heard and seen

***It makes sense to me that if our mind is wrapped up in things that aren’t honorable or peaceable, then we wouldn’t have peace in our lives!**

***It makes sense that if we aren't acting our lives in accordance to the teachings of scripture (to love others, love God, serve, live in humility, give, pray, fast, etc), then we won't have peace in our lives.**

***I've noticed that in all the years I've pastured, I've never gotten to counsel or talk with someone who is faithful in serving Jesus that is struggling with a deep lack of peace in their lives. It always seems to be the folks who are trying to embrace inappropriate mindsets or lifestyles that struggle with restlessness. (I'm not making a case for or against the mental state of depression, but I'm talking about living without peace in general.)**

***It's easy to live without peace if you constantly listen to political talk radio, or watch the news about wars and our failing economy and the health care crisis, and if you are surrounding yourself with gripers and complainers and negative people.**

***It's easy to live without peace if you are trying to live a compromising life before God – not fully devoted to him in all areas of your life.**

***And this is what brings us back to Paul's original thesis – whatever happens, let your manner of life (let how you live in all areas) be worthy of the Gospel of Jesus. There is PEACE in that!!!**

Conclusion:

***Live Rejoicing**

***Live Reasonably**

***Pursue Peace directly from Jesus**

***Focus our efforts (our minds and our actions) on God's peace**

***I don't want to necessarily say that this is a "formula," but I will say that this passage makes logical sense – if we would rejoice in the face of our doubts and fear, if we will live reasonably with others, if we will trust Jesus for the peace that**

comes from him, and focus our minds and actions on Scriptural things, then I believe that we will have peace. (It's not man-centered, the source of our peace is not our efforts, but God alone! But we can do these things – and what's wrong with them anyway?)

**I want us to pray and commit to “Living with Peace.”
Pray for God's help to live this way
Pray for God's direction to live this way
Pray for God's peace**