

## JOY AND PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES

### Part 3

#### Philippians 4:5b-7

6/1/03

**Big Idea:** We can have joy and peace in troubled times because God is near and because we have the privilege of praying to a loving all-powerful God.

**Purpose:** To encourage our people in the midst of their trials because they are looking to God in prayer.

**Best way is to use examples and illustrations of God's faithfulness.**

The last two weeks we have been looking at what it is required for you and I to rejoice in the midst of the pain and injustices of life.

The next two weeks we will see how you and I can have peace in the midst of the uncertainties of life.

*Fear, anxiety and worry are the greatest thieves of joy.*

**Fear and worry over the future.**

**loss of job, children, parents, marriage, sickness and death,**

*It is not enough for us to tell ourselves to "quit worrying."*

*Over the next two weeks we will see what it takes to conquer worry and experience a secure mind.*

*right praying vv. 6-7*

*right thinking v. 8*

*right living v. 9*

#### 1. Peace And Joy Are Possible Because The Lord Is Near. 4:5b

**near-** near at hand, close by

- **Acts 17:28** for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
- **Hebrews 13:5**

- ◆ To hear the cry of our hearts
- ◆ To strengthen the weak
- Hagar
  - ◆ **Genesis 16:13** Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees";
- Israel in Egypt
  - ◆ **Exodus 3:7** The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.
- Unfortunately in the midst of trials we often seem to forget what we know about God.
  - ◆ We lose confident trust in Him.
  - ◆ We lose our spiritual stability and become defeated.
    - ◇ **George Muller** The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.
    - ◇ **G. Campbell Morgan** What we do in the crisis always depends on whether we see the difficulties in the light of God, or God in the shadow of the difficulties.

**near-** may come quickly

- He is near and His coming is imminent.
  - ◆ This is as bad as it get for the Christian.
  - ◆ This is as good as it gets for the unsaved.

***It is easier to have peace of mind when we bring God into the picture.***

We can have peace during trouble times because the Lord is near and because we currently have access to God in prayer.

## 2. Peace And Joy Require Right Praying. 4:6-7

### a. Be anxious for nothing. v. 6 cf Matthew 6:25, 34; 10:19

- Don't fret
- Don't be overly concerned.
- Don't be worried or shook up about anything
- ◆ **Matthew 6:31-33** "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.
- ◇ God's faithfulness in seminary
- ◇ **J. Hudson Taylor** As a rule, prayer is answered and funds come in, but if we are kept waiting, the spiritual blessing that is the outcome is far more precious than exemption from the trial.
- ◇ **Edith Schaeffer** We were in need of passage money to return to our work in Switzerland. In faith, we set a date that the children and I began "praying towards." We contemplated sending out a letter informing people of this need, but kept deciding against it-- "*Let's just pray about it for the time being.*" *Less than three weeks before the date, the money began to come in. It was a direct answer to prayer, because I never did mail any letters. And the love gifts did not come from any of the sources I had had in mind when praying. It was as though God said, "It is not necessary to bring the money from those places you think are possibilities. I am able to make it all a surprise to you, my child."*

- ◆ **Matthew 10:19** "But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.
- ◆ **Luke 10:41** But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;
- In Scared to Life (Victor), Douglas Rumford cites a study that explains why we shouldn't allow fear to rule our lives:
  - ◆ 60% of our fears are totally unfounded;
  - ◆ 20% are already behind us;
  - ◆ 10% are so petty they don't make any difference;
  - ◆ 4-5% of the remaining 10% are real, but we can't do anything about them.
  - ◆ That means only 5% are real fears that we can do something about.
- We become fearful, anxious, and worried because we do not trust in God's wisdom, power, goodness, or love.
- We fear that God is not wise enough, strong enough, or good enough to prevent disaster.
  - ◆ Or it may be because sin in our lives has crippled our faith.

**b. But . . . let your requests be made know to God. v. 7**

- **Luke 18:1** Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,
  - ◆ Spiritually stable people react to trials in thankful prayer.
- Three synonyms for prayer (prayer, supplication, requests)
  - ◆ *prayer*- focuses upon asking with an attitude of worship

- ◇ **Ruth Bell Graham in Prodigals and Those Who Love Them** I [have] learned that worship and worry cannot live in the same heart: they are mutually exclusive.
- ◆ **supplication-** focuses upon the petition part
  - ◇ cf James 4:2
- ◆ **Requests-** asking
  - ◇ **John 16:24** "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.
  - ◇ When **George McCluskey** married and started a family, he decided to invest one hour a day in prayer, because he wanted his kids to follow Christ. After a time, he expanded his prayers to include his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Every day between 11 a.m. and noon, he prayed for the next three generations. As the years went by, *his two daughters committed their lives to Christ and married men who went into full-time ministry. The two couples produced four girls and one boy. Each of the girls married a minister, and the boy became a pastor. The first two children born to this generation were both boys.* Upon graduation from high school, the two cousins chose the same college and became roommates. During their sophomore year, one boy decided to go into the ministry. The other didn't. He undoubtedly felt some pressure to continue the family legacy, but he chose instead to pursue his interest in psychology. He earned his doctorate and eventually wrote books for parents that became bestsellers. He started a radio program heard on more than a thousand stations each day. The man's name was James Dobson. Through his prayers, George McCluskey affected far more than one family.

- *with thanksgiving*

- ◆ Instead of having a spirit of rebellion against what God allows, we are to trust God and cast all of our cares on Him.
- ◆ Thanksgiving for past favors, present blessings, and future assurances.
- ◆ Thanksgiving takes faith that God is in control and knows what He is doing.
- ◆ It takes faith that God will work all things together for good.
- ◆ It takes recalling the sea of God's goodness that you are constantly experiencing.
- ◆ We can be thankful for God's promises, His forgiveness, His mercy, His patience, His provisions, etc.

- *in everything*

- ◆ 1 Peter 5:7

c. **And the peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts and minds. v. 7**

- *A peace that guards your hearts and minds*

- ◆ **peace-** inward tranquility
- ◆ **guards-**protects
- ◆ **hearts and minds-** emotions and thoughts
  - ◇ Remember Paul's situation
  - ◇ Peace does not mean the absence of trials.
  - ◇ **Phillips Brooks** Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks.

◇ **Tim Hansel** I have prayed hundreds, if not thousands, of times for the Lord to heal me--and he finally healed me of the need to be healed.

- *A peace that surpasses all comprehension*
  - ◆ A peace that defies the world's understanding
  - ◆ **Isaiah 26:3**
  - ◆ **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.
- *A peace that comes only in Christ Jesus*
- *The real challenge is not to eliminate unpleasant circumstances; it is to trust in the good purpose of our infinite, loving, holy, sovereign, powerful God in every difficulty.*

**Big Idea:** We can have joy and peace in troubled times because God is near and because we have the privilege of praying to a loving all-powerful God.

Before you and I can have the peace of God, we must have peace with God.

**Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

**2Corinthians 5:18-21** Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**1 John 2:23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

**John 3:36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

**John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."