

## *Spiritual Stability – Part 2*

Philippians 4:4-6A

Series: Joy and Gratitude in Christ

### 1. Introduction

- a. The verses read today express the theme of the book of Philippians. Paul, essentially, calls all believers to rejoice in the Lord always.
- b. We understand that our outlook on life will determine how we engage life and more importantly, how we will react in times of trouble.
- c. This is not about positivity or positive confession but on a deep understanding of the Sovereignty of God.
  - i. As far as we understand God's sovereignty and are committed to His plan and purposes, we are left in the unique position of absolute trust and surrender.

### 2. Verse 4 – As Christians, we are to maintain a Spirit of Joy – Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice

- a. Joy is such an important factor in spiritual stability that Paul repeats his command for emphasis
  - i. To be joyful, therefore, is not easy but it is essential.
  - ii. In order to maintain the Joy of the Lord, the Philippians (and us) must rise above their consequences.
- b. Some people wrongly identify joy as a purely human emotion.
  - i. Some are bewildered by Paul's twice repeated command to be found in Joy
    1. How can Paul command us to feel a certain way?
- c. However, Joy is not a human emotion but rather it is the deep-down confidence that God is in control of everything for the believer's good and His own glory, and thus all is well no matter what the circumstances.
- d. It is true that a believer often cannot find reasons to rejoice in their specific circumstances.
  - i. There is general wickedness, sorrow, misery, and death
  - ii. People are not a source of joy either, they change, hurt, and disappoint.
  - iii. The only sure, reliable, unwavering, unchanging source of joy is God.
- e. Paul makes an incredible claim; spiritual stability is directly related to how a person thinks about God.

- f. Four keys to rejoicing as a Christian:
    - i. Knowledge of God is the key to rejoicing
      - 1. **Psalms 1:1-3** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (2) but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (3) He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.
    - ii. Believers rejoice in the contemplation of God's Redemption
      - 1. **Psalms 13:5** But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
    - iii. Another reason for believers to rejoice is that God has promised to supply all their needs.
      - 1. **Matthew 6:28-33** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (31) Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
    - iv. A Christian should rejoice because of privilege of serving God
      - 1. **1 Timothy 1:12** I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,
3. Verse 5A – Learning to be content – Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
- a. Reasonableness – (*Greek Epiekēs* – gentle spirit) – Graciousness of humility; the humble graciousness that produces the patience to endure injustice, disgrace, and mistreatment without retaliation, bitterness, or vengeance. It is contentment.
  - b. This type of gracious humility runs counter to the cult of self-love that was rampant in ancient society, and is rampant in modern society.

4. Verses 5B-6A – Resting on a confident faith in the Lord - the Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything,
  - a. There is no greater source of spiritual stability than the confidence that the Lord is near. Nearness in the sense of His presence is being emphasized here.
  - b. Because of God's nearness, believers should not be fearful, anxious, or wavering. They should not collapse, but be strong and stable.
  - c. Unfortunately, when they face trials, many believers often seem to forget what they know about God.
    - i. When we lose our confidence in Him, we lose our joy and consequently our stability.
  - d. Be anxious for nothing – Nothing is outside of his sovereign control or too difficult for Him to handle. A low view of God leads to a myriad of problems.
  - e. Anxious, fretful, worried, harried believers are inherently unstable and vulnerable to trials and temptations. Anxiety is both a violation of Scripture and totally unnecessary.
  
5. Benediction –
  - a. **Psalms 57:1-3** To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. (2) I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. (3) He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah. God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!