

## INTRODUCTION

Despite the message from the angel of peace on earth, it can be hard for us to be at peace this time of year. Temptations to be anxious, to worry, to fret ourselves, to be stressed out, to be full of care, seem to come at us from all directions.

So, I bring you a word of exhortation this morning, to address that temptation. Maybe I should have exhorted the congregation with this sooner! Several of you have confessed that you have been feeling very anxious lately. Yesterday it came out pretty clearly that I have been worried about things pertaining to this time of year.

So, hear this message from the word of God today: Have peace this time of year in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## TEXT

Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 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 understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

## BODY

To have peace this time of year in Jesus Christ:

- I. Rejoice in the Lord
  - A. "Rejoice" having to do with joy
    - 1. be joyful; have joy on purpose
    - 2. find joy in something; take joy in something
    - 3. enjoy
  - B. Primarily in the Lord rather than in anything else
    - 1. this time of year, it becomes even more obvious than usual that the world is trying very hard to rejoice in the good things of this world
      - a) enjoyment of snow, up north where they have that kind of thing
      - b) eating special food
      - c) giving and receiving presents
      - d) fun fairy tales about Frosty and Rudolph and other mythical characters
      - e) lots of music
      - f) pretty light displays
      - g) being with friends and family
    - 2. yes, God provides many joys in this life; and it certainly is not wrong to enjoy them
    - 3. but really to have peace, we rejoice first in the Lord Himself, much more than in the good things in this life
    - 4. rejoice not so much in the gift as in the giver
      - a) e.g. teaching children about opening presents
    - 5. unlike anything else, we always can rejoice in the Lord, who never disappoints us
  - C. In who He is
    - 1. as the Son of God
    - 2. as the Son of Man
  - D. In what He has done
  - E. In what He continues to do
  - F. In what He yet shall do in the future

To have peace this time of year,  
Rejoice in the Lord, and

## II. Temper your conduct with thoughts of the Lord's nearness

### A. The word

1. Geneva: patient minde
2. KJV: moderation
3. NKJV: gentleness
4. ESV: reasonableness

### B. The concept

1. our natural tendency is to react sharply to things that provoke us
2. to have peace, we endeavor to react mildly to provocation

### C. This is done by keeping in mind the Lord's nearness to us

1. by His omniscience, He watches over us closely all the time
2. He is right with us by the presence of His Holy Spirit in us
3. His return is near
  - a) it is the next thing
  - b) it could be any moment

### D. The temptation is to think of the nearness of other things

1. the nearness of the day when we need to have a present for someone or everyone
2. the nearness of the time when we have to be with people who have hurt us; people who make it hard to get along with them
3. the nearness of our end-of-semester assignments being due
4. the nearness of our checking account balance to zero

### E. Psalm 145:18-19 The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. (19) He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.

To have peace this time of year,

Rejoice in the Lord

Temper your conduct with thoughts of the Lord's nearness; and

### III. Replace anxiety with prayer

#### A. Consider the essence of this saying:

1. for no thing worry
2. for every thing pray

#### B. Instead of worrying, pray and give thanks

1. on a regular basic, before you get worried, pray and give thanks
2. on an emergency basis, when you realize you're worrying, pray and give thanks

#### C. By this means, find peace

1. God knows how to give you peace, beyond what you fully can understand
2. He can give peace to both your emotions and your thoughts

To have peace this time of year,

Rejoice in the Lord

Temper your conduct with thoughts of the Lord's nearness

Replace anxiety with prayer; and

### IV. Choose wisely what to think about

#### A. This time of year, the world peddles things for you to think about, especially pertaining to buying their merchandise at the store or online; some of their best salesmen are a talking snowman, flying reindeer, and a grumpy grinch

1. it's not wrong to manufacture goods and sell them; nor is it wrong to shop for them and buy them and give them to people
2. it's not wrong to make up fun fictitious friends and entertain children with them
3. but thinking constantly and intensely about such things does not make for peace; these things are not necessarily wicked, but neither are they lovely, noble, virtuous; they are not things such as the Lamb on His throne in heaven

#### B. This time of year, the prevailing religion around us pushes its own combination of things for you to think about, consisting of

1. Mary riding on a donkey
2. Jesus being born on a snowy winter's night, December 25th
3. three kings riding camels to see the baby in the manger

#### C. This time of year, the world gives you a version of Jesus to think about; but only as

1. a helpless babe in the manger
2. an injection-molded plastic toy of a baby

#### D. This time of year, the world gives you an alternate savior to think about, who is

1. perfectly benevolent, so he always wants to do you good
2. omniscient, so he knows all about you and sees you even when you're sleeping
3. omnipotent, so he can do whatever he wants to do or needs to do to give you what you really want

#### E. The problem with those religious things is that they are not true. So we derive no peace from thinking of them. So let us think instead of what the bible tells us is true!

1. Jesus: "I am the truth"

## CONCLUSION

Rather than spending this part of the year in anxiety, worried about many things, have peace this time of year. And not the peace the world offers, but the peace that comes through Jesus Christ, as we

Rejoice in the Lord

Temper our conduct with thoughts of the Lord's nearness

Replace anxiety with prayer

Choose wisely what to think about, prioritizing what is true about our Lord Jesus Christ

Prelude - Journey - please pick

Journey - Trinity 719 "A Shelter in the Time of Storm" - Andrew lead

Rita - Sheet - "Is He Worthy?" Andrew & Alex lead

Haven - Trinity 435 "Jesus Christ the Crucified"

Dillon - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Isaiah 61:10-11

Jeremiah - Scripture Reading - Psalm 97

Thad - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Habakkuk 3:17-19a

- V. Follow good examples
  - A. Our Lord Jesus Christ
  - B. His apostles
  - C. Your pastors
    - 1. past
    - 2. present
  - D. Godly parents
  - E. More mature church members