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The Lord is at Hand; Phil 4:4-6  
GPBC  
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Introduction – As I was studying and preparing the message for today, I knew that these verses were next in our study through Philippians. But since it was Mother's Day, I thought over and read over some other passages that would serve as a typical Mother's Day message. But I just kept coming back to these verses. There was one passage in particular that I really tried to focus on, but my mind kept going back to these verses. So I stopped and thought – okay there must be something here that we need today and that our mothers need today.

So yes, while these verses apply to all of us, I can't help but think if our moms can lock on to the lesson here what a blessing it would be to our mothers, what a help it would be to encourage and strengthen our mothers in motherhood. You have been a blessing to us, may today's text be a wealth of blessing to you.

The challenges for the believing mother, the disciple of Jesus who seeks to disciple her children, are great. Not only the challenge of going through the seasons of life herself but also being a mother through the seasons of life of her children, balancing life and decisions and boundaries, protecting and yet giving room, raising them up in the fear of the Lord and yet allowing them to find God's purpose for them – these can be difficult to navigate. On top of all this is the challenge of the increasing darkness of the culture around us. Godly, believing mothers are some of the strongest people I know, exemplifying in every way the grace and strength of the Lord.

- I. What Does "the Lord is at hand" mean?
  - a. If you'll notice in vv4,5,6 there are three commands given: (1) rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice, (2) let your reasonableness be known to everyone, and (3) do not be anxious about anything.
  - b. In the middle of those 3 commands is a massive truth claim – The Lord is at hand. The commands of God are always grounded in either a glorious promise or a massive truth. When God issues a command, He issues a promise or a truth to give wings to that command. God is not a legalist. He doesn't set forth a list of arbitrary and subjective

rules. He sets forth a treasure chest of joy, truth and promise. The commands of Scripture are simply how we are to respond to such grand and glorious truth and promise. How do we respond to a God who is so mighty, and holy, and gracious? In light of what God says is true and all that He promises for His people, how should we live?

- c. The great truth from which these 3 commands spring is that the Lord is at hand. So what does that mean? That the Lord, the God of creation, the holy Triune living God, who sits on the throne in heaven and reigns over every speck of His creation, and is working all things toward an eternal end for His glory and our good – the God that the angels dare to look upon – the Lord is at hand. What does that mean?
- d. I think there is room here to understand Paul's meaning in one of three ways or in all of these three ways, for they would all certainly apply. The first two are general statements for all of us. The last one is for all of us but I particularly want our mothers to hear it.
- e. First, I understand the Lord is at hand in the sense of being next.
  - i. What I mean by that is the brevity and frailty of life. Even if you are blessed with a long life, it goes by quickly. The Bible says this life is a vapor. It comes and it goes quickly. It is appointed to man once to die and then the judgment.
  - ii. Ill. Heartbeat. Take a deep breath.
  - iii. In terms of what's next in each of our lives, God is truly just right around the corner. Peek with me around that corner. Imagine standing before the One who is holy, holy, holy. One day we will turn the corner of this life, and there He will be!
  - iv. How different our lives would be were we to live each day as if the Lord were right around the next corner!
- f. Second, I understand the Lord is at hand in the sense of coming soon.
  - i. Matt 24:12ff.
  - ii. How different our lives would be were we to realize the Lord's return could be in our lifetime!
- g. Third, I understand the Lord is at hand in the sense of being near.
  - i. The nearness of God to His people. When something or someone is at hand, it is close. It's right there with you.
  - ii. Acts 17:24-25, 1 Cor 6:19-20, Col 1:27.

- iii. The God of the universe who is a consuming fire and cannot be reduced to the space of a man-made temple dwells within His people.
    - iv. God is closer to you than your next breath. He lives within you!
    - v. Ill. Church, God's house – church is not what we do on Sunday morning, or where we go, church is who we are.
    - vi. How different our perspective on life would be were we to realize the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, the God of wisdom and might and grace makes His home in our heart?
  - h. Take it whichever way you want, it still applies – the Lord is at hand!
  - i. With all the stresses and joys and concerns and laughter and heartache and decisions and victories and failures that come along with being a mom – know this beyond a doubt – the God of all comfort who is gracious and filled with steadfast love, lives in you.
  - j. Make the most of motherhood by living each day knowing that Jesus is just right around the corner. Give it all you've got. Keep praying. Keep loving. Keep living for Jesus. Keep going until you hear "Well done!"
- II. 3 Ways It Applies to the Believer's Life
- a. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, rejoice. Now he says it twice for 2 reasons (1) to stress the importance of a joyful life if we are in Christ. After all, joy is a fruit of the Spirit.
  - b. But joy doesn't always come easy, so that's why he says it twice. (2) Sometimes we have to fight for the joy that we have in the Lord! Sometimes we have to crawl back out of our circumstances and back into our salvation. Sometimes we lose our joy because we've lost our focus.
  - c. So Paul says rejoice in the Lord always – and remember he writes from prison. So listen carefully, evidently there something about knowing the Lord is at hand that is wonderful enough to raise up joy in a downcast heart or a downtrodden situation. There is more joy to be known and tasted and experienced in the Lord than there is darkness and hardship to drown it out!
  - d. Moms when you think about who your Lord is and all He has done to rescue you, and restore you, and He's returning for you – O you can rejoice!

- e. Ill. My mother
- f. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
- g. Fair, not extreme, good judgment, well grounded – opposite meanings would be misleading, invalid, unreasonable.
- h. What do you think Paul means here? I think he means this: don't be so selfish and prideful and uncaring that you're difficult to get along with but rather let everyone attest to a spirit of gentleness and love and truth in you. It's really the second command isn't it?
- i. (1) Now that's really difficult to do if you're hurt. (2) If you always get your way. (3) Moms – it's really hard if the path your growing or grown child wants to pursue is not the path you've always planned for them. It's really difficult to transition from the watching over, to giving counsel and advice, to helping, to just being there.
- j. But you know what really helps us to be reasonable in life and as parents – know the Lord is at hand. He's watching. He knows. He's guiding. He's got this!
- k. Do not be anxious about anything. Anxiety and depression are skyrocketing in our society. And I'm not diminishing the reality and anguish of it at all. It's real and it's crippling. But it's interesting that we have more affluence than ever before, and we're more anxious. We are more social than ever, more connected than ever, supposedly, and we're more anxious. We have more access to more information and opportunities than ever before, and we're more anxious.
- l. Now we're really going to get into the Bible's hope for the anxious heart in the next passage but for now, here's the takeaway from today's text. Paul says, "The Lord is at hand, do not be anxious about anything."
- m. I believe this is what we need today – disconnect, find a quiet spot, make adequate room in you life, to just sit with God. Wash in His Word. Soak it in to your bone. Lift up your heart in prayer and then listen. Lift up your voice in worship and then rest. Slow down, live simple, spend time with God. Know that He is right there with you. You're going to be in His presence just around the bend. He's coming back for you soon. Breath Him in and let the rest go.
- n. The Lord is at hand – moms, you don't have to be anxious about anything!