

MAKING MY PRAYER WITH JOY – week 1

Rejoice in the Lord always... Rejoice ... in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving: Philippians 4: 4 – 7; an appeal to faith rather than encouragement. See **3: 1** *rejoice*, based in Jesus Christ not circumstances; **1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 18**. Danger of being despondent under trial. **Phil. 4: 5** *gentleness* – moderation – forbearance – reasonableness; relations with world rather than church; generous spirit beyond ‘my rights’. Such gracious disposition only possible through God’s grace for - *the Lord is at hand*. **Verse 6**, foes and pressure; cf. **1: 28 & 29**. Giving way to being anxious means lack of trusting God; **Matthew 6: 25 – 34**. So, *in everything by prayer and petition (supplication) with thanksgiving*, ie. Content of specific prayer and definite petitions; Luke 23: 24, *So Pilate decided to grant their demand*. **1 John 5: 13 – 15**; *ask/request*; confidence in requesting does not suggest that prayer is a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or bending His will to ours, but subordinating our will to His. **Verses 6 & 7**, Philippi a town with Roman garrison, so *guard*; sentry keeping his watch. Only in Christ Jesus; **Romans 5 : 1**.

Jesus the God-Man, born under the law, frequently prayed to his Father. He was his Father’s only Son and had need of God and opens himself up to God in petition and thanksgiving; **Hebrews 5: 7 – 10**. There is no suggestion that his prayer was a monologue; but a man with his Creator and Father. Jesus never makes his own plans nor does he obey robotically as automation. His prayers unite his will with that of the Father and his obedience is personal as the obedient Son always doing the Father’s will.

Psalm 54: 2 *Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth*. Believers are commanded to pray; **1 Thess. 5:16 - 18**. Most people find difficulties in prayer. Struggling is part of the way we learn. Feelings of inadequacy, busy schedules, church work, family responsibilities, can push conversation with God aside. However, our praying is not at our initiation or by our decision for God seeks us to worship Him **John 4:23**.

‘It is not enough to rejoice, unless our joy look straight towards God, and unless we keep Him alone always in our view’. John Calvin; *Institutes*, 11, 381 ‘**Prayer** is nothing else than the opening up of our heart before God’. IV, 353.