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Pastor Brian Bluett

### Philippians – The Blueprint for Joy #13

Welcome to OIC. We are glad you are here. For those of you who are here for the first time, we are in the midst of reading someone else's mail – a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. He had started the church and was very familiar with the people there. I, here at OIC, have done my very best to get to know all of your names. Thankfully, I have gotten to know your smiles. Nancy and I really look forward to greeting you as you arrive. Nothing warms my heart more than to meet you as you come to worship. Today we begin chapter 4 of this letter. It is without a doubt one of my most favorite chapters in the entire Bible. I would be very surprised if most of you don't know at least 4 of the verses from memory that are found in chapter 4 of the letter to the Philippians. You may not be able to say them chapter and verse but no doubt you know some of these verses. Today's message could easily be called "keeping calm and overcoming anxiety". Our support text is Philippians 4:1-9

#### Philippians 4:1-9

**4** Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. <sup>2</sup>I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of the gospel*, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

<sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

<sup>9</sup>The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul gives us 2 ways we can stay calm and overcome anxiety.

#### #1 Have peace with others

##### Philippians 4:1-3

**4** Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. <sup>2</sup>I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of the gospel*, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

It seems there was a division amongst the leaders of the church at Philippi. One thing I've learned about division in church is it can destroy a happy, healthy church. Paul challenges them to settle their disagreement. We are not sure what the dispute was all about but it must have been big enough so that Paul addressed it from his prison in Rome. Two ladies apparently weren't getting

along. When they arrived at church, they probably sat in the extreme corners of the building looking rather stern and probably got nothing out of the church service. Maybe because they were sitting and probably preoccupied with negative thoughts about the other person. I've said it before and I'll say it again, God wants us to walk in unity. Let me show you what Jesus said.

John 17:20, 21

<sup>20</sup> "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;  
<sup>21</sup> that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Jesus tells us in His Word that if the church can walk in love and unity, then we can have a fantastic impact on the world we live in. There is a lot of stress and anxiety outside these walls. Can we let God's house be a solace from it? Division is just one thing that causes stress and anxiety. Another thing is #2.

## #2 Have peace with yourself

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Anxiety is anticipating the worst possible scenario and then freaking out about it. What causes so much stress in our culture? How about the constant noise? Our iPhones, our iPods, traffic, we live a 24-hour lifestyle. Yet, we have a disconnect from a meaningful community. It causes a lot of stress. How do you know if you are stressed out? Does this sound like you? #1) You have unusual mood swings, #2) you're angry almost all the time, or #3) at least depressed most of the time, #4) you're exhausted but you can't sleep, #5) the smallest thing seems to emotionally overwhelm you. Life doesn't have to be that way.

1 Peter 5:6,7

<sup>6</sup> Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

So, how do we overcome stress and get our peace back? Here are 7 biblical disciplines to help overcome our anxiety.

## I Anchor your joy in Jesus, not your circumstances

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. It's difficult to display this fruit if you are not finding joy in your relationship with Jesus.

Galatians 5:22, 23

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law

## II Respond with gentleness

Philippians 4:5a

<sup>5</sup> Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men

Typically, when people are stressed out, they are not gentle. Have you sent an angry email and immediately after you sent it you wished you hadn't. Gentleness is also a fruit of the Spirit.

## III Remember that Jesus is always with you

Philippians 4:5b  
The Lord is near.

The Lord is always at hand. He is always with you. Remember a few years ago, WWJD... I think we can apply that to our lives almost every day and recognize that Jesus is always with us. He is omnipresent.

#### IV Refuse to be anxious

Philippians 4:6a  
Be anxious for nothing,

You must make a choice. You always have one, you know. You must make the choice to be joyful in spite of circumstances **OR** let our worries overwhelm us. Most of us do not function well in a heightened state of anxiety.

#### V Pray for help

Philippians 4:6b  
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

It's a simple matter to talk with Jesus about what is overwhelming us and then receive His peace. God doesn't want us to walk around all stressed out. We are ambassadors for God's kingdom. Remember our citizenship is in heaven.

#### VI Meditate on God's Word

Philippians 4:8  
<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Too many people are meditating on the bad news of this world. The Middle East situation troubles me but I'm not going to let it dominate my life. I'd rather meditate on God's love, grace, hope, mercy and compassion.

#### VII Walk in obedience to the Bible

Philippians 4:9  
<sup>9</sup> The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

It's one thing to meditate on God's Word. It's another to be obedient to what it says. Sometimes we get worried and anxious and fearful because we have disobeyed God but it says in this verse when we obey God's Word, the peace of God will be with us.

#### **Conclusion**

Everyone of us has times in our life when someone tells us to "stay calm" or "calm down". Life inevitably will throw things at us that will be a challenge to our peace. It's how we manage these events that will cause us not to lose our joy. Remember Paul's letter to the Philippians is called the blueprint for Joy or in other words the plan to have joy in your life. Let us let our lives reflect that joy for the sake of Jesus. Let's pray.