



World Christian Fellowship

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Philippians 41 Prayer of Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6-7, *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.*

Spiritual stability:

What it takes to be strong in the trying times?

How can we be spiritually strong?

How can we have that stability that looks death right in the eye?

How can we have that kind of calm in the midst of grave difficulty?

Every Christian hunger for that.

Stand firm in the Lord.

V 1, *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

Apostle Paul wants the Philippians to be strong.

He wants them to be rooted and grounded.

He wants them to act like men, to be courageous and bold and strong as they stand for the Lord.

Last few weeks we saw the principles of spiritual stability.

1. Peace and harmony

V 2-3, *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.* ³*And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

You are to be a peacemaker, cultivating peace in the fellowship of love.

What is the one great need of the church?

Harmony in the church.

Why?

Because loving, peaceful harmony is a stabilizer.

When you are in an environment of harmony and love, you are stabilized by that environment.

On the other hand, discord, disunity, chaos, division in the church will always produce great insecurity, and it will destabilize people.

For the sake of unity of the church, you are to do everything you can to be a peacemaker so that in the peace of the church and in the loving bond of the church, you find spiritual strength.

2. Joy

V 4, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*

This joy is based upon our relationship with the Lord, not our circumstances.

We are to rejoice in the Lord. Our joy is because of our privileged, permanent union with the Lord.

We must cultivate that deep-down joy that comes when we understand and live in the light of a privileged union with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Humility

V 5, *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*

You expect nothing and demand nothing.

If you rightly assess your sinfulness and know you deserve nothing, then you don't mind when you get nothing.

But if you wrongly assess your worthiness and assume that you are worthy of much and deserve much, if you don't get much, you are very upset and unstable.

You can be spiritually stable in the most difficult time, if you understand that as an unworthy sinner you don't deserve anything anyway, and you should be grateful for the grace of God, which is yours, and not expect anything beyond that.

4. Faith

V 6, *Be anxious for nothing,*

Spiritual stability demands resting on a confident faith in the Lord.

"The Lord is near;"

"be anxious for nothing."

That's sequential.

The Lord is near in terms of His presence and because the Lord is near, we are not anxious for anything. So spiritual stability, then, is predicated on a confident faith in the Lord. That's the bottom line.

- If you understand that God is sovereign,
- If you understand God is loving,
- If you understand that God is in control of everything in your life for His glory and your good,
- If you understand that nothing is beyond the purview of God's control,

- If you understand that God's orchestrating everything for eternal purpose and you can rest in that confident faith,

Then you are going to be stable in the most serious times.

5. Thankfulness/ Gratitude

V 6, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

Here is the antidote to worry!

By the way, this section does not emphasize the theology of prayer, but it emphasizes the importance of prayer and the attitude of prayer.

It's not really a study of the theology of prayer.

There are three different words for prayer used here.

- Prayer,
- Supplication, and
- Request.

They all have to do with petitions, and the assumption is that when you get into a problem, you are going to cry out to God.

Paul is saying that instead of crying out to God in your difficulty with doubt, with questionings, with dissatisfaction, with discontent, blaming God, cry out to God with the attitude of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving.

Why?

Because you know that He is the God of promise who has promised that nothing's ever going to come in your life that's too much for you to bear.

He is the God of promise who is working all things for your good. He is the God of promise who is causing you to suffer a while in order that you might be made perfect, that you might be settled, that you might be established.

1 Peter 5:10, *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

in all the difficulty you see God's purpose and thank Him. You thank Him for the available power you know is there. You thank Him for the promises which He never will violate instead of questioning God, doubting God, sort of shaking your fist at God.

1 Peter 5:7, *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

When you pray and supplicate and request to God, in the process of doing that, do it with thanksgiving.

- ✓ Thankful for His purposes,
- ✓ Thankful for His providence,
- ✓ Thankful for His power,
- ✓ Thankful for His promise,
- ✓ Thankful for His perfecting work,
- ✓ Thankful for the hope of relief,
- ✓ Thankful for the hope of glory,
- ✓ Thankful that it is His Will,
- ✓ Thankful that He's doing exactly what He wants in your life to accomplish what He wants,
- ✓ Thankful for past mercies that are the foundation of future blessings.

Prayer should always be with thankfulness.

This immediately releases me from fear and worry because I see God's purpose in it. I never question His purpose. I know my God is sovereign. I know He orchestrates all things for my good.

Romans 8:28, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Whatever may come, He can turn to His own praise and to my growth and so I am thankful.

I am thankful that He knows the problem.

I am thankful that He can deal with the problem.

I am thankful for His knowledge, His power, His promise – all of that.

All three of those words, by the way, refer to specific direct requests – prayer, supplication, request.

They all assume that in difficulty, you go to God, but the issue here is the thankful heart.

If you really know your God and you can thank Him in the midst of all of this, you have spiritual stability.

You can see people who are worried, fretting, anxious and troubled about everything. The bottom line is they do not trust that everything is under the control of God for their good and His glory. They can't handle that.

Either they don't understand their God or the sin in their life has caused them to have a weak faith in the God they do know to be a sovereign God.

- If you understand that my God shall supply all your needs,
- If you understand that God knows everything in your life and cares about it,

- If you understand that God has the power for every difficulty,
- If you understand that God is perfecting you to be like Christ,
- If you understand that nothing escapes God and nothing is outside of His tolerance and His purposes,

Then,

Why would you fear and be anxious about anything?

What is the result of a thankful heart?

V 7, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Everybody with a problem would like to find peace!

In the middle of difficulty, when you are pleading, supplicating, praying to God, and you have a thankful heart, the answer is not the issue.

The answer is not the issue.

What the bible doesn't say that if you will pray, supplicate, and request to God with thanksgiving, God will answer your prayer the way you want.

Doesn't say that.

It says nothing about the answer.

It says whatever the answer may be and whenever the answer may come, God will give you Peace!

That's the issue!!

What is the peace of God?

The peace which God possesses and gives to us.

Its inward peace, Godlike peace given to us. That's what provides the calm.

Please note again it is a gift from God to one who prays thankfully.

This is building to a spiritual climax.

In the middle of grave difficulties when you are pouring out your prayers before that God, you can do so with thanksgiving. God, in response to that kind of heart attitude, dispenses His peace. That's the promise.

God grants you His peace.

Isaiah 26:3, *You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.*

You trust in God, you get a steadfast mind, God keeps you in peace.

So much wrong advice.

So much trust in man's ability.

So much distrust in God's sovereignty that we have sent people down the wrong path.

Beloved,

Don't care what the problem is in your life.

Don't care what the difficulty is that creates anxiety.

If you understand who your God is, if you can take every issue of life with a thankful heart as you pray and ask him for deliverance, in the midst of it all, the promise of the Word is that God will give you peace.

What kind of peace is it?

It is peace which surpasses all comprehension.

What does that mean?

- It's not human.
- it's not rational.
- It surpasses intellectual powers.
- It surpasses analysis,
- It surpasses man's insights,
- It surpasses man's understanding
- It is not human.

You don't go to man to get it.

You go to God to get it.

- There is no counsellor in the world that can give it to you.
- There is no pastor in the world can give you.
- There is no therapy in the world that can give it to you.
- There is no technique in the world that can give it to you.

It is a gift of God to a believer who so confidently understands and trusts his God that he is thankful in the trial, and out of his thanksgiving, God responds by granting him peace that is supernatural peace.

There are lot of cheap substitutes being offered for that today. It is beyond any approach that attempts to reason your troubles away.

It is superior to human scheming, superior to human devices, superior to human solutions, superior to any so-called human security. I can simply sum it up by saying

The real challenge of Christian living is not to see if you can eliminate every uncomfortable issue in your life.

The real issue of Christian living is to see if you can trust your infinitely holy sovereign and powerful God in the midst of every situation and have His perfect peace.

People are running around trying to create a perfect world, so that they will be happy.

They don't like the way they look.

They don't like the way they are shaped.

They don't like the way their mother treated them.
They don't like the way their father treated them.
They were abused.
They were misunderstood.
They weren't treated properly.
They don't like the way their husband treats them.
They don't like the way their wife treats them.
They don't like the way their kids are turning out.
They don't like the place they live.
They hate their job.

Out of all these things come all these anxieties. Sooner we should learn we are fallen people and we live in a fallen world, that is the way it's going to be.

The great reality is that our glorious sovereign God has overruled our fallenness.

John 16:33, *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

When are we going to start living on the supernatural plane and accepting that we live in a fallen world and wait for the overcoming God to do His perfect work in us here and someday in the glory to come?

You must accept the fact that you are a fallen person living with fallen people in a fallen world and there are manifestations of that fallenness all over the place. There will never be the calm and peace would like circumstantially in this world, but you will find the peace from God as you entrust everything confidently into His care.

V 7, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Guard you from what?

From anxiety, from doubt, from fear, from distress.

This is a great truth.

That term “shall guard” is a military term.

It literally means shall keep guard over, shall protect.

The Philippians lived in a garrison town where Roman soldiers were stationed to watch out for the Roman interests in that part of their world. They knew what a sentry was.

What was a garrison?

Protector.

Paul says that,

- if you know your God,
- you know your God is near,
- you confidently trust your God in the midst of any trial,

- knowing that it is affecting His purpose,
- then being thankful in the midst of that for the purpose of God even in the difficulty,
- you are granted the peace of God,

that peace will guard you and protect you from anxiety, difficulty, distress, dissatisfaction, discontent, doubt.

When Christ is out of our thoughts, when we no longer see things in the light of how He views them and the confidence in His sovereignty.

But where we have that confident trust in the Lord, so much so that we can thank Him in the midst of our petitions, then we have God's peace on duty, and he is the protector of the peace of our souls. That couldn't be a clearer perspective for all of us to understand.

Why does he mention hearts and minds?

Paul just making a comprehensive statement. The heart is the seat of personhood and the mind is the seat of thought.

Guard your whole inner person.

God's peace guard them in Christ Jesus. Because you are in union with Christ, you have this guardianship.

How can you face the inevitable day of your death?

What if you had a corona?

What if you are told that you have cancer?

What if one of your children is tragically taken from you?

What about the difficulties that you face right now in your life,
how do you face them with spiritual stability?

How do you stand your ground?

Be thankful and let God's peace guard your heart!