

Philippians 4:1-7 (NKJV)

Be Anxious for Nothing; Think These Thoughts

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

Be United, Joyful, and in Prayer

2 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 labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

4 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.

This passage begins with Paul expressing his affection for the Philippians. He calls them “my beloved and longed-for brethren.” His love for them is evident and he hoped to visit them. We see his affection also in the words, “my joy and crown.” They cared for Paul and demonstrated it through their prayers, their financial support, and they sent Epaphroditus to Paul to care for him.

The final part of verse 1, is an encouragement for them to “stand fast in the Lord.” Why does he need to encourage them in this way? Because Paul knows there will be opposition to the gospel, opposition that has led to Paul’s current imprisonment. There will be times of suffering, there will be disunity in the church arising from without and within the church, all of which Paul knows will cause some to fall away. Thus he says “stand fast in the Lord.”

In verses 2-7, Paul gives short instructions to the Philippians, in three areas to help us live as “citizens of heaven” as he says in chapter 3 verse 20. In the heading over this section in the New King James Version it tells us that these are - Be United, Joyful, and in Prayer.

Verse 2 says, I implore Eodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. What is happening here? In 2:2, Paul writes, “fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” We are not told specifically of what the problem was but we can guess from some of the other things Paul writes. These two women have had a disagreement over some issue. There are certain things Paul has spoken about in the letter that have probably come into play. He mentions selfish ambition and conceit (2:3), lowliness of mind esteem others, humility (2:4), the opposite of this is pride and arrogance.

Why are these so important to Paul? Because it is only when the church is in unity can it accomplish the calling of God upon them. Matthew 12:25 says, “Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.” Without unity neither a kingdom, a city, nor a household can stand. This unity doesn’t mean that we have to agree in every part, but we must be agreed in our calling and purpose or we will fall.

Paul then calls on others to help the women and all those who laboured together in the gospel. It is a call to work together again in unity. In doing so they will bring glory to God and a witness to the world. We don’t know all of them by name, but their names are recorded in the Book of Life.

It is at this point that Paul turns to a major theme of the letter, rejoicing. It is a divine imperative that Paul gives in 1:4, 1:18, 2:17,18, 3:1 and 4:4. Here he says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” The most often asked question is how can we rejoice in the midst of crisis? The answer is found in the words “in the Lord.” Circumstances cannot decide if we will have joy, unless we allow it. If we are in the Lord, living in fellowship with Him, then we can trust Him and choose to rejoice in the one who loves us and saves us.

The next verse is the instruction to be gentle, which may also be defined as kindness, goodness, and even patience with others. “Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.” (v5). This should be our attitude and response to all people, especially as the verse says, “The Lord is at hand.” This means that we respond in this Christ like way, because He not only sees us, but that He will one day come again and we will see Him face to face.

Paul now encourages us “be anxious for nothing.” (v6). Are you anxious? Do you fret and worry about things? How can we overcome this anxiety? Paul goes on to say, “in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” What is the solution? PRAYER. In every situation and circumstance and struggle, turn to God. Even better give thanks as well. Because thanks changes our focus from the problem to the one who is greater than our situation. Talk to God is truly the best advice for anxiety.

Finally Paul says, “**7** and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” The encouragement to rejoice, to be gentle, and to pray, is in the knowledge that when you do, you will find the peace of God in your life. And it surpasses all understanding and will guard our hearts and minds in Jesus. This is the way God intends us to live or lives.