

Content in all Circumstances

Գոհունակ Ամէն Պարագայի Մէջ

Philippians 4:8-23

Last Sunday we ended our sermon asking to God replace our anxiety with His peace and joy. I pray that you were and are at peace. I pray that you do not lose your joy during this crazy pandemic, or anytime.

Paul ended this section saying that the **peace of God will guard our hearts and minds**. Paul knew that we could easily drift from our focus, and circumstances could lead us toward the wrong direction. We need to guard our mind and heart.

Paul starts verse 8 saying, **“Finally”** which also can be translated as “and so..., it follows then...”

Then what?

1. What’s on your mind?

1. Միտքդ ի՞նչ բանով զբաղած է

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil 4:8-9 ESV)

What’s on your mind?

What do you feed your mind daily?

What are you thinking about?

Garbage in, Garbage out....

Please study the words Paul uses:

Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, worthy of praise...

“Think about these things” and “Practice these things.”

What does it mean to think and practice?

The present verse is governed by the verb *think, logizesthe*, which means more than ‘keep in mind’. It is rather ‘take into account (*logos*), reflect upon and then allow these things to shape your conduct’. The following

verse is a continuation of Paul's message with a call to explicit action: 'put it into practice'. (Tyndale Commentary)

Our mind is like a sponge ready to be fed. How do you spend your time? What thoughts do you entertain?

I think it is a good discipline to guard your mind and feed on those thoughts that are true, honorable, just... to replace the poisonous thoughts that corrupt our heart and mind.

I urge you to start the day with His Word. ¹

2. Content in All Situations

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¹⁰I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Phil 4:10-13 ESV)

Beautiful attitude...Content in all circumstances, in all situations. What is the secret? Is it even possible?

Please notice that Paul was a tentmaker. He tried his best to be financially independent. Yet, here we see he is in prison. Those days the families of the inmates would provide for the financial needs of the person.

We find here the generosity of the church of Philippi. They wanted to help Paul previously and there was no means to send the help.

“You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.”

Please notice Paul's attitude. He is in need; yet he understood, that to be content in all days:

Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. (Phil 4 MSG)

What is the secret?

He knows that all outside circumstances are changeable. They cannot be the source of joy and contentment. He does not say he would not need “things.” But he is teaching them and us not to rely on “things”, “circumstances”. Opportunities are good to do or achieve things, but they can never give the inner contentment, never. Paul knows he needs strength to run, go forward, to preach, teach, love, care... comes from God.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (ESV) I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am...(MSG)

3. Thank you for your Generosity

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¹⁴Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. ¹⁵And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. (Phil 4:14-18 ESV)

“Ok, guys, I can make it without your help, yet, you did help me, and I am thankful for you help. ‘You shared with me my trouble.’”

What do we see here?

a. The Philippians put their **priorities** in the right order. Supporting the ministry of Paul was a priority. Do you think they were a rich church? I don’t think so. And let me add, they were the only church who supported Paul financially. Here is what Paul said to the Corinthians about the church of Philippi.

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord. (2 Cor 8:1-3 ESV)

Giving should be from the heart and according to what you have. Give the best and not the leftovers. Giving with the right motives is a sign of spiritual maturity. Let me repeat, it should come from the heart. God loves a cheerful giver. Giving is a discipline of putting the priorities in the right order.

Illustration: My mother taught me this from my childhood, and it was engraved in my heart. I believe in this very much. It is giving yourself (it means literally everything) to God to be used for His glory. It is our way to honor our Lord Jesus Christ.

-The church of Philippi (the Macedonian church) has an abundance of joy in extreme poverty. From their nothingness they gave beyond their means.

-Do you remember when Jesus said to the rich young man to give away everything and follow him, the young man left Jesus sad. It strikes me that a man meets Jesus face to face, and then **leaves sad**. How come? How come after meeting Jesus one can leave sad? His heart is not with Jesus. His treasure is somewhere else.

b. Paul is not seeking the gift of the church but seeking what the gift can do. He is seeking **the fruit**.

Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit... (17)

Paul is interested in more than the gift, what this gift will do. The fruit is the advancement of the Gospel. The gift will be used to sow the seeds of the gospel which will give fruit. And this will be rewarded in heaven.

Illustration: I started my sermon by giving an example of how this church invested in our Christian camp in Lebanon 1955. The gift itself was money to build the chapel of the camp. In that chapel (I wish the walls of chapel could speak), thousands came to Christ. Many are ministers and full time workers for the advancement of the Gospel.

c. The gift was an act of worship.

the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

This language is from the Old Testament, (Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18; Lev. 1:9, 13; Ezek. 20:41). Our gift should be like the aroma of an offering, pleasing to God.

Whatever we do, should bring GLORY to GOD. Our worship and service and ministry (our gifts) should bring GLORY to GOD. Our gifts are an act of worship.

4. Last words

4. Վերջաբան

¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (Phil 4:19-23 ESV)

Paul ends with a prayer and blessings over them. Paul ends with the promise of how God will supply all our needs. God will provide every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. In His time and according to His will.

Greetings to church members...

Farewell: **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Let me quote the opening of this letter:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Paul starts with Grace and ends with Grace.

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1 The words “excellence and worthy of praise” are important words in Greco-Roman culture. They were specially popular with the Stoic philosophy. So Paul is using their cultural words to explain how important to set our mind on what is excellence and worthy of praise. Mind you Paul gives to these words Christian understanding. For Paul the source of true, pure, just, lovely comes only from Jesus. To know Jesus is not mental exercise as such, it is commitment to focus on Christ which is noble, true, just...