

Exegetical Notes – Philippians 4:4-9

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Philippians 4:4-9

Verse 4

⁴ *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

- As Paul begins to close his letter to the Philippian church, he lays out several principles for the Philippians to follow. The first of these principles is to rejoice. He repeats the word “rejoice” twice to emphasize it. It means that despite any circumstance, they should be joyful.

Verse 5

⁵ *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

- He then tells them that their gentleness should be evident to everyone. They should not rage as the world does. Instead, they should deal gently with each other and with the people of the world. This does not mean they should compromise their faith. It means that they should not be harsh in dealing with other people.
- He reminds them that God is close at hand; meaning, he is watching us. He will see if we are gentle in our dealings with others. But the phrase could also mean that the end of time is at hand and that those who do not know Jesus are in peril. Christians should be gentle so as to lead others to Christ.

Verses 6-7

⁶ *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- Christians should not be fearful in any situation. When they are concerned about something they should take it to God in prayer. They should be thankful to God for His goodness when they pray, knowing that He is always good to His children.

- If His children approach Him so in prayer, they will experience the peace only God can give. This Godly peace will transcend understanding. The circumstances which the person is experiencing may not change. There may be no reason for it, but the person praying will know peace.
- And the person praying will know that God is guarding their hearts and their minds despite the circumstances they face.

Verses 8-9

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

- Paul instructs his brothers and sisters in Christ to think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. The world is an ugly place because of sin. It can be a depressing place. But Paul suggests that Christians should not focus on the bad stuff. Christians should focus on the Light of the World. They should see Jesus and the unfolding plan of God. They should look on the good and not the evil around them.
- Christians should follow the example Paul has set for them. This may sound like a boastful statement. But Paul wrote 2/3 of the New Testament. God has chosen to lay out the example of his life to us as a pattern for us to follow. Paul was not a perfect person. But God has chosen to set him before us as a pattern to follow. Paul always points out that the highest example is Jesus. We are to be like Jesus. Paul shows us what it means to be Christlike. That is the example we see in Paul and that we should follow.
- If we center our thoughts on what is good and noble and seek to follow Paul's example so that we are conformed to the image of Christ, the peace of God will be with us. To go back to the beginning of this passage, we will rejoice. We will be filled with the peace of God which passes understanding.

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