

# Peace Be Still

## Philippians 4:4-9

### Pierre Cannings

#### I. Be Well vs. 4-5

- a. Rejoice - **to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be glad**
  - i. **Rejoice**- The experience of deliverance and the anticipation of salvation provide the most significant occasions for rejoicing among the people of God in the OT. The coming of the Messiah, who delivers his people and brings salvation becomes the basis for rejoicing in the NT.
  - ii. There is no doubt that joy was understood in terms of a deep inward experience, but this inner disposition likely found tangible expression in the Christian communities when they gathered.
  - iii. The deep-rooted joy of the Christian is not abated when the circumstances of daily life are adverse. Joy is experienced in suffering and even persecution. This was the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:11–12) and the experience of the early Church (Acts 5:41; cf. 1 Thess 1:6). Paul exemplified this possibility of joy in suffering in his own life (2 Cor 7:4; Col 1:24) and encouraged his churches to follow suit (Phil 2:17–18). Suffering is prominent in the background to the statements concerning joy in 1 Peter and Hebrews. *Eschatological anticipation, however, provided incentive for rejoicing even when one's personal property was plundered (Heb 10:34) or when one faced persecution (1 Pet 4:13). The early Church looked forward to the second advent of Christ as a time of joy (Matt 25:21, 23). The ultimate triumph of God and "the marriage of the Lamb" will consummate the joy of God and all his people (Rev 19:7) and result in cries of "Hallelujah!" (Rev 19:1, 3, 4, 6).*
- b. **Again Rejoice**- **to repetition in the same (or similar) manner, again, once more**

#### II. Peace Be Still vs. 6-7

- a. Nothing
  - i. Anxious - **to be apprehensive, have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned**
    - 1. it is "anxiety in the face of *something*" (1 Pt. 5:7; Phil. 4:6). There is always a hint of the future, but in relation to the antonym ἡδονή (Lk. 8:14) μέριμνα has the sense of "sorrow," and in Mt. 10:19 par. μεριμνᾶν means "to consider," "to prepare"
    - 2. This would not be so if the admonitions not to care, but to cast one's care on God, were based on the idea that God guarantees the fulfillment of all striving. Phil. 4:6 shows, however, that in

petitionary prayer, which is based on anxiety, the man who prays attains a certain aloofness from his wishes when he puts them before God μετὰ εὐχαριστίας, and he thus finds liberation from care. 1 Pt. 5:7 (cf. v. 6) also shows that to cast one's care on God does not mean to think of Him as the One who guarantees one's wishes, but to see in Him the One who knows what we need better than we do ourselves. These exhortations to prayer are thus designed to give absolute freedom from care as anxiety

b. Everything

i. Pray

1. Eph 6:18- **petition** A classic definition of Christian prayer is “an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies
2. In the broadest terms the motive for prayer is the fact that God commands it. More particularly, the motives for prayer are the glory of God and the good of the one who prays and of those for whom he prays. These ends are not in conflict since the biblical picture is of God being glorified in the blessing of his people (Eph 1:6). More particularly still Scripture provides us with many different motives for prayer which throw light on the character of prayer itself. In the case of petitionary prayer prominent among these motives is the need for forgiveness of sins (1 Jn 1:8, 9), freedom from anxiety (Phil 4:6, 7), deliverance from temptation (Mt 26:41) and the provision of temporal needs (Mt 6:11). Undergirding all of these is the recognition that men depend upon God for all good things. Undoubtedly one of the reasons why prayer has such a prominent position in biblical religion is that it brings the recognition of this dependence into prominent focus.

ii. Supplicate

1. Supplicate - **urgent request to meet a need, exclusively addressed to God, prayer**
  - a. In the NT δέομαι always has the sense of “to ask” or “to seek” as the context may determine. In the form δέομαι σου at the beginning of direct speech it may sometimes mean no more than “please,” as when Paul asks the chiliarch for permission to address the people (Ac. 21:39) or the eunuch asks Philip to explain the passage in Isaiah (Ac. 8:34)
2. With thanksgiving - **the expression or content of gratitude, the rendering of thanks, thanksgiving**
  - a. The community's thanksgiving may also focus upon a particular benefit it has received from God (2 Cor 1:11; 9:11–12), and thanksgiving should be a feature of all

prayer (Phil 4:6; 1 Thess 5:17–18; Col 3:15–17; 4:2). Thus, according to 1 Tim 2:1, worship features not only a prayer of intercession for the whole world but also a general thanksgiving

### 3. Request be Made Known

## c. Peace of God

### i. Peace of God

1. In one form or another the notions of wholeness, health, and completeness inform all the variants of the word. Peace is not, then, simply a negative, the absence of war. Peace is a positive notion, a notion with its own content
2. Our starting-point is the OT word  $\text{דִּילֶשׁ}$  in the sense of the salvation which comes from God, especially the eschatological salvation.
3. Paul speaks, moreover, not only of the God of Peace but also of the peace of God (Phil 4:7); and of the peace of Christ (Col 3:15). In the first instance he stresses that the peace of God transcends human reason and comprehension. Nevertheless, it is his prayer that it may protect his readers' hearts and minds from wrongful intrusion. Although it may transcend human comprehension, its major domain of operation is still the human mind as well as the heart.
4. Similarly, the author of Colossians prays that the peace of Christ may serve as an arbitrator or referee in the hearts of those who hear him read (3:15). The author sees peace as the purpose of their calling, just as in 1 Cor 7:15 Paul states that being called to a relationship of peace is more important than maintaining a marriage between a believer and unbeliever.

### ii. Surpasses Understanding - *surpasses all power of thought*

1. Surpasses- **to surpass in quality or value, be better than, surpass, excel**
  - a. The salvation given by God completely “exceeds” what we can grasp or think
2. Comprehension - “Understanding.” In this sense it is an intellectual organ, the faculty of knowledge whether as state or act. The peace which God gives to those who pray is a liberating power far beyond the human thought which is dominated by anxiety,

### iii. Guarded

1. Guard - to provide security, *guard, protect, keep*
2. Hearts - as center and source of the whole inner life, its thinking, feeling, and volition

3. Minds - that which one has in mind as product of intellectual process it means the thoughts which proceed from the heart of Christians
  - a. In Christ Jesus

### III. Dwell vs. 8-9

- a. Dwell On ... **to give careful thought to a matter, *think (about), consider, ponder, let one's mind dwell on*** detailed and logical manner—'to think about, to reason about, to ponder, reasoning
  - i. True - to being in accordance with fact, *true*
  - ii. Honorable- of characteristics, states of being, and things *honorable, worthy, venerable, holy, above reproach*
  - iii. Right- **obligatory in view of certain requirements of justice, *right, fair, equitable***
  - iv. Pure - Holy
  - v. Lovely- **to causing pleasure or delight, *pleasing, agreeable, lovely, amiable***
  - vi. Good Repute - to what is being said with cautious reserve' (in deference to the transcendent or out of respect for those of high status, words ought to be carefully chosen, for one might utter something sense ***praiseworthy, commendable***
  - vii. Excellence **uncommon character worthy of praise, *excellence of character, exceptional civic virtue***
  - viii. Worthy of Praise – **the act of expressing admiration or approval**
- b. Peace of God
  - i. Learned
  - ii. Received
  - iii. Heard
  - iv. Seen
  - v. Practice
    1. Peace of God - Romans 15:33- as nearly synonymous w. messianic salvation messianic kingdom character of God
      - a. Paul used the formula, "the God of Peace" a total of six times. The earliest reference is 1 Thess 5:23 and the latest is Phil 4:9. Most often (five times) it appears as a benediction or prayer but also to enforce an ethical admonition: "God is not of chaos but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33). Once it is combined with the "God of Love" (2 Cor 13:11) and once changed to "the Lord of Peace," (2 Thess 3:16). Here he prays that peace will be given to his readers always and in every way. In another text the God of peace will "sanctify" them completely (1 Thess 5:23).
    2. Will be with you