



Brown Community Group

To Be Content: In our Prayer - **Philippians 4:1-9**

November 15, 2020

I. Starter Questions:

1. When you find yourself in almost impossible situations, what do you do? What is your first natural response?
2. What types of difficult situations grab your heart and your mind like a new pair of pliers?
3. Do you have trouble looking past these situations to obtain the focus you need to effectively live your life?

II. Scripture and Discussion:

Paul begins with the typical “therefore” as he continues his logical letter. He doesn’t jump around with random thoughts. He had just been writing to them to avoid unscriptural teachers whose god was their belly and whose glory is their shame.

Is this reaffirming, when you see this in the world around you, to see that Paul predicted that the world would act like this?

So in light of the teachings of the chapter before, Paul says,

Philippians 4:1-3: “*Therefore*, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat (urge) Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion(? , who’s this), help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”

Background: Paul continues speaking of a theme common throughout Philippians—being of the same mind, or to “agree in the Lord”. He is speaking of unity in the church and he “entreats” two women to agree in the Lord. The word entreat doesn’t sufficiently communicate Paul’s heart. He is pleading; some would say, begging Euodia and Syntyche to “agree in the Lord”, telling us that what Paul is speaking of is vitally important—that the church can’t let disagreement distract and sidetrack the gospel work of the church.

Discussion: How have you seen disagreement impact the work of the church? Was the disagreement viewed as potentially very harmful, as Paul has indicated here, pleading for “agreement in the Lord”?

These verses don’t really tell us a lot about Euodia and Syntyche. It does tell us that they were believers, whose names were written “in the book of life”, and they were workers who labored side by side with Paul and others in the work of the church. And that’s about all it says. Paul doesn’t say what the disagreement was, although we do know it was most likely public or habitual, as Paul is mentioning them by name. The church would probably not

say, "what could Paul be possibly be talking about?" Perhaps they were just always in conflict or perhaps it was pertaining to a certain issue. Regardless, the principle applies, we are to live in unity, as Paul's been stressing throughout this letter, as humble followers of Christ.

Now Paul abruptly changes the subject, or this is an answer that would be helpful to the unity issue he just discussed. Probably both are true. He wrote:

Philippians 4:4-7: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness (forbearance) be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding (mind), will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Rejoice in the Lord, what does that mean?

Let your forbearance be known to everyone. How does this happen? Isn't everybody like this?

The Lord is at hand. What does that mean? He's coming soon, or He's close by? Both? Something else?

Now comes the "easy" part.

Be anxious for nothing. Do we even need to discuss if this is a difficult command? Don't we all struggle with this tendency, to be anxious about. . . lots of things! Doesn't this tend to be one of the most imprisoning problems in our minds?

Paul gives the wonderful, freeing answer to this life-throttling tendency to worry. IN EVERYTHING (that we tend to be currently anxious about), let your requests be made known to God, through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

Does this work? Tell me about it. . .

How has this peace that surpasses all comprehension (mind), guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus?

How does it surpass all comprehension?

So if we aren't ruminating on all these worries, what are we to do with all this free time in our minds?

Paul didn't leave us floating aimlessly in the ocean of brain waves. He said:

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy praise, let your mind dwell on these things. ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be

with you.

III. Responding in Prayer:

We certainly live in tumultuous times, wherein our faith is being attacked by the world. It is hard to not be consumed by the almost unbelievable situation we find ourselves in. This leads us to the importance of, and the desperate need for, prayer.

- Pray that our experience with prayer would demonstrate that it brings about trust in God, with the gift of prayer being peace that we can't explain.
- Pray that God would guard the unity of His church, particularly in very anxious times.
- Pray for our country, and that people would turn to God and His word.