

Sunday, 03 June 2007

Philippians 4: 4-9 (Good News Bible)

Phi 4:4-9 May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice! Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus. In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.

Do we need to worry?

In this piece of scripture, we find Paul writing to the church to be joyful. We find him saying that it does not really matter what the external circumstances are, we should have joy inside of us that is so great the our circumstances should not overshadow it. But is this possible? Does Paul actually know what he is talking about? Could he then fathom how bad our circumstances could actually be, and still expect us to be joyful? I think the answer is to be found in looking where Paul was when he wrote these verses. Paul was in jail. He was locked up, and not even sure if he would be allowed to live for another day. He was well aware that others were killed for their faith, and for spreading the Gospel. Yet, from jail he wrote to the church that they should rejoice. Why would he do this, and how?

The answer is found in Paul's belief in Christ, and the knowledge he had that Christ had died for him, but has risen from death, and is returning for him. He was rejoicing in the fact that regardless of his circumstances, Jesus loves him, and will be with him through it all. He knew that where he was at the time, was only part of the road of life he had to travel, and not the final destination. This part of life, as unpleasant as it might be, will not change His final destination, for Jesus is waiting for him at the finish line. He did not even fear death, for he knew that death is also not his final destination, but only the crossing of the finish line, leading to a victorious life with Christ.

Paul tells the church that they should not waste their time by worrying about things they can not change, and things they fear. Paul asked them to rather give it all to God in prayer, and leave it with God with thanks giving, for He will take care of it all. This is not a promise that everything will always only go well for us, but it is a promise that we will never be left alone with our problems or worries, for God is with us. Let us change our focus in life, and concentrate on all that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honourable. Let us live with thanksgiving, for we know what our destination will be. Let us do this joyfully, for we will never be alone. God is coming soon for us. We have a reason for being joyful.

* Should you wish to write me, and are in need of someone who would listen and pray with you... Please do. david@davidniebuhr.com

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