

PHILIPPIANS FOUR, SIX AND SEVEN

Intro: (This is #5 in the series on The Great Verses of Scripture.)

The circumstances under which any passage of Scripture was written are important, but they are especially important as we consider these two verses tonight. PAUL WAS A PRISONER OF ROME! And yet as you read through it you find joy expressed in so many ways, and you realize that Paul did not write because he wanted them to be concerned about him; he is writing because he is concerned about them! He writes thanking them for what they have done for him, but not to ask them for more. He is thinking of the many ways they are going to experience the blessing of God!

This makes Phil. 4:6, 7 more significant than ever. Could a man under those circumstances write verses like these? Apparently so--because he did! And there is a positive note expressing the confidence which was in his own heart.

- FIRST REACTION - V. 6 CAN'T BE DONE ; V. 7 CAN'T BE TRUE .

In looking at the two verses, we find that they are complementary to each other. V. 6 is a command for me to obey; v. 7 is a promise for me to believe. My attention must be centered on v. 6; I have nothing to do with v. 7--that is for God. Moreover, the truth of v. 6 precedes that of v. 7, i.e., if I do not obey v. 6, then I cannot God to stand behind v. 7 so that it will be true in my life.

Having said this, let me make two explanations:

- 1) We all know that God blesses us many times in spite of our unbelief, in spite of our failure to act upon the promises of His Word. His faithfulness to us is something which we can never understand. It goes beyond anything that we deserve.
- 2) We never obey the commands of the Word in our own strength. You and I must never look at the Word as though the Lord is saying, "V. 6 depends upon you; v. 7 depends upon Me." V. 6 (and every other command of Scripture) must always be acted upon and considered in the light of Phil. 2:13.

But having said this, let us look at v. 6:

I. THE COMMAND (Phil. 4:6).

What is Paul thinking about? WORRY! What does he say about it? He says, Stop worrying, and never start it again about anything!

I was reading what Alexander Maclaren had to say on this verse, and he calls it, An Impossible Injunction. He is right! It is so natural for us to worry that Paul writes

this very verse so that we could translate it, Stop being anxious! Cf. Robertson, IV, 459.

He is talking about "anxious harassing care," (Lightfoot, 160), the cares and worries which we all have because of life and the problems which it brings to us. We all have them, and our immediate reaction is that Paul is telling us to do something which no person can possibly do.

But then I remember where he is as he writes!

And I ask myself, "Aren't all of the commandments of God really impossible?"

But my dilemma increases when I notice that he is saying, Stop being anxious about anything!

Remember, he is not saying, Do not be concerned about anything. Nor is he saying, Do not seek help, or take precautions, or make plans, about anything--BUT DON'T WORRY! DON'T BE FULL OF CARE!

Well, he cannot just say that and leave me there. How can I keep from it. HE HAS TOLD ME WHAT I SHOULD NOT DO; HOW CAN I KEEP FROM IT?

Note the rest of the verse--what I am to do so that I will not do the first:

- 1) I must see that what I do must include everything that would otherwise cause me to worry: "In everything"--emphatic. You and I must pray about everything if we expect to be anxious about nothing. It is all-inclusive again.
- 2) I must pray--but how? Notice: "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving."
 - a) Prayer--to God, indicates worship.
 - b) Supplication--the specific needs, all of them.
 - c) Thanksgiving. A child of God should never pray without thanksgiving! Cf. 1 Thess. 5:16-18. Can we be thankful about our trials. Cf. Psa. 119:61, 67, 75.

Many times we do not get the blessing from prayer because we do not pray according to the Word. Be thankful that you have a God to whom you can turn--and tell Him so!

- 3) I must pray just like the Lord did not know anything about me or my problems: "Let your requests be made known unto God." Do not worry about how you can harmonize this with Matt. 6:8--just do it!

Illustrate
with Hezekiah's
prayer. Isa.
39:14-20.

"Unto God" is a very wonderful expression because it not only reminds us of the One to whom we are praying, but it indicates that we are at that very moment in His presence!

Do you pray like that? Do you pray about everything? Do you pray worshipping and with thanksgiving, bringing your requests to Him just as though He did not know a single thing about you?

If not, then you are full of care to the extent that you are failing here. Do not go on to v. 7 until you start, by the grace of God, obeying v. 6 just as it is written. V. 7 will only torment you, or disgust you, if you do not come through v. 6.

But let us look at v. 7. Possibly that will get us back to v. 6.

II. THE PROMISE (Phil. 4:7). *A most unbelievable verse! Do you ever ask, Does it really mean that?*

In this verse there is not a single thing for me to do. I can just enjoy every bit of it because all of it is dependent upon GOD!

What does it say?

"And the peace of God." Note the connecting word. It is a part of v. 6.

Think of it! We are promised GOD'S peace! Do you think that God worries about anything? No, this is that inner tranquility which puts everything within us into harmonious relationship.

Do not try to understand it because it "passeth all understanding." Notice: Nothing is said about the answer. Paul is talking about what God does for us while the cause for the anxiety is still there!

But then notice the next part: Not only does the peace of God come, but it sets up a military guard (lit.) so that no intruders can enter into your "heart" or the thoughts which it produces. Thoughts are our problem. When we pray and as we continue to pray, God's very peace sets up a garrison so that we are kept in peace!

And finally, but most wonderful of all--not "through Christ Jesus," but IN Christ Jesus! The Lord Himself is the place of peace. Cf. John 14:27.

Concl: The Philippian epistle is the greatest evidence that what Paul is writing is TRUE! He manifests the very peace that he is writing about. This is the reason he knew how to get it. He does not mean that we pray once, and then everything is peaceful after that, but as we pray, and continue to pray, and live at the throne of grace, God supplies His peace and makes sure that nothing disturbs the heart of the one who is *trusting Him!*

- Ed. ... -