**BY PRAYER AND PETITION**

Philippians 4:1-9

Key Verse 6

 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

**Introduction**

 In the previous chapter Paul expounded on how to become like Jesus. In this passage Paul deals with some practical issues, pleading with two women in the Philippian church to be of the same mind. He also exerts believers to pray in every situation instead of being anxious and encourages them to behave according to God’s holy character, putting what they’ve learned into practice. Through this passage we can learn how to live as the children of God in a corrupt and troubled world.

1. Read verses 1-3. Why did Paul call the Philippian believers as his joy and crown? How did he plead with two women and why was it important to help them? (2-3)

1-1. Read verses 1-3.

 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! **2** I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. **3** Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

1-2. Why did Paul call the Philippian believers as his joy and crown?

 ***Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!***

- **my joy** : It was great joy for Paul to see the believers growing spiritually and participating in God’s work.

- It is also a great joy for a shepherd to see his/her Bible students growing to be a shepherd (Bible teacher). Paul had no greater joy than hearing of the Philippians’ spiritual health and prosperity.

- **crown** : The Philippians were the fruit of Apostle Paul’s hard work to serve them.

- At that time, a marathon runner received a crown as his prize after running a good race. The Philippians who grew through Apostle Paul’s labor were the reason for God’s prize that he would receive in the future.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 reads,

 “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?”

- **Stand firm in the Lord** : the original meaning of ‘stand firm’ was that a soldier stands firm despite the enemies’ severe attack. Believers should stand firm in any situation or difficulty and stand firm in the Lord, to the end.

* Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ in legalism, liberalism and antinomianism. Satan attacks Christians with flaming arrows of doubts, sins, pleasure seeking, immorality, the influence of a perverse society, the internet, and other forms of media. But we can stand firm in the Lord.

- Being in Christ, they must stand fast in him, be even and steady in their walk with him, and be constant to the end. Or, To stand fast in the Lord is to stand fast in his strength and by his grace; not trusting in ourselves, and not claiming any sufficiency of our own.

1-3. How did he plead with two women and why was it important to help them? (2-3)

 ***I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.***

- I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

- Euodia means “smooth traveling” Syntyche means “good luck opportunity”

- The Philippian church was founded as Apostle Paul preached the gospel to Lydia and the role of women in this church was powerful, compared to other churches at that time. The two women Paul mentions here, seem to be influential in the church and their conflict gave bad influence to the church.

- Paul pleaded with the women. Their conflict seems to have been serious. It’s possible that they failed to listen to other’s advice to be reconciled and to work together.

- Paul earnestly encouraged them to be united for the sake of the church, even specifying their names in his writing.

- **Be of the same mind in the Lord** : It is right to be united in the Lord having the same mind. And when they remain in Jesus and keep a right relationship with him, they would be able to be united.

- Paul didn’t take side with either of them but rather turned their attention to Jesus’ mindset. Philippians 2:5 says “In your relationships with one another, have the

same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

* Jesus came down, down from heaven to earth, and from earth to the grave in order to serve sinners. In his humility, Jesus who is in very nature God, became a man, taking the very nature of a servant. Paul asked his true companion to help these women.

 ***Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.***

- These two women were good co-workers to Paul for the gospel. Paul considered them preciously.

- **Whose names are in the book of life** : They were precious before God even though they had conflicts with each other.

- We don’t know whose names are written there; but we may, in charity, conclude that those who labor in the gospel, and are faithful to the interest of Christ and souls, have their names in the book of life.

- People don’t remember those who labor for the Lord but their names are in the book of life. They have eternal life and will inherit the kingdom of God in the future.

- We need to consider our brothers and sisters as blessed ones whose name are written in the book of life.

2. Read verses 4-7. What did Paul emphasize again? (4) Why should we be gentle to all? (5) What should we do in the situation leading us to be anxious? (6) What happens to those who pray? (7)

2-1. Read verses 4-7.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **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.

2-2. What did Paul emphasize again? (4)

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



- Here Paul encouraged believers to rejoice in any difficult situation.

- Paul repeated the word “rejoice” again and again. Some may wonder how Paul could write the word ‘rejoice’ from a prison cell. Had he lost his mind while imprisoned? No! Usually people seek joy from eating, drinking, watching movies, and shopping. But these joys are temporary. People lose joy easily even by hot weather and or if their favorite sports team loses a game. But the joy that Paul mentioned is joy in the Lord. The words “in the Lord” tell us that Paul’s joy came from the Lord. This joy that Paul speaks of is the deep joy of our souls.

- We can rejoice in the Lord all the time because Jesus is the true source of joy.



* The gospel is the good news that brings great joy for all people” (Lk 2:10b). “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Our Lord is Jesus. So we can say, “Rejoice in Jesus always!”
* Jesus is the one who loved us and gave himself for us. He is the one who died for us, calling each one’s name on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.
* He is the one who shed his precious blood from all his body as the Lamb of God. In Jesus, we have new life, eternal life, life purpose, the hope of the kingdom of God, love, indwelling of the Holy Spirit and so forth.
* Jesus’ love compels us to rejoice. Jesus is the source of joy. Yes! Loving Jesus first is the secret of rejoicing.
* But if we lose Jesus through committing sin, our relationship with God is damaged and we lose joy.
* Then when we pray to God with repentance, God restores the joy of our salvation (Ps 51:12a). As long as we remain in Jesus our Lord, we can rejoice always.
* Joy comes when we have a right relationship with God regardless of our situation. May God help us to rejoice in Jesus always.

- It is our duty and privilege to rejoice in God at all times and in all conditions, even when we suffer for him or when we seem to be afflicted by him. We must not think the worst of him or of his ways for the hardships we meet while in his service. There is enough grace in God to furnish us with joy even in the worst of circumstances here on earth.

- Joy in God is a duty of great consequence in the Christian life; and Christians are called to this duty again and again.

2-3. Why should we be gentle to all? (5)

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

- ‘Being gentle’ means to maintain peace in heart not being troubled or falling down despite any loss or adversity. It also means to treat others with generosity and patience despite their negative attitude towards us.

 Matthew 11:29 reads,

 “…for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

* Gentleness is consistent with having Christ-like character which others will see. Sometimes when we insist on our own way and win, joy leaves our hearts.
* When we win an argument, we lose a friend or a Bible student. The Lord is the Judge of all men. As we show Jesus’ gentleness to others, Jesus is near to us.

- The Lord is near: We can be gentle to others with the faith that God would judge everything either good or bad.

- When we believe that God would reward according to what people do, we can be gentle to others even those who hurt us.

- The consideration of our Master’s approach, and our final account, should keep us from smiting our fellow-servants, support us under present sufferings, and cause us to strive towards what is good. "He will take vengeance on your enemies, and reward your patience

2-4. What should we do in the situation leading us to be anxious? (6)

 ***Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.***

- **‘Do not be anxious’** – The original meaning is “Stop being anxious”. This is a strong order of prohibition, not an option. Anxiety and worry is an intrusion into an area that belongs to God alone. It makes us the father of the household instead of being a child.

- It means not wasting time or energy to be anxious or worried about any kind problem.

- We must not be anxious when we face the difficulties of life.

- It is the duty and interest of Christians to live without anxiety.

- There is an anxiety of diligence which is our duty, and consists in a wise forecast of the future and due concern; but there is an anxiety of distrust which is our sin and folly. This kind of anxiety only perplexes and distracts the mind.

- **"Be careful for nothing**, so as by your anxiety to distrust God, and unfit yourselves for his service.’’

- The solution is **‘prayer’ and ‘petition’.** We need to use time and energy to pray and petition God, rather than to be anxious.

- **‘about anything’** : It includes any kind of problem that could cause our anxiety. There is no problem that can justify our continuing anxiety and worry.

- In every situation : This includes all situations. There is no problem or situation that we cannot pray for. We should pray for all the matters either big or small. We’d better include all matters and situations for our prayer topics.

- When anything burdens our spirits, we must ease our minds by prayer; when our situation is complicated/perplexing or we feel distressed, we must seek direction and support from God by prayer.



-  **Prayer** : Turning our heart toward God with trust.

- Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, or making them known to him: Let your requests be made known to God. Not that God needs to be told either our wants or desires; for he knows them better than we can tell him: but he will hear them from us. When we do this, we express to God our concern, and show our faith and appreciation of His mercy. Prayer is also an expression of our dependence on him.

-  **Petition** : asking God what we need and desire. Prayer is a broader form of communication with God. But petition is a specific request to God. Its dictionary definition is: a formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority with respect to a particular cause.

- **Thanksgiving** : Thanksgiving should be included in all our prayer. Giving thanks to God with the confidence that God will answer our prayer and give us what we ask according to perfect will, goodness, love, and generosity.

2-5. What happens to those who pray? (7)

 ***the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

-  **The peace of God**, that is, the comfortable sense of our reconciliation to God and interest in his favour, and the hope of the heavenly blessedness, and enjoyment of God, which passes all understanding.

- Jesus himself is our peace who had made the two one. He has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility between God and men through his death on the cross. And also men can be reconciled with each other in Jesus. (Ephesians 2:14)

- **The peace of God**, which transcends all understanding – It is the peace of God that man cannot make. It is given by God. We cannot understand this peace because it is beyond our understanding and different from the peace that comes to us from the world. We need to experience God’s peace personally.

-  **Will guard your hearts**: The word, ‘guard’ is terminology that was used in the Roman army. The peace of God protects us from all evil attacks or discouragement.

- This peace will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus; it will keep us from sinning under our troubles, and from sinking under them; keep us calm and sober-minded, protecting and strengthening our passion for God, and with helping us to experience inward satisfaction.

3. Read verses 8-9. What did Paul ask us to do? (8) How did he stress the importance of practicing what we know? (9)

3-1. Read verses 8-9.

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.

3-2. What did Paul ask us to do? (8)

 ***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.***

* **true...Noble . . . just . . . right . . .pure... lovely . . . admirable . . .excellent . . . praiseworthy**: These, Paul would say, are the fruit and the food of the mind that is guarded by the peace of God. When we put these good things into our mind, they stay in our mind and then come forth from us.



* Our heart is a spiritual storage room. Whatever things we allow into our minds will be reflected in our words and our actions in the future. And what to store is important.
* Romans 8:5 says, **“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”**
* **Think about such things**: Much of the Christian life comes down to the mind. Romans 12:2 speaks of our mind being the essential place where we are transformed by the renewing of your mind and 2 Corinthians 10:5 speaks of the importance of casting down arguments and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. What we choose to meditate on matters.
* What Paul describes here is a practical way to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

- God wants us to demonstrate his image whatever we do. Instead of acting according to how we feel and think, we have to think about God’s character and his way.

- God wants us behave as his noble children.

3-3. How did he stress the importance of practicing what we know? (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.***

- We need to put what we have learned into practice. Until we put them into practice we cannot say we have truly learned or received His Words.

**Conclusion**

 We should be united in the Lord by being of the same mind in the Lord. We are thankful and work hard even though we are not famous in this world because our names are in the book of life. It is not right to be anxious before God. God wants us to keep the peace of God by presenting all our requests to God through prayer and petition in every situation. May God help us to overcome all problems and difficulties and serve his work powerfully through our prayer and petition. May God help us to reveal his image in our behavior and practical life by putting the word of God into practice. Let us sing a song, “What a friend we have in Jesus.” **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SCorW9r\_Is**

**One word; By prayer and petition.**