

"SWEET REASONABLENESS, THANKSGIVING, & PEACE"

I. Philippians 4:4-9

A. Thanksgiving is on Thursday. Black Friday now begins on Thursday and some people are thankful for that... Cyber Monday begins on what was Black Friday, unless sooner... Better news: A week from today is the first Sunday of Advent. So are you rejoicing or worried? Peaceful or anxious? Sleeping like a baby or pacing the floors?

1) Financial woes add to the stress of this season... Got any of those?

2) If your job's not secure, that can cause worry. It's even worse if you're unemployed.. Then holiday commercials and advertisements are like piling on...

3) Caring for an aging parent or sick child? Have your own health issues?

4) Suffered the loss of a loved one this past year? Perhaps Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year will be different for you all this year...

5) Are the holidays (holy days) elevated way too high and our awesome God deemed way too small? What if we were to elevate our Lord above all the madness?

B. Philippians 4:4-8 is full of truth, promise and challenge. I've read or recited it to many of you just before a surgery... It is impossible to drink these verses dry...

1) V4-7 *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

2) So how can we pull this off? What kind of white knuckle, teeth grinding, willful straining can get us from deep anxiety to a place of peace? As Jesus once said to His disciples, *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* The Gospel of Jesus Christ, fully illuminated, completely elevated, placed as first and foremost in our minds and hearts, brings the reality of peace from the *Prince of Peace* because in Christ, all things have been changed for us.

C. In the light of eternity, won for us through Christ, all things natural and temporal must fall in submission to that which is forevermore. Like when I shared Paul's words to these same Philippians a few weeks ago (Phil. 1:21) *"To live is Christ and to die is gain."* So when a despised, scarred, imprisoned, ex-Pharisee, thorn-in-his-side, half-blind apostle, destined for eventual beheading speaks via the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we should all take notice... This is why Paul could emphatically counsel others to rejoice, forgo anxiety, pray humbly & thankfully, until peace comes—because He saw Christ, a bloody cross, an empty tomb, an occupied throne, the third heaven, the throne's eye view, the bigger picture and the eternal outcome...

D. Lamaze classes--breathe in, breathe out, and go to your "happy place." :-)

E. When you see yourself in an *"All things turn out for good"* no lose situation, with God completely in control, maybe, just maybe, down the stretch, peace will surpass worry and fretting and things out of our control...

1) V8-9 *"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. 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."*

2) Close with prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV)

4 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. **8** 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.

Video Clips for Growing Believers

Thanksgiving--God's Goodness by The Skit Guys (Hilarious!)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfEzC8eG1_Y

Thanksgiving Medley

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3dXCL34aEA>

Give Thanks - Hyper Pixels Media

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRaTSveqknw&NR=1>

"All That I Can Do" - Ted Sandquist, Nedra Ross, & Phil Keaggy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kefjB1HZ2c>

The Theology of the Cross and Walking With A Limp - Tim Keller

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lwy5k2d7oVI>

"Build Your Kingdom Here" - Rend Collective Experiment

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKgVqtg>

Bonus Stuff

Quote by Francis Schaeffer

"The beginning of men's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart."

Quote by Corrie ten Boom

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

Quote by Arthur Somers Roche

"Anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all others thoughts are drained."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"Anxiety is not only a pain we must ask God to assuage, but also a weakness we must ask Him to pardon."

Quote by George Mueller

"The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety."

Quote by Charles Mayo

"Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly affects the health."
- Charles Mayo (Founder of the Mayo Clinic)

Quote by Mark Twain

"I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened."

Anne Steele's Fiancé Drowned

A young woman named Anne Steele had encountered one trial and disappointment after another. Being a devout Christian, she continuously sought to praise God—even in sorrow. She was engaged to be married, and had looked forward to her wedding day with eagerness. The big day finally arrived and so did the guests—but the groom was missing. After about an hour of waiting, a messenger brought the tragic news that Anne's fiancé had drowned. The sudden shock was almost too much for her, but after a while she regained her spiritual composure. Later Anne Steele penned the following song that is still found in many hymnbooks. - H.G.B., Our Daily Bread

Father, Whate'er of Earthly Bliss

By Anne Steele

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at thy throne of grace,
Let this petition rise:

Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free:
The blessings of thy grace impart,
And make me live to thee.

Let the sweet hope that I am thine,
My life and death attend;
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end.

I Thank Thee Lord
by Ralph Gaither (former P.O.W.)

I thank Thee, Lord, for blessings, big and small;
For spring's warm glow and songbird's welcome call;
For autumn's hue and winter's white snow shawl.
I thank Thee for the harvest rich with grain;
For tall trees and the quiet shadowed lane;
For rushing stream, for birds that love to fly;
My country's land, the mountain's and the plain.
I thank Thee for each sunset in the sky.
For sleepy nights, the bed in which I lie;
A life of truth and peace; a woman's hand,
Her hand in mine until the day I die.
I thank Thee, Lord for all these things above;
But most of all I thank Thee for Thy Love.
- Ralph Gaither, written while a POW in North Vietnam.

H. A. Ironside's Restaurant Experience

Ray Stedman tells of an experience H.A. Ironside had in a crowded restaurant. Just as Ironside was about to begin his meal, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited him to have a seat. Then, as was his custom, Ironside bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "*Do you have a headache?*" Ironside replied, "*No, I don't.*" The other man asked, "*Well, is there something wrong with your food?*" Ironside replied, "*No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat.*" The man said, "*Oh, you're one of those, are you? Well, I want you to know I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!*" Ironside said, "*Yes, you're just like my dog. That's what he does too!*"

- Ray Stedman, *Folk Psalms of Faith*.