

Philippians 4:4-7

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[0:00] Good morning. You know, I have to resist the urge not to say, 'Good morning, Vietnam!' This is Paul's command to rejoice always, to be anxious for nothing, and to pray for everything.

We're going to see how God, as Lord, provides us with everything we need in order to fulfill these commands. And so if you would, go ahead and open your Bibles and we'll read our text.

Philippians 4, 4-7 reads, Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again, I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Let's pray. Lord, we pray this morning that you would open the eyes of our hearts to your word, that you would give us understanding and spiritual sustenance in this, Lord.

[1:48] Father, help me to communicate clearly and help those in my hearing to be transformed, not by my wisdom or tact, but by your word.

We pray that your word would be faithfully preached and that we would receive this peace that surpasses understanding. We pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. All right.

So, last week, we started a little break from John. We're popping into Philippians this week. Since we're just jumping in, I wanted to give a little bit of context first before we get into our passage.

So, our passage this morning, it comes from Paul and Timothy's final remarks and their letter to all the saints who are at Philippi. This is a very personal and affectionate letter to the Philippians. Throughout the letter, he's informing them of his own circumstances and he is deeply encouraging them in Christ. He is so persuaded that Christ is our everything.

[2:47] He says to live is Christ, to die is gain. In regard to Paul's earthly accolades, he says that he counts everything as loss for the sake of Christ.

He proclaims that Christ is the name above every name. So, all of his encouragement and exhortation to the Philippians is in Christ and for Christ and because of Christ.

The whole letter is seeking to glorify Christ. He is our authority and purpose in all things and that's what we have in mind as we are coming to the end of this letter and these concluding remarks.

So, as we look at these verses, we're going to consider how Christ is the foundation and the purpose of our text. These verses are broken into three pretty pronounced sections, which we've already mentioned, rejoicing, anxiety, and prayer.

We're going to consider these three individually and see where and how the Lord's sovereignty informs each one, but they will also overlap each other in various ways. So, for the note takers this morning, the three headings I would outline are rejoice always, never be anxious, and pray for everything.

[4:02] All right, so to start, we are called and commanded to rejoice always. Rejoicing is a deep-rooted joy that is not controlled by mere circumstances.

It is accompanied by gladness and delight. It is a joyful disposition, but it is deeper than surface-level happiness. It is a sense of continual rest and peace, knowing that all things are working out for God's glory and are good.

It does not sway with momentary thrills like the word happiness might describe. For instance, it makes me happy when I hook up on a trout out in the river, but afterwards, as we spend the rest of the day getting hung up on trees, the excitement fades.

And so it is a very temporary, very shifting momentary. So rejoicing is more constant and foundational than just that blip of happiness. It can be achieved even amidst hardship and even in sadness.

Back in chapter 2, verse 17, Paul says that even if he is being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice, he rejoices. Being physically, emotionally, and relationally spent, he still finds joy in the Lord.

[5:24] He may not like his suffering, it might not make him happy, but he does rejoice in his suffering. He is also writing this letter while imprisoned, and yet this whole letter is just saturated with joy and rejoicing.

And this is all because true rejoicing, the kind that Paul exemplifies, is rejoicing in the Lord. Our text does not tell us to rejoice in creature comforts, in financial stability, in obedient children, or marriage, or singleness, fill in the blank.

It says rejoice in the Lord. The title of Lord, I think, is really significant here. In chapter 2, back in chapter 2 again, Paul says This title, Lord, it can be used for master, or owner, king, and obviously as a name for God.

But with all of that in mind, recognizing God as Lord, it gives us a little more specificity on what about God causes our rejoicing. Christ as Lord is presented as the sovereign one.

He is the final authority and master over all things. He not only created the universe, but he upholds the universe by the word of his power. He is in a position of ruling and reigning over his creation like a king does.

[7:04] God is a king that has complete control over everything that conspires. It's all subject to God's counsel and wisdom. Being sovereign, he has already written history from beginning to end, and he decides what is allowed to occur and what is not.

And praise God that he, the sovereign one, that he is good. This would not be a means of rejoicing if he was evil. God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one.

We rejoice in the Lord because our God is a good Lord. He rules with justice and mercy. He always does what is right. He is morally pure through and through.

And that is who's sitting on the throne. Just this fact alone that a holy and good God is Lord is a means for rejoicing always.

That's part of who he is which would cause us to rejoice. But there's also what the Lord has done and is doing that gives us reasons to rejoice.

[8:15] One of the things he has done is canceled our record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. God, our Lord, is completely sufficient in and of himself.

He has no need for anything. He has no obligation to appease anyone else. But when his own creation pridefully rebelled against him and acquired eternal debt, he did not just sit back and let us figure it out.

In chapter 2, we read, Let each of you not look only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. The king took on a commoner's identity to serve his people.

He did this to be the substitute in our place. Man deserved eternal wrath but God sent Christ to bear the punishment for us.

[9:34] With our eternal debt forgiven, what should prevent us from rejoicing? Yeah. If we don't find ourselves regularly rejoicing in this reality, it's probably because we don't understand how significant the weight of sin is.

the doctrine of the depravity of man rightfully acknowledges that man is completely helpless of his own accord. Being depraved of the lawbreakers against an eternal and holy God means that the punishment is equally substantial and this is a really terrible punishment to pay.

Eternal destruction is not to be taken lightly. And when you recognize how terrible being forsaken by God is, you will then realize the benevolence and the value of Christ's sacrifice.

Jesus paid it all. If you've been forgiven of your sins, you have reason to rejoice always because otherwise we deserve death and hell. Another blessing he has given us is himself.

We not only get our debt canceled, we also get Christ. He is our joy. Remember the parable of the hidden treasure.

[10:55] The kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. The man is not worried about

losing all his possessions because he knows that he has something greater.

We don't have to cling to our earthly possessions to protect our joy because we too have something greater. These earthly possessions are not the source of our joy.

And our heart's treasure is not just the secondary benefits that the Lord provides us but it is predominantly Christ himself. He is the grand treasure.

Living and abiding in Christ should be our heart's deepest joy and treasure. This is a spiritual reality for us. We have the greatest friend. We have the best shepherd, the most loyal brother, the wisest father, the great paraclete, the comforter.

He is our supreme joy and he is ours. I'm sure you've heard this question asked before but if Jesus were not in heaven would you still want to go?

[12:10] If you got to have all the grandeur of heaven, the streets of gold, the pearly gates, the tree of life but if Jesus was not there would your yearning be the same?

You won't be able to fulfill this command to rejoice always if not. We rejoice in the Lord because he is all satisfying himself and he has given himself to us.

Our text commands us to do this always. All the time. Because God is not bound by space or time or matter, the basis of our rejoicing is also not bound by space or time or matter either.

This is why we can rejoice in the Lord always. The spirit offers himself to us all the time no matter where we are or what's going on. You cannot evade the presence of God.

Behold, he is with us always to the end of the age. The text does not say rejoice always unless unless your house burns down, unless you lose your job, unless your child gets sick, unless your friend moves away.

[13:21] It doesn't say that. All these things are rightfully sad and cause us grief but it doesn't take away the eternal and forever joy we have in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God promises that when we pass through the waters he will be with us. Paul is quick to not leave any room for contingencies here. He immediately doubles down on his command.

Again, I will say rejoice. If God is giving us this command to rejoice always then that means it is achievable and he will help us to fulfill it.

He is never changing and so our rejoicing always has a solid rock to base our joy. If we are abiding in this command it will be evident to others.

Verse 5 says that we should let this reasonableness or some translations use gentleness be known to everyone. We are to be pointing others to Christ and we are to be so characterized by rejoicing all the time that it is plain to see by others.

[14:24] Not just to believers but to everyone. And so when you're daily clinging to Christ and you're submitting to him as Lord there is a regular joyful and gentle demeanor we have.

We aren't getting all ruffled up by the stressors in our day and taking them out on one another. We are glad in his mercies which are new every morning remembering who he is what he has done and what his promises are.

It should be noticeable that we aren't getting tossed to and fro by the world but rather we are joyfully submitting to the Lord who gives us all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places and namely himself.

We won't be perfect at this but we will be characterized by it. If we grasp the gravity of our hope in the things above not the things below we won't be able to keep our reasonableness on the inside. The spirit will do actual internal work that displays itself outwardly. So implicit to rejoice in the Lord always is our second command. Do not be anxious about anything.

[15:37] If we are rejoicing in the Lord always we will in turn not be anxious for anything but Paul goes on to say it out loud so that we can see more fully the implications of resting and trusting in the Lord.

There may be a more robust definition of anxiety but I think here it can mostly be summed up in being so overwhelmed by the unknown that we neglect trusting in God's providential sovereignty. When we see this word elsewhere in the New Testament it is those texts that say do not worry that word worry right there do not worry about what you will eat or drink or what you will wear for clothing do not worry about tomorrow it is regularly referring to the unreasonable fear and giving too much concern to things outside of our control like the future.

What if they fall down? What if this is cancer? What if Russia attacks? What if what if what if the natural disposition of humans is a desire to guarantee favorable outcomes.

Everything needs to go the way we want it to go. the thought of something not going well attacks our hearts such that we find ourselves anxious.

[17:01] This anxiety lends itself to a lack of self control. We get irrational, we get worked up, we make spontaneous overcorrections and we start placing our hope in our physical circumstances rather than God.

This anxiety can put us in a really bad physical and spiritual place. Physically, we can lose sleep, we can undereat or overeat and our hormones can get out of whack.

There's all kinds of physical effects that come from anxiety. Spiritually, we can get so far into our own worries and fears that there is no relating to God in any way.

It is all earthly problems with only earthly solutions. Modern medicine will just say you need meds.

The news tells us we just need to vote for this person. Get this guy in office and it will be okay.

The guys say you just need to go golfing man. Your co-workers will say you just need work life balance. The worldly counsel to the spiritual problem will be worldly solutions and obviously those don't suffice.

[18:11] That is a strain from the Lord. That is letting the things of the earth be our Lord. God has made us in a way that our spiritual and our physical beings are not separate but they do go hand in hand.

Our text just told us that there are outward realities to our inward reasonableness. So they are linked. Spiritually fighting to trust the Lord can include taking physical measures.

If your right hand causes you to sin cut it off. If staying up late and drinking ten cups of coffee every day keeps you on edge then go to bed on time.

Turn from trusting coffee and turn to the Lord for your sustenance. It may even be wise to take medications at times. I would be very slow and prayerful to do so but there is a time and a place.

Part of your spiritual fight can and should include caring for yourself but the fight is never just a physical one. It always involves spiritual matters.

[19:22] Paul isn't saying don't have any concern about anything. Complete apathy is not the answer. He is saying don't have an anxious concern about anything. Don't make your physical circumstances your Lord.

In this we are committing the sin of not trusting God but rather trusting ourselves or the things of this world. Don't place your hope where it can't be sustained.

And I know this is all easier said than done. I have failed in finding anxiety at times. But church we have good reason to not be anxious. What does the text say?

The Lord is at hand. Note that Paul is using this title of Lord again. It is only a means to rest our hearts because it is the Lord who is at hand.

Not a job promotion, not medical care, not retirement, not a good night's sleep, but it is the Lord. So this is not just a blind happiness we throw on.

[20:27] It is substantiated by the reality of who God is, what he has done, and what his promises are. The Lord being at hand could be a timeliness or proximity.

I lean more into the proximity, but both lend themselves to not being anxious. If the day of the Lord is coming soon, then we can rejoice always and endure knowing that our Lord is coming.

The present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that is revealed to us soon. If the sovereign Lord is near in proximity, then the comfort here is that he sees, he knows and he goes with us.

Both of these are true and both give us a foundation to rest our anxious hearts. But again, it is only good news because of who is at hand. The Lord being sovereign means that everything we might fear will happen, he knows it already.

God being a good and holy Lord means that whatever the outcome is, we can rest knowing that it is for our good and for his glory. It may not be fun, it may hurt, but it is ultimately how the Lord is using our circumstances to draw us deeper into fellowship with him.

[21:48] Back in chapter 1, Paul is sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion. So if these things are under God's rule and authority, trust him. God saying he'll be with us through fire and flood is sufficient enough for us to trust him, but he has also proven his reliability time and time again.

The Lord has taken every situation from Genesis to Revelation and beyond and used it for our good and his glory. We may not always understand how, but there is a plethora of instances where we

clearly get to see how.

We can recall so many Bible stories where it seemed that God was at a loss, but he shows how he was using these situations providentially. The story of Joseph sticks out.

When he confronts his brothers who sold him into slavery, he famously declares what you intended for evil, God intended for good. God used the seemingly hopeless situation for Joseph to then go feed the Israelites during a famine, and so he was providentially working here, and when that in turn led to the Israelites captivity in Egypt, God used the exodus then to display his power through deliverance, and to reveal his love and compassion for his people.

When Jonah got swallowed up by a big fish, the reader might think this is the end. The fish get supper and the Ninevites don't get their preacher. But God displays the sovereignty by having the fish spit them out in Nineveh to accomplish God's task.

[23:20] God time and time again shows us that he is working in and through all things. Let's take the worst thing that could ever happen in human history. glory. Could God use that for his glory?

Yes. Man put the Lord Jesus to death. Being the author of life, the grave had no power over him. God very clearly prophesied this and promised that it would result in God's good providence, and it did.

Jesus saves his bride for all eternity to the praise of his name. Even in the most vile and evil time of human history, God displays his sovereign providence over evil.

There are so many instances where it seems like God is losing the battle, but in turn it is a grander way to reveal his power and his providence. We can rest knowing that all the little details and all the big details are being overseen and used for God's higher purposes.

Evil might seem to rule the day at times from our perspective, but God is doing something grander that we may not be able to fully see. You and I could probably sit around the fire and recount all the ways God used particular, peculiar situations in our lives and did something with them that we never thought could happen.

[24:40] So God's track record gives us good reason to not be anxious. Knowing that the Lord is on his throne means we can rejoice. Let me never forget, though the wrong seems off so strong, God is the ruler yet.

This is my father's world. God has proven himself. So finally, what does the Lord promise us that gives us rest when tempted with anxiety?

He's given us many promises in his word, so let's look there. Nearly everything we are tempted to be anxious about, God has provided some sort of promise to his children to sustain our rejoicing. For instance, the news may make it seem like America is coming to an end. I don't know if you guys have seen this. Stray law is taking over and we will not have the Constitution soon.

Our God reminds us in Philippians 3:20 that our true citizenship is not here. It is in heaven. Do not be anxious about your earthly citizenship. The Constitution does not keep us in eternal security with God.

[25:50] The climate activists tell us that our world is going to perish in 2050 if we don't stop driving gas vehicles. God has promised in 2 Peter 3 that he will actually come and destroy the earth.

There are going to be a people here and earth present for him to destroy. Do not be anxious about the vitality of our earth. God has promised it will be here until he comes. We aren't sure if our company is going to keep being profitable or that millennials aren't going to have social security. In Matthew 6, God has promised that he cares for your physical provisions and he will provide as he sees fit. He is our security, not American tax infrastructure or the economy.

Do not be anxious about what you will eat or drink. We get a rash and WebMD says we have cancer. God says in Luke 12, the hairs on your head are numbered.

He knows if you have rash or cancer. Whichever the case, he will go with you. Which one of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Do not be anxious about your health.

[27:02] This does not mean we should be careless. We don't just sit around twiddling our thumbs and write it off as trusting the Lord. If anxiety is giving too much concern to our circumstances to where we make them our Lord, complete apathy is also not the answer.

the care given needs to be calculated but not worshipped. We ought to steward God's creation well even though he is going to come and destroy it. We ought to work hard at our jobs and have an exit plan to feed our families knowing that God promises to provide.

We should take our kids to the doctor if there's a medical concern. The difference is we rejoice in the Lord all the while knowing that he is working through it all.

He cares for his children. He cares for us better than we care for ourselves. And he commands us to do these things. He commands us to provide for our families. He tells us to have some wine if you have a stomach ache.

He tells us that the wise man builds his house on a rock not sand. We seek to be faithful yet prudent and we trust the Lord and the outcomes.

[28 : 10] If it ends in physical blessing praise God. If it ends like Paul in physical hardship praise God. These physical circumstances are not our Lord.

Quite often things aren't really that peachy. What if we really do lose our jobs? What if Russia really does attack? God does not promise that everything will be a bed of roses here on earth.

In fact he promises that we are going to be persecuted and he promises that work is going to be difficult. He promises that in this world we are going to have tribulation. But amidst these things he promises spiritual respite.

God being Lord gives us what we need to not be overwhelmed in fear. When the world fails us we are not to be surprised or anxious but instead we allow these things to push us deeper into trust in the eternal and never failing God.

So turn from hope in the world and turn to hope in God. He is a good Lord. He has done great things and he promises great things.

[29 : 20] You can find rest for all the red alarms that the news provides you or that we make up in our own minds with the reliable truths that God has provided us in his word.

Study them know them memorize them cling to them they are for your soul's well-being and for the glory of God. They are tools for you in the fight against anxiety.

We have talked at length how God is Lord and what that implies for anxiety and rejoicing. Seeing what he has done we know that his word is backed with his omnipotence knowing his reliability.

We can hope in the promises he gives for the future. These things are not just to be understood from a theological academic perspective our text ends with a command to also be in personal relationship with the Lord not just to know about him but to know him personally.

We are to commune with him and this is our final point pray for everything. In our text we have four different words used for how we are to talk to God.

[30 : 30] There is prayer supplication thanksgiving and requests. the latter three supplication thanksgiving and requesting are all under the umbrella of prayer.

Prayer includes more than just these three categories but all of them should be a part of our regular prayer life. And let's note that God is commanding us to pray to him in everything.

So therefore he wants us to bear these things with him. we fool ourselves to think that we can or should muster these things by ourselves.

It is deception to pretend that the Lord doesn't care about your little trivial concerns or that he's too busy to listen. God wants us to walk in step with him in everything.

Every experience we have every thought that pops into our minds we are talking and walking with God. God is omnipresent and he is omniscient. He is everywhere and all powerful.

[31 : 34] He is never too busy to give you his ear or fulfill his promises to you. He is a hospitable and welcoming father comforting his children.

He does not scowl at us for asking the wrong things and he doesn't expect us to do everything by ourselves. But instead he gives us peace and he guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus through our prayers.

So if we need something supplied we go to God for that supplication. Our requests are made to God because God is the Lord. He is the sovereign one over all things that can actually do something about it.

Being clothed in Christ's righteousness we can draw near his throne with confidence to make our requests hearts. And God in some spiritual economy uses our prayers to accomplish his works. He knows what we are going to pray for before we even ask.

He has already written history but part of his history is using our prayers as a means to his ends. He desires our relationship dependency and submission to him to carry out these things.

[32 : 44] That doesn't mean he does everything we ask him to and it doesn't mean he's dependent upon our prayers to execute his will. It means that he uses our prayers and his wisdom to dictate

our circumstances as he sees fit.

He is Lord. Because he is Lord he is also the one we are to be thankful to. I think the Lord often uses these prayers of thanksgiving in a very real, practical, tangible way to help us rejoice always and resist anxiety.

1 Thessalonians says similarly to our text rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances. So letting yourself stop and reflect on your circumstances from a broader lens I think will open your eyes to see how much you have to be thankful for.

Instead of letting your flesh, the world, and Satan convince you of how hopeless this world is, you can thank the Lord for all the things he has blessed you with.

So find ways to recognize God's providence in your situations and never forget that what we deserve is death and hell that Christ saved, that Christ died for us.

[33:54] So giving thanks turns that outlook from a worldly and emotionally overwhelmed disposition to a confidence in the Lord's goodness and providence over all things.

And this text ends and tells us that the result is the peace of God that surpasses understanding. I take this to mean that it's not just known, it surpasses understanding, it is also felt, it is real, the Lord is actually present in us through our prayer, bringing us peace inwardly.

It's part of what makes the relationship a two-way street. We aren't just talking with God and shooting our prayers up aimlessly. He is giving us peace as we are talking with Him.

And this kind of peace protects your hearts and your minds from anxiety, and it provides you with the joy that we have in Christ. We don't just, you know, again, we don't just have this one-way street, it's both.

The suggestion box is not just there for our taking. So He actually hears our prayers, and He responds to them. So pray to Him, be in fellowship with Him, tell Him of the things that are sweet to you, tell Him of the things that you are struggling with, tell Him of the things you need help with.

[35:18] One of the things that Christ did for us, one of the things He accomplishes for us, is this personal relationship. So walk with your Father in a prayerful way, He is with you, and He will go with you.

So this text has three summary thoughts. first, we rejoice, we rest our anxious hearts, and we pray to God, all because He is Lord.

Worship Him as such. Do not neglect to express that horizontally to everyone around you, but also express it vertically to God in prayer. Second, don't dissociate your physical being from your spiritual.

I think when the Scriptures say to flee temptations or to gouge out your eye, that means we should use everything in our arsenal to help us against the fight to stop sinning or to be tempted by sin. If watching the news makes you anxious, stop watching it for a while. If you have a weird mole, go get it checked out. I've had a couple of those.

[36:27] But be reasonable and rest in God's sovereignty over your physical circumstances. anxiety is never just a physical fight. And it's very often purely a spiritual one.

Finally, read your Bibles with intentionality more. It will produce more rejoicing. It will give you godly wisdom to disarm the lies that the world and Satan and yourself engender.

It says, man will not live off bread alone, but from every word that comes from the mouth of God. With that, let's pray.