

# Hearts of Joy Guarded by the Peace of God

Phil. 4:4-7

## Introduction:

- A. Verse 4 makes many of us uncomfortable – know we do not always following it.
  - 1. It is easy to blame it on the times in which we live – things seem never right for rejoicing.
  - 2. Many of us have become *clouds* rather the *lights* of the world (cf. Mt. 5:14).
- B. Verse 4 emphasizes the importance of, not merely rejoicing, but “rejoicing *in the Lord*.”
  - 1. A double emphasis: “Rejoice *always* .. *again* I say...”
  - 2. “In the Lord” — not pumped up emotion, not self-induced, but by-product of godly living.
  - 3. Comes as result of the “peace of God” being in our hearts — peace then joy.
- C. Verses 5-9 gives us three elements of a formula for peace that brings joy.

## Discussion:

### I. The Spirit of Moderation (v. 5a)

- A. The meaning of “moderation” has puzzled Bible students for ages.
  - 1. Various translations: Forbearance, gentleness, magnanimity.
  - 2. “The sweet reasonableness of Christ” (Matthew Arnold) probably nearest to idea.
  - 3. A composite virtue: Hate sin, love sinner; holiness with humility; conviction with forbearance, zeal with discretion, indignation without vindictiveness, anger without sin.
- B. The incentive for “moderation” is “The Lord is at hand”
  - 1. Makes moderation in *speech* easier (cf. Matt. 12:36)
    - a. Ill. Elderly servant “Taste words”
    - b. The effect of presence of one highly regarded on conversation.
  - 2. Makes moderation in *feeling* easier (cf. Psa. 94:11)
  - 3. Make moderation in *behavior* easier.

### II. The Discipline of Prayer (v. 6)

- A. Prayer must be *trustful* (“Anxious for nothing”)
  - 1. Cast cares upon him (1 Pet. 5:7).
  - 2. Ask in faith (Jas. 1:5-7; Matt. 21:22)
- B. Prayer must be *thankful* (“With thanksgiving” cf. 1 Thess. 5:18)
  - 1. Praying *only* about needs and troubles will not bring peace — does not focus on blessings.
  - 2. Praying with thanksgiving helps bring peace in midst of trouble
    - a. Hard to be overly anxious and thankful at same time.
    - b. Jesus on night of betrayal gave thanks (Matt. 26:27).

### III. The Practice of Selectiveness (vv. 8-9).

- A. Selective *thinking* (v. 8; cf. Prov. 23:7).
  - 1. Be selective what we feed our minds upon (Humming bird and buzzard).
  - 2. Choose to focus on good in any environment (cf. Phil. 1:12-18; 4:11; 2 Cor. 4:8, 9; Matt. 5:10-12)
- B. Selective *Living* (v. 9).
  - 1. Selective thinking leads to selective living.
  - 2. Choose to live by the precepts and examples of the Lord and His apostles.

## Conclusion:

- A. Let us apply this formula to our lives and enjoy the peace of God.
- B. How can we “rejoice *in the Lord*” if we are not in the Lord (Cf. Gal. 3:26, 27).