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.
      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”)
      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).