

## PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

## REJOICE! CAREFREE! PEACE!

*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, 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 minds through Christ Jesus.*

“Rejoice, Carefree, Peace.” These three words are different, yet closely related. They sum up the thoughts of our text. Please bear with me for a minute, if you’re not an English “major.”

1) Some words are “verbs.” Verbs express action—run, talk, eat, smile, laugh. *Rejoice* is a verb. To rejoice is to express happiness.

2) Some words are “adjectives.” They “describe”—tall, short, strong, excited. *Carefree* is an adjective that describes a person who is happy, worry-free, joyful.

3) Some words are “nouns.” Nouns “name” things—house, barn, horse, car, pick-up, holiday, war. The noun *peace* the name for no fighting, no arguing, no disturbance—only pleasing calm.

These three words are the point of our text today—“Rejoice! Carefree! Peace!”

Paul was in prison in Rome for preaching Christ. These words are from his letter to the people at Philippi. He had brought the Good News (“Gospel”) of Jesus to them—forgiveness in Jesus, resurrection in Jesus, and eternal life in Jesus. He longed to see them. He told them not to have sorrow for his imprisonment. As it was, Christ was being preached to the palace-guard! Plus others were becoming bold to preach Christ—“Paul was willing to go to prison for Him!”

Paul also explains that he is even willing to die for the sake of preaching Christ—his Savior, their Savior, and the world’s Savior! He knew that to die “is gain”! Heaven! Jesus Himself—true God—humbled Himself (“lowered” Himself) even to the point of death on the shameful and painful cross! He did it in love to wash away Paul’s sins, their sins, and yours! God exalted Jesus (held Him high) at His resurrection, at the ascension, and will again when He returns at the End. All will bow before Him! Believers with joy—you!—unbelievers with fear.

Paul says to put aside complaining. Do you? They are now children of God! You too. Imagine! They are precious lights in this sin darkened world. Think of the pleasantness of Christmas lights. Be a light. Live to Jesus’ glory (not yours).

Their dear friend Epaphroditus, whom they had sent to help Paul in prison, had been sick and near death. In His mercy, God spared him. Paul was sending Epaphroditus back to them. Joy!

Finally Paul rejoiced in his own situation—even though outwardly undesirable. Things in his life that once meant something, specifically his own good deeds accomplishments, were now like rubbish—dung!—to him. He would press on as a servant of Christ, striving through Christ for the crown of the powerful resurrection. His and every believer’s true citizenship is in heaven! When Jesus raises us from the grave, our lowly bodies will be transformed to glorious bodies—no sin or death!

Therefore, with all this in mind (Philippians 1-3), Paul says, live in harmony and peace with one another! Do you?—with family members, relatives, church members, neighbors, merchants? *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18).*

But, how to live in peace and harmony? *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, Rejoice!* “Re-joyce”—to have double joy—like “re-paint.” He says it again. *Again I will say, Rejoice!* Repeated words are important—whether words of caution, comfort, or congratulations. Paul says, Double “rejoice!” Live with joy in your forgiveness, your resurrection at the end, and your eternal life in heaven, in Christ! Let your Savior “show,” in your words and actions to one another.

*Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.* Let your “gentleness”—your smoothness, not “bristly-ness”—your appropriateness, show itself in dealing with others. Be concerned for others, not grabbing all you can for yourself. Live in “moderation” (KJV) toward others.

*The Lord is at hand.* A great reminder! The Lord is near. Think of a child whose father is approaching. The child loves father very much, and doesn’t want to dishonor him—such as, by mistreating sister or brother, when he comes in the door. *The Lord is at hand.* That’s the real reason to behave—and to “behave before Christmas”! To honor the Father and the Savior!

*Be anxious for nothing.* To be anxious is to be filled with worry, fretting, nail-biting. Do not be anxious over anything in life. Here the KJV says “Be careful for nothing.” That does not mean be reckless! The old sense of “careful” was “full of care,” weighted down with cares and worries, opposite of “carefree.” Go through life, remembering that the Lord is near. He covers you and holds you in His arms of love, mercy and forgiveness. You are carefree!

*But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.* For each and every issue that faces you in life, you have help at hand. Turn to the Lord. “*Cast all your care upon Him for he cares for you*” (1 Peter 5:7). With prayers and petitions go to Him, your dear loving Father, your dear rescuing Savior who won your forgiveness, and your dear counselor and comforter, the Holy Spirit. Ask! And it’s not just “I want, I want, I want.” But with thanksgiving, “Thank You. Thank You. Thank You.” Does the pastor always remember to give thanks after the sermon for the help for which he earnestly prayed? What about you?

*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* Peace with God through Jesus. As the angels said to the shepherds, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.” In Jesus’ birth—the first step preceding His dying and rising again, God’s peace and goodwill are extended to run-aways and ne’er-do-wells like you and me. Such full peace and happiness in Christ *surpasses* all logic, reasoning, and understanding. It supersedes, it tops, everything else! God’s gift to you!

At this Christ-mas time, or on any day, or in eternity, the verb “rejoice,” the adjective “carefree,” and the noun “peace” apply to you. In forgiveness in Jesus, Rejoice!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---