



## *Prayer - Philippians 4:5-7*

When Paul tells us to rejoice always, we might at times wonder how that is to be. Sure it is easy to rejoice when your team is winning when the economy is strong when you and your loved ones are healthy and secure. But what are the times in life when things are not going our way? Are we able to rejoice then?

As we enter into Lent we are reminded of our sin and the resulting broken relationship that humanity has had with God since the Garden of Eden. Reflecting on our need for a savior, Paul points us to Jesus and in the midst of the sufferings of life encourages us to not be anxious, but rather to bring everything to our Lord in prayer.

We pray to God for those things that we need and for those things that we desire for others. Further, Paul encourages us to include prayers of thanksgiving when we go to God with our needs. The great thing is that when we include a focus on thanking God, we remind ourselves about all the things for which we can and should be thankful. Additionally, we are reminded that God is the giver of all our blessings.

One of the best reasons to rejoice and give thanks to God is captured by Paul in v. 7 when he says that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” As we reflect throughout the season of Lent on our sin and need for a savior, we can rejoice that in Christ Jesus, we have the Savior that we need and that this Savior not only brings us to faith in Him, restoring our relationship with our heavenly Father, but that Jesus sustains our faith in the midst of the struggles of life caused by our sin.

So, when we are reminded of our mortality and impending return to dust, we can still remain confident in the promises of Christ that our eternity is secure in Christ. The pains of this world will one day be a thing of the past and our sufferings will be remembered no more.

## *Thoughts for Reflection*

On this Ash Wednesday, how do you plan to prayerfully turn to Jesus throughout Lent and beyond?

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.