



**2016: Week 45**

Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup> 2016

*"Rejoice in the Lord!"*

### **Philippians 4:4**

"<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (NASB).

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On Sunday we continued our sermon series through the **Book of Philippians**, and in this week's section we find Paul exhorting the Philippian church to do certain things that might be unnatural. As we consider Paul's imperatives to that church then, it will serve us well to notice that Paul's circumstances were less than pleasant. In fact, Paul was beaten, imprisoned, stoned, persecuted, mocked, and regularly opposed for his unwavering proclamation that Jesus was the risen Lord and that salvation was found exclusively in Him. Can you imagine that? The message of the gospel that we freely declare today is the same message that led to Paul's multiple persecutions. Like so many other times in the New Testament, here in **Philippians 4** we find Paul rejoicing in the Lord amidst his sufferings. It is very likely the Philippian saints were experiencing various sufferings too. Chances are you've probably experienced some form of suffering lately. You have several legitimate reasons to be discouraged, frustrated, tired, anxious and upset. And yet, our passage from **Philippians 4:1-9** will challenge you (like the Philippians) to consider other alternatives for handling such frustrations.

### **READ Philippians 4:1-9**

On Sunday John broke down several imperatives given by Paul to the Philippian church of his day. These same imperatives are just as applicable to the church today. Below are listed the imperatives from this passage along with thoughts to consider.

- **STAND FIRM** in the Lord (4:1)  
What are ways that a person stands firm "in the Lord?"  
How can you do better at standing firm in the Lord?
- **LIVE IN HARMONY** with one another (4:2)  
Why is it so difficult to live in harmony with other people, even other Christians?  
How can you do better at living in harmony with other believers?
- **REJOICE** in the Lord (4:4)  
How can a person rejoice in the Lord, even when his/her circumstances are terrible?  
What changes do you need to make in your attitude, so that you resolve to rejoice in the Lord?
- **BE FORBEARING/GENTLE** toward one another (4:5)  
What does it mean to be forbearing and gentle?  
In what areas of your life does the Lord need to work on making you more gentle toward others?
- **DO NOT BE ANXIOUS** for anything (4:6)  
What makes you anxious, and how might your anxiety reveal a lack of faith?  
What burdens to you need to lay in prayer (and leave!) at the throne of God?
- **DWELL ON THE EXCELLENT** (4:8)  
What do you allow to enter your mind (& consume your thoughts) that is not excellent and pure?  
How can the Lord help you eradicate the harmful, perverse, and wasteful in your life? What can the Lord bring new into your thought life that is excellent and pure?
- **IMITATE** the righteous (4:9)  
Is there a believer who is living well for the Lord that you want to imitate in some way? If so, who and in what way do you want to follow his/her example?

**FAMILY PRAYER:** Dear Lord, please help me to look to You when I am tired, lonely, discouraged, and afraid. Help me to dwell on that which is excellent. I want to rejoice in You... no matter what. Thank you for sending Your Son to die for me. I depend on You, and I cast my cares upon You. Strengthen me and make me to stand firm in You. Amen.