

BROKEN CHAINS
The Philippians Series #15
July 16th, 2017

TEXT: Philippians 4:5b - 9

CONSIDER THIS: **The Lord is near.** With these four words (three in Greek) Paul captures the essence of all you need to know to truly experience **BROKEN CHAINS**. This simple statement, properly understood, is one of the greatest promises you will ever know, it is the very fountainhead of hope and it is what makes joy, peace and contentment possible. It is the cure for anxiety, the remedy for discouragement, the healing balm for pain, loss and sorrow. It drives away fear and safeguards our hearts. It inspires our service and motivates us to delight in obedience. It rescues us from being controlled by difficult circumstances and defeated by life's trials and tribulations. It announces the end of loneliness and reminds us of an unimaginably wonderful future. **The Lord is near.**

GOD'S WORD TEACHES US ...

- I THE TERRIFYING PRESENCE OF GOD
- II THE COMFORTING PRESENCE OF GOD
- III THE CHRIST WHO SAVES US ...
- IV ... IS THE CHRIST WHO STAYS NEAR TO US

I THE TERRIFYING PRESENCE OF GOD

- A) Before delighting in **The Lord is near**, we need to recognize the terror of being in His presence because of our sin and His holiness (Read Genesis 3:8-10; Exodus 19:16-19; Isaiah 6:1-5 with John 12:41; Revelation 1:12-17 and Revelation 6:15-17.

One of the great blasphemies of our day is the portrayal of God as someone who has no anger or righteous wrath, as someone who overlooks sin as easily as we do, as someone who is little more than the friendly therapist who lives in Heaven. Not only does the unbelieving world often portray Him this way, sadly it is how many Christians represent Him. Sometimes partial truths distort reality as much as outright lies.

- B) Paul's first encounter with Jesus Christ filled Him with terror (Acts 9:1-9). Thirty years later nothing gave Paul greater joy than to be able to write "**The Lord is near**".

II THE COMFORTING PRESENCE OF GOD

- A) Consider what these passages say about the peace and comfort you can experience in His presence:
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| 1) Joshua 1:5-9 | 4) John 1:14 |
| 2) Psalm 23:1-4 | 5) John 20:19-20 |
| 3) Isaiah 41:9-10 | 6) Revelation 21:1-4 |
- B) When Paul told the Philippians “The Lord is near”, he meant for this promise to bring comfort and to also encourage them to obey the accompanying commandments. Together, all this would shape their attitudes, their reactions and it would govern their perspectives about life’s trials and circumstances in a way that would fulfill the promise of peace (4:7, 9).

Christian, the Lord is always with you, you don't have to ask Him to be near!
The issue is, what in your life (sin, too focused on circumstances, unbiblical thinking, broken relationships etc ...) is blocking you from sensing, perceiving, experiencing and being comforted by His presence?

III THE CHRIST WHO SAVES US ...

Question: How do we reconcile what the Bible says about the Lord’s presence being terrifying **AND** comforting?

Answer: Jesus Christ bore our sins upon the cross and removed the barrier (propitiated) between sinners and a Holy God (Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalm 103:10-12; I John 2:1-2).

IV ... IS THE CHRIST WHO STAYS NEAR TO US

- A) The Mark 4:35-41 event ... the disciples chose to focus on the **storm** and so they lacked peace. They mistakenly thought **peace** depends on the absence of storms. What it actually depends upon is something they already had = the presence of the Lord with them. Yes, it was a severe storm, but Jesus was in the boat!
- B) See also Romans 8:28-39; John 10:27-30
- C) Christian, when Paul wrote, “**The Lord is near**” he wanted you to understand how this truth can have such transforming power in your heart and mind that even if your external circumstances do not change, even if the storms keep coming, you can have joy, peace and contentment.

KEY: The presence of God in Eden before sin was Adam’s delight. The presence of God in Heaven is our destiny ... Philippians 4:5, **The Lord is near** is therefore both a restoration and a foretaste of Paradise.

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