



GREETINGS TO YOU ALL IN THE WONDERFUL NAME OF JESUS! *I hope all of you are rejoicing in the Lord's grace, thankful for His love and care.*

Beyond Worry and Anxiety...

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ***...Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*** And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

Here is a passage that I *still* struggle to apply. I come from a long line of worriers and find that anxiety, pessimism, and worry are *sinful attitudes* still get the better of me. By now, I have more than enough experience to say with all sincerity that there has not been one time in my whole life where the Lord has let me or my family down or not provided for our needs. Yes, there have been disappointments. Yes, there have been very difficult times. But coming through such things, *perspective* allows us to see the Lord's hand leading us out of immaturity into Christlike maturity.

Paul begins the passage above telling us to rejoice! All of us who are "in Christ" are sons and daughters of the King and Creator of all! We are His inheritance (Ephesians 1:18) and he is working all things together for good, for us (Romans 8:28). What better reason could we have for rejoicing?

Then comes the harder part. Paul tells us to not worry about anything. Jesus also teaches us,

"...do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what

*you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" (Matthew 6:25-27).*

A little later, in His first parable, the Lord tells us that "the worries of the age" are some of the "thorns" that choke out the Word of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:22). *Our worry and anxiety blind us to the goodness of our Father and the abundance of His kingdom.*

And yet we still worry, even though we know these truths and have enough experience that should have produced worry-free-wisdom by now.

Paul then tells through "*prayer and petition with thanksgiving let our requests be made know to God.*" Prayer and petition with thanksgiving... As we pray and place our requests before Father God, we do so *with thanksgiving*. Gratitude and thanksgiving are the first signs of true spiritual enlightenment and growth. Neglecting them are the first steps on the downward spiral path of rebellion and sin (see Romans 1:18-32, take note of 1:21).

Being thankful flows out of rejoicing. *Rejoicing immediately puts us in the frame of mind for thanksgiving.* And take note, Paul encourages us to give thanks *while* we are praying. I have the bad habit of giving thanks *after* the Lord answers.

We can rejoice and be thankful because Jesus taught

us that our Heavenly Father knows what we need before we even ask (see Matthew 6:8). He also tells us that our Heavenly Father is truly good, knowing how to provide for us out of His goodness (see Luke 11:5-13).

Finally, the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus as we *rejoice with rejoicing* and *pray with thanksgiving*. When worry and anxiety take hold, we can feel like we are losing our minds. *We need the Lord's peace to guard us from insanity*. When I hear that word "peace" my mind goes to the Hebrew term *shalom*, often translated as "peace." *Shalom* is an unshakable sense of wholeness and well being that flows out of the experience of God's grace and provision. It is the Lord's *shalom* that restores our sense that everything really will work out, everything will come together in the end.

These are the lessons the Lord has been teaching me over the past several months. The Lord has been so gracious to answer all of my prayers in amazing and powerful ways. I am not saying that to boast. My prayers aren't special, although maybe they are becoming more mature. Every blessing, every answer to prayer flows out of our Heavenly Father's grace and goodness, given to us in the love of Christ through the power and presence of His Holy Spirit.

And so, we continue to rejoice. We continue to give thanks. We continue to pray. His peace continues to guard. I hope this is true of you as well.

Updates and Answers to Prayers

At the end of last year, I was thinking about everything that was in the works for the first five or six months of 2019 and I was *worried* about how everything was going to get done. As I stand at the end of that time now, I am rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord in providing "more than we could ask or think."

As many of you know by now, we recently moved our office. We have been praying for a space that would still be centrally located but cut our rent expenses. The Lord provided a space right next door! We will keep the same physical address, **5390 Estate Office Drive**, but we are **Suite 4** now.

We finished up the first half of our study of **The**

Revelation of Jesus Christ this semester and we will finish the book in the classes next year. The first half of the course is available now on the website.

At the end of April, I was also blessed to lead several workshops at the *Contending for the Faith Conference* at **Brown Missionary Baptist Church** in North Mississippi. I facilitated three workshops: "*Promoting Oneness/Unity in Your Ministry*," "*Teaching Christ in All the Scriptures*," and "*Developing Jesus' Mission and Vision for Your Church*" - some of my favorite topics. So thankful to my sister Muriel Taylor, who organizes this whole event every year, for inviting me this year.

Not only did we move the office this year, our family is also in the process of selling our house and finding a new one. This past week, we sold our house on Wednesday and found our new house on Friday! *The Lord is gracious!*

Finally, this summer I am planning to get caught up on a lot of work that has been neglected over the past couple of months. Although we will not have any summer classes, there will be a lot of work going on developing new material and resources. Keep an eye on the website, hope to have some good things happening there.

Please Pray for Us as We Pray for You

The Lord continues to amaze me in the way He provides for us in so many incredible ways. We continue to trust Him and rely on His provision *through* all of you who pray for us and support us. Would you please join us in giving thanks and praying for the following:

- **GIVE THANKS** that we were able to find an office right next door that meets our needs
- **GIVE THANKS** that our Heavenly Father knows our needs, hears our prayers, and blesses us out of His abundance
- For **wisdom to be pleasing to the Lord** in all things
- For the **financial resources** we need this year to keep the ministry moving forward
- For **new opportunities for ministry**—new students, new areas of outreach

We constantly give thanks for you all—our students and supporters—who have been and continue to be such a vital part of TSE. *Grace and peace to you in Jesus' name.*