

The Carefree Life

Text : Phil. 3: 20-21, 4: 4-13

INTRODUCTION :

A. I'm addicted to the most depressing thing in one's life.

1. Winter or Summer, I feel like I've just got to have it every day.
2. No matter where I travel or what I'm doing, I've got to have my fix.
3. I know it's going to be a downer, but I have to have my daily dose of news.

B. The devil makes sure we're kept abreast of all his most diabolical activities.

1. He does his best to keep all the good news off the air.
2. The rule of news broadcasting is : *"If it bleeds, it leads."*
3. We know we're going to hear all of the bad that happens, but we listen anyway.

C. Society conditions us to want to be informed and concerned.

1. If we aren't all worked up about the crisis of the day, there must be something wrong.
 - a. Illegal immigration
 - b. Global warming
 - c. Do you remember the uproar over the impending extinction of the "Snail Darter?" (Tennessee's hydro-electric project ... *Tellico Dam project* ...1979) **No one does?**
2. We are taught to be concerned about so many things that we end up seeking a way to relieve the inevitable stress that drags us down and keeps us awake at night.
3. **Ultimately** we find ourselves longing for a simpler time when life was more carefree.

D. However, the carefree life is available to anyone who wants it, even to news junkies.

1. Not only is it available, God wants for you, for me, for everyone to have it.
2. God not only wants us to have it, He tries to persuade us to accept it.
3. In fact, He's commanded all of His followers to accept it.
4. Even so, few are willing to receive this gift from God.

Our lesson this morning will explore this awesome gift and how we can make it ours.

We'll see that Jesus has indeed made the carefree life available to all who will receive it.

Jesus wants for us to live free of worry, stress and fear.

READ ... Phil. 4: 4-7

I. Notice that Jesus wants for us to Vs. 4 - “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

A. He wants all who are in Him to have uninterrupted rejoicing.

1. He does not say to have more good days than bad days. (**not generally joyous**)
2. God wants rejoicing to be an ongoing process.
3. Rejoicing is the Christian’s lifestyle. (**ILL.- People coming to USA .. joy in eyes**)

B. The Christian’s rejoicing is not a product of external circumstances.

1. People of the world rejoice in response to their environment.
 - a. Happy when something good happens ... e.g., promotion at work ; sports team wins
 - b. When bad things happen their joy is lost ... bad things will always happen
2. The Christian’s rejoicing comes from within rather than from without.
 - a. It’s a part of the Christian’s character. (**The prism through which life is viewed.**)
 - b. It’s the fruit of one’s relationship with God .. so .. as long as the relationship lasts

II. The Christian’s joyous heart distinguishes him from those in the world.

“If you’ve got it, flaunt it.” “Be a light.”

A. Vs.- 5a “Let your forbearing spirit”

1. *Epieikes* = seemly, suitable, mild, gentle (**Thus, in no way reactionary**)
2. It is not a person who reacts to external circumstances.
 - a. One with a “**forbearing spirit**” is calm and steady no matter what happens.
 - b. Has the confidence to keep his head when others are panicked by events.

B. Vs.- 5b “Be known to all men”

1. Jesus is not foolish ... “**No man lights a lamp and put it under a basket ...**” **Matt 5:15**
 - a. It is the will of God that non-Christians see the lives of Christians and be impressed.
 - b. Christians are sufficiently different so as to be noticeable, to be distinctive.
2. When the world sees a Christian, it sees a tower of light that stands firm in the storm.
 - a. All actions stem from the heart, **So**, unshakeable actions reflect an unshakeable heart.
 - b. **THUS**, it is apparent that the Christian’s heart is different from those in the world.
3. The unshakeable heart (the faith) of the Christian sets him visibly apart from others.

C. Vs.- 5c “The Lord is near.” (**Heb. 13: 5-6 ... Matt. 28: 19-20**)

1. The Christian’s rejoicing is not in his circumstances or in his own strength.
2. The Christian knows that God is his companion and is his protector.

III. The Christian's rejoicing is the proof of his confidence that God is with him.

ILL. - Have you ever scene a really scary movie ? Was it as scary the second time you saw it ? Of course not; the more times we see a movie, the less the impact because we know the outcome. **CHRISTIANS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT !**

A. Vs.- 6a “Be anxious for nothing” (Our faith assures us God is in control.)

1. This is a command of God. (**Direct , empirical , ... DO THIS**)
 - a. Baptism is a direct command ... **Acts 22: 16 , Acts 2: 38** , etc.
We know we cannot see God if we refuse to be baptized.
 - b. Repentance is a command ... **Acts 17: 30**
We understand one cannot refuse to repent and expect to see God.
 - c. Do not be anxious is a command ... **Vs. – 6a**
We know it must be obeyed and that it can be obeyed.
2. This is an all-encompassing command. (**can't reserve an area for worrying**)
 - a. **What** can a Christian worry about ? **... NOTHING !!**
 - b. God says ... *“Don't be concerned about the things of this world.”*
 - 1) **Matt. 6: 24-34** ... Don't worry about anything, serve Me and I'll take care of you.
 - 2) We cannot control our circumstances, but GOD can and GOD will. (**FAITH**)
3. When we are violating any command, we must repent and submit to the will of God.

B. Vs.- 6b “But” (i.e., in contrast to being anxious)

1. If you have become concerned, depressed, filled with anxiety – that's the wrong response
 - a. What is the proper response to external circumstances ?
 - b. Turn it over to God.

ILL. - Our cares aren't like a dog that we must keep on a leash. One must turn them loose, let them go, turn them over to God and walk away.

2. Entrust God to take care of it for you and don't worry about it. (**NEVER doubt God.**)
 - a. **I Thes. 5: 16 - Rejoice always; (17) pray without ceasing;**
 - b. **I Pet. 5: 6- Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7- casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.**
 - 1) This is also a direct , empirical command ... **DO THIS**
 - 2) Humble yourself ... **surrender** ... **turn control over to God** ... **TRUST HIM**
 - 3) What to turn over ... **“ALL”** ... every single one of your cares.

3. Why should we turn our cares over to Him ? **“He cares for you !!”**
 - a. We’re not being bothersome to Jesus ... He wants to bear your burdens.
 - b. Turning our cares over to Jesus is an act of **trust** ... of **faith** ... of **obedience**.
4. Why would Jesus want our cares ?
 - a. He loves us. ... So much so that He died to save us. ... **John 3: 16**
 - b. Cares will choke out and kill our faith. ... **Luke 8: 14** (**one master ... Matt 6: 24**)
 - c. If we fall away, His sacrifice will have gained Him nothing.
5. When I become bogged down with cares :
 - a. I express a lack of faith in Jesus.
 - b. I’m trying to be my own savior.
 - c. I’m rejecting the offer of Jesus to help and disobeying His command.

C. Vs.- 6c “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving”

1. **“everything”** - Don’t wait until you’re overwhelmed ... going down for the 3rd time.
 - a. **ILL.-** When our car starts making a noise and then starts shifting poorly, we know enough to get it fixed before we’re strained on the roadside.
 - b. If we’ve got anxiety God wants to know about it BEFORE it becomes fear or worse.
2. **“prayer”** - The way to get help in an emergency is to call 911.
In the spiritual realm, **to pray is to dial 911.**
 - a. God knows about our problems, but he won’t step in until we invite Him.
 - b. Sometimes we have these deep feelings of uneasiness that we can’t put into words, but God has given us the Holy Spirit to explain our hearts to God. **Rom. 8:26-27**
3. **“supplication”** - (*deēsis* : *plea*) **1** need, indigence, want, privation, penury.
2 a seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty to God or to man.
4. **“with thanksgiving”** - The natural response to a blessing received.
 - a. A sincere form of praise
 - b. Acknowledging what God has done and will do
 - c. Blessing God for being available for us

D. Vs.- 6d “Let your request be known”

1. God already knows every detail of your life, of your heart, of your mind.
 - a. You cannot hide anything from God.
 - b. Remember Adam and Eve in the garden.
2. **Matt. 6: 8** ... God knows what you need and what you want and why.

- a. God wants for you to ask for His partnership in your life.
- b. He wants for you to acknowledge your faith in His ability to supply your needs.

IV. When a Christian turns all his cares over to God, there's a positive result.

A. Vs.- 7a “And”

- 1. “And” indicates there will be a result.
 - a. What is it ? We will have no cares.
 - b. Cares are the source of anxiety.
 - c. If the cares are gone, the anxiety in our lives will be gone. ... **carefree, rejoice**
- 2. If we are free of all cares, we are tranquil and secure with no feeling of helplessness.

B. Vs.- 7b “The peace of God”

- 1. It is only in God that true peace is found. (**The prince of this world can't give it.**)
 - a. **Only God can control all outcomes.**
 - b. Inner peace involves the absence of all uncertainty and the resulting apprehension.
- 2. Faith removes everything that robs us of inner peace. (**anxiety = weak or no faith**)
 - a. Trust in God's love for us makes us know that He will work all things to our good.
 - b. Trust in God's power frees us from the fear of the unknown.

C. Vs.- 7c “Surpasses all comprehension”

- 1. Explaining the peace of God to an unbeliever is like explaining colors to a blind man.
 - a. He has no frame of reference so he cannot possibly understand.
 - b. Faith is a pre-requisite to understanding **all** spiritual things.
- 2. Without faith one cannot possibly understand :
 - a. The spiritual realm. (**It is not seen with the eye of flesh.**)
 - b. The power of God **-or-** the love of God. (**Spiritual eyes see spiritual things.**)

D. Vs.- 7d “Shall guard your hearts and minds” (**spiritual war continually rages**)

- 1. The devil doesn't want for anyone to have peace.
 - a. Satan wants for us to feel the need for things of this earth.
 - b. He wants us to obsess over the here and now and the potential for the adverse.
 - c. When we yield to his temptation, we take our eyes off of our homeland.
- 2. Satan wants **me** to feel that **I** must control **my** life and **I** must control **my** destiny.

- a. To think that is the ultimate frustration, ... **Only** God can control the course of history.
 - b. When I seek to control my own destiny, **I attempt to be my own god, I usurp God.**
3. Faith will lead us to surrender to God and trust totally in Him.
- a. Faith gives us confidence in God's ability to guard our hearts from fear and doubt.
 - b. Once one learns to trust in Christ as his savior, there's no reason for anxiety.
 - 1) Jesus / God loves and cares for us.
 - 2) He is in control of all things. (**Nothing is out of His hands except our hearts.**)
 - c. Jesus guarantees a positive outcome. **HEAVEN**
 - 1) There is no uncertainty. (**Be faithful until death and you WILL receive a crown.**)
 - 2) Things may look out of control, but Jesus will be victorious in the end. **Trust Him**
(**Ultimately ... it doesn't matter who's ahead at halftime, only at the final buzzer.**)
4. **Read ... Phil. 3: 20-21**
- a. **No matter where we go in this world, we travel on a passport issued by Heaven and signed in blood by our King, Jesus the Christ.**
 - b. It is better than an American passport because it's backed by more power, influence.
 - c. No matter what happens along the way, **WE KNOW** :
 - 1) our journey will end in Heaven.
 - 2) we will be transformed into the likeness of our blessed King, Jesus the Christ.
 - 3) King Jesus will subject everything, everywhere to His rule.

CONCLUSION :

A. Vs.- 7e "In Christ Jesus"

- 1. True peace of mind can be found nowhere outside Christ.
- 2. In Him there is no doubt, no fear, no uncertainty.

B. Are you in Christ Jesus ?

- 1. Have you publicly acknowledged believe in Jesus as the risen Son of God. **Acts 8:37**
- 2. Have you turned your back on this world declaring your allegiance to Him? **Act 17:30**
- 3. Have you accepted your new citizenship in the ceremony of baptism ? **Rom. 6: 1-23**

INVITATION :

John 14: 27- Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.