

Sermon: Joy and Peace

Text: Philippians 4:1-9

Discussion Questions:

- Paul uses a string of phrases to describe how he feels about the church in Philippi:
 - “My brothers and sisters”
 - “You whom I love and long for”
 - “My joy and crown”
 - “Dear friends!”

Discuss each of these phrases. What do you find remarkable about these words? How do these phrases fit with how many view Paul—as a harsh and impersonal person? To whom might you write these same things to if you were drafting them a letter?

- We don’t know anything about these two women that Paul mentions in verse 2...other than the fact that their names are difficult to pronounce! (“Yo-Dee-Uh” and “Sin-Tic-Key”) Why do you think Paul makes such a public display of these women? Why is he so concerned for unity in the Philippian church? What does it mean to “be of the same mind in the Lord”?
- What is the basis of Paul’s appeal to these women? Why might it be significant that they both worked alongside of Paul—or that their names are in the book of life?
- What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord? (v. 4) Why do you think he specifies “always”? Talk about how it might be possible to do this even in hard times.
- Why do you think Paul is so serious about showing our “gentleness”—and “not being anxious about anything”? Why would he mention this in this context? (Hint: Think back to Euodia and Syntyche. Are anxious people reasonable or easy to get along with? How would disunity in the church affect their witness to the outside world? How would anxiety?)
- How does praying bring peace? (v. 6) Is it because God promises to answer our every request or is it something else? Why would prayers that bring peace have to be done “with thanksgiving”? When you think about praying, why is it important to remember, as Paul says in verse 5, that “the Lord is near”?
- What do our hearts and minds need to be guarded or protected from? How are we guarded “in Christ Jesus”? (v. 7)
- How might it affect the lives of the Philippians to live out Paul’s command in verse 8? How might it affect the gospel ministry in Philippi? How might it affect the relationship between Euodia and Syntyche?
- Why do you think Paul places such an emphasis on the life of the mind (1:27, 2:2, 2:5, 3:15, 3:19, 4:8)? How does the mind fit into our experience of God, or our ability to live a life worthy of the gospel?