When Faith Gets Real Pt. 2

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Turn with me again to Philippians 4. If you're new to us, we are walking verse by verse as we normally do. And we're in the book of Philippians. We are in chapter 4. And so we are getting close to completing this study together. We are looking at this section of verses 4 to 7.

We started this a couple of weeks ago, and I'd like to read it to get it in front of your mind as we take a moment for a brief review, and then continue on in verses 4 to 7.
Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
We've looked at a couple of things already from this brief paragraph. Let me remind you of what we've seen, and we'll build on to that. The first thing that we looked at a couple of weeks ago was the word rejoice. We rejoice. We're talking about what do you do when life is hard? What do you do when your faith is tested? What do you do when things are difficult and seeming to go from bad to worse?
Do we lose our joy? Do we lose our hope? And the reminder in Philippians 4 is that we can rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I will say rejoice. And let me just remind you that Paul, the human author who pens this, writes this while under house arrest, he is a prisoner. He is going through things that we would consider very difficult. He has no privacy. He's not free to come and go as he pleases.
[2:23] He is in a very difficult situation. In the midst of that, his encouragement to the church is to rejoice. And again, I say rejoice. And we talked a couple of weeks ago about some specific things that we rejoice in as children of God. We rejoice in the fact that God is present with us. That wherever we go, whatever we experience or face, he's with us. We rejoice in the fact that God's promises have been given to us. That he won't leave us or forsake us. That he's working all things for our good. He's given us precious promises to believe and to hold on to. Then we rejoice in the fact that his power is at work in our lives. We rejoice in the fact that the power of God is working within us to accomplish his will.

We look at a second word from the text. It was the word reasonableness from verse 5. Let your reasonableness be known to all. A word that means your gentleness, your considerate spirit.
It's an idea of a word that means to have graciousness with strength, to have a poise of character. That we are to be reasonable, thoughtful. That you take the joy that God has given to you, and in light of the joy God has given to you, you then go through life with a gracious spirit, with a reasonable spirit that we understand and interpret the things that we experience through the lens of the goodness and the greatness of God. We pick up here in verse 5.
Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. And because the Lord is at hand, verse 6, do not be anxious about anything. The Lord is at hand. It means the Lord is near. The Lord is with you. We rejoice in the Lord because the Lord is near us. And He's not just near us in the sense that the Spirit of God dwells within us. It's also fair to look at this and as a reminder that the Lord's return is near. He is near us. He's in us. The Spirit indwells us. The Spirit seals us. And the Lord is coming again.
As believers, we will soon be with the Lord. Whether that is by His return to get us, or by our death going to be with Him, we will soon be with the Lord.
[5:13] And we don't pretend that these words of encouragement here are given in the context of everything being perfect. I remind you that Paul, as he pens this, is under house arrest.

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Paul's life and biography after his conversion. His story after story of difficulty and accusation and struggle.
Even the dear church at Philippi to whom he writes this in verse 2 and 3, he deals with the fact that in that church, as good of a church as it is, that they've got conflict and there are people in the church that are serving but having a hard time getting along with each other. And right in the midst of conflict and right in the midst of trial and tribulation, he says we are to rejoice always. Not some, not often. Rejoice always.
Rejoice always. And remind ourselves that the Lord is at hand. The Lord is near. Well, there's a third word I want you to write down. It's the word requests.
Request. We see this as we come to verse 6. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
[6:43] The encouragement and the commands in this passage are quite staggering. Verse 4, rejoice always. Verse 6, do not be anxious about anything. These commands are all encompassing.

Now, how is it that we can, verse 6, not be anxious about anything? After all, we are real people in a real world with real trials.
You may be here this morning and you're going through some things in your life and you just think to yourself, I don't know how I can rejoice in the midst of this. I don't know how I can not be anxious about this.
Let's just turn to the Scripture for our help here. Verse 4 comes before verse 6. And that's instructive for us.
We find our joy in the Lord and because we do, we don't have to be anxious about other things.
[7:54] If you go to verse 6 and don't understand verse 4, you won't arrive. If you just sit there and tell yourself, don't worry about this, don't panic about this, don't fret about this, if you try to talk yourself into not being anxious about things in your life and things in the world, it won't work that way.

The way that we can live out verse 6 is by first believing and living out verse 4. We have to find our joy in the Lord.
We have to remind ourselves the Lord is at hand. The Lord is near. The Lord is with us. And we will go to be with Him. Now because of that, in light of that, He says, don't be anxious about anything.
Think about who the Lord is. Think about what He's done for you. Think about what He's promised for you. In light of the Lord's nearness and in light of the Lord's love for you and your joy you find in the Lord, now in light of that, don't be anxious about anything.
But if your heart's not delighting in the Lord, I promise you, and you know this, your heart will find no shortage of things to be anxious about.
[9:25] The way to fight anxiety is with joy. You fight your anxiety by finding your joy in the Lord.

This is why, if people aren't in the Word, if they're not delighting in the Word, if they're not spending time in prayer, if they're not delighting in gathering with God's people in worship, if all you do is fill your heart and your mind with all of the concerns and cares of the world, and all you do is hear everybody else's thoughts and opinions and complaints about the world, and you're not finding your joy in Christ, you will be anxious about everything.
And we live in a world today that is living this out moment by moment. These days have been penned by many and called the anxious generation.
The way you fight that is verse 4. You've got to find your joy in the Lord. You've got to be in the Word. You've got to spend time in prayer.
You've got to gather with God's people. You've got to serve each other. You've got to delight in the things in which God delights in. And as your joy in the Lord increases, you understand why verse 6 can be true.
[11:02] To not be anxious about anything. As one man put it, no exception, no exclusion, no excuses.

Do not be anxious about anything. And if we're honest, this kind of puts us back a bit.
We've got to say, do we really believe this? Because there are so many things that feel legitimate to be worried about. Health, finances, political issues, things happening all around the world.
There's no end in sight of things that the world should be anxious about. Because if they don't have the peace of God, no wonder this world is so stressed out.

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But if there is a God in charge, and if He can be known, and if He is merciful, then God's people ought to be different than the world.
[12:17] It's not just that you come to church on Sunday while your neighbor sleeps in that should set you apart. It's the way you trust and the joy you have in the midst of your circumstances.

That's what sets us apart. Be anxious about nothing. How do we continue to do that?
We'll look at verse 6. Instead of being anxious, do not be anxious about anything. But, here's the different way to live. But, in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
Another all-encompassing word. Rejoice always. Do not be anxious about anything. In everything, by prayer, let your requests be made known to God.
I know it's so tempting. It's so tempting with whatever you're facing in life to think that your situation is the exception. It's so tempting to think.
[13:31] I could rejoice if this one thing were different. I wouldn't be anxious if this one circumstance would change.

I could find joy in the Lord if I was anybody else, but not in this one situation I am. And it's so tempting to think that our life, our problem, our season of suffering, our dilemma, our struggle, our pain, must be the exception.
But just understand, if you really believe the Bible, it leaves no room for exceptions here. Rejoice always. Don't be anxious about anything.
in everything, in everything, let your requests be made known to God. He says, in everything by prayer and supplication.
Just a couple of thoughts on that. The word prayer here is a general word. Use the New Testament to talk about our worship, our devotion. The word for supplication speaks of a pressing need that we have.
[14:41] And so we are to go to the Lord in prayer in general. And we're to go to the Lord in prayer when we have specific pressing needs. Sometimes our prayers are just prayers of gratitude.

Sometimes our prayers are praying for our children and praying for our families and praying for our church. It's not that there's any big pressing need. We just pray to the Lord regularly.
It's just a part of our life to take our prayers to the Lord. And we do that also with our supplications. The things in our life that are very real and very difficult that are pressing needs in our hearts.
And the way that you find joy in your life is by learning to live a life of devoted prayer.
And let me make you this promise. If you are not a person of prayer, you will not be able to say that you are anxious for nothing. It won't work.
[15:46] Prayerless people will not be without anxious thoughts. So just look at the way he words this in verse 6. Do not be anxious about anything, but there's something different.

Here's a different way to live. Here's something else to do. In everything, with prayer, general thoughts, general acts of worship and devotion, and supplication, specific pressing need, and with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
How are we thankful? If we've got a pressing need, if we've got a health concern, if we've got a family issue, if we've got conflict in a church, if we've got difficulty with a friend, whatever it may be, how are we going to be thankful when we pray?
And remember, this starts in verse 4. We rejoice in the Lord. Always start there. Lord, what have you given to me?
Lord, what have you already blessed me with? Lord, you have forgiven me of my sin. You have made me your own. I have the promise of heaven. Your Spirit is within me.
[17:03] You've given me your Word. You've given me the church. You've given me your nearness. You've given me your presence. You have taken care of my most pressing issue, which is my sin condition.

And I stand before you forgiven and redeemed. And you call me your own. Now, with that in mind, I'm going to lift up this need that I have.
But even while the need exists, I have plenty for which to be thankful. But if all you do is go through life without prayer and from anxiety to anxiety, your heart and mind will always find something to be troubled about.
The fight for peace is won in the mind with what you know about the Lord, what you believe about His Word, and having your thoughts directed toward Him.

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And He says, make your request known to God. We're to be a prayerful people. Let your requests be made known to God.
[18:21] Let's ask you this morning, what are you asking God to do that only God can do? In your life? In your family? Through our church?

What are you asking God to do? Are you trying to do everything on your own strength? Are you saying a quick, short prayer because you feel like you're supposed to, but in reality, you're just relying on yourself, on your ability, on your wisdom, on your experience?
This can happen in our daily lives. This can happen in ministry. This can happen to Sunday school teachers. This can happen to pastors. We can rely on our strength. We can rely on our experience. We can rely on our education.
I wonder, what are you truly, sincerely asking God to do? Let your requests be made known to God. He has told us in His Word, He wants us to be a people of prayer.
But look at how the logic builds on this. Rejoice in the Lord. Be reasonable. Meaning, let what you know about the Lord drive how you think and how you see things and then lift your request to the Lord.
[19:42] If you follow the logic of the Scripture here, it's a very sound thing for us. We have joy in the Lord. We act reasonably as a response of that. And then we lift our request to the Lord.

This is what guards our prayers from being selfish or worldly. If you're not delighting in the Lord, your only prayers are going to be for your life to be easier.
But what we want to pray for is that the Word of God would go forth, that people would be saved, that lives would be changed, that people in our family would love the Lord, that people in our church would be growing in the Lord.
We delight in Him and then we make our requests known to Him. And when we live like that, when we rejoice in the Lord, when we are reasonable and compassionate, when we are in prayer making our requests known to the Lord, there's a fourth thing that we can experience and that's the word rest.
We see rest in verse 7. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
[21:10] When you rejoice in the Lord, when you lift up your request to the Lord, what you find is that anxiety is replaced by rest.

What kind of rest? Well, verse 7 says it's the peace of God. This is His peace. This is the peace given to us by God.
This is the peace that God has and the peace that God gives. The peace of God is given to us. How great is this peace? It surpasses all understanding.
The peace God gives is incalculable to our mind. And the peace that God gives us is something the world knows nothing of.
There is no promise here of life being easy. There is no promise here of circumstances changing. There is no promise here of the struggles in life being lifted from you.
[22:20] What there is is the promise of joy and of peace. And it's interesting to me if you think to Christmas time what everybody talks about, what everybody sings about is joy and peace.

Even people who aren't believers, even people who don't claim to be a Christian, at Christmas time, they'll sing about it, they'll talk about it, they'll read books about it, they'll watch movies about it, it's decorations are put up about it, it's all about joy and peace.
Can I just remind you, true joy and true peace is found only in the Lord. Only in the Lord. And it's interesting that that which the world most desires, joy and peace, is only found in the one that most in the world rejects, the Lord Jesus Christ.
This is why only true believers can experience real joy and real peace, because it's the peace of God. This is the peace that the Lord gives to us.
And the peace that He gives to us, look what it will do, it will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. How do you protect yourself from anxiety?
[23:50] Here it is, right here. The peace of God will guard your heart and will guard your mind. Like a soldier on a post defending against the enemy, the peace of God guards your heart.

It guards your mind. It protects you. It defends you. This is all based on what you believe and what you know and how you think and where you find your joy.

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He uses this term for a good reason when He says it will guard your heart and mind. It's speaking here of a garrison that's watching over a town. This would make perfect sense to the readers that this letter was sent to because Philippi was a Roman colony in that first century.
And so the residents of Philippi would have been very used to seeing military personnel all around. They were there and they were guarding that place for the sake of the peace of Rome.
And He says just like you see guards all around you guarding and protecting to keep the peace. That's what God does for you.
[25:10] This is what is available to the people of God. Real joy. Real hope. Real peace. You won't find a person walking the earth today who wouldn't in their heart of hearts long to have joy and hope and peace.

but it's only found in Christ. He will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
This is the only way through which this kind of peace can be experienced. Only in Christ. God's peace guards our hearts and minds.
It means it impacts it protects the entire person. Your thoughts your will your emotion everything about you is guarded by the peace that only God has that is experienced only through a relationship with His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.
This can be true for you. He says in verse 6 don't be anxious about anything.
[26:32] Verse 6 starts with worry. Verse 7 ends with peace. And what is it that made the transition from worry to peace?

In verse 6 it's prayer. That's what made the transition. That's what takes you from worry to peace is prayer.
There's just no way around this. You will not be able to live without anxiousness if you're not a person of prayer. You will not be able to experience joy in all circumstances if you're not a person of prayer.
There's just no way around this. This is not hidden in the text. This is right here clear for us. Verse 6 begins with anxiousness. Verse 7 ends with peace.
And what makes that transition is being a person of prayer. We've got to be a church that faithfully at home in our lives with the Lord in our ministries are faithfully in prayer with the Lord.
[27:46] That is what guards and protects our hearts. It is prayer that takes you from worry to peace. It's been my observation through the years that there are many Christians who will do a lot of things.

Christians will study. Christians will read. Christians will memorize. Christians will work. Christians will give. Christians will sacrifice.
Christians will serve. But they are often so slow to pray.
Many of us will do lots of things for the kingdom. but we can be so slow to truly pray. I suspect that maybe because when you pray it feels like there's other things you could or should be doing.
I don't think we're prayerless because of the time. People will spend time reading and time studying and time serving. I don't think it's that we're not willing to give the time.
[29:10] I think that at the end of it all it just seems like wouldn't we be better served actually doing something when prayer is the work, is the ministry, is the act of worship, is the devotion.

I'll tell you what would change lives and change families and change churches would be people who would devote themselves to prayer.
Truly, wholeheartedly, passionately, devote themselves to prayer. I feel like the world is just screaming out that they are anxious and they are worried and they are looking everywhere and anywhere for peace.
And here's the truth, church, we as God's people, we know where peace is found. And yet, how many of us miss the joy that prayer would bring because we ourselves are often so slow to pray?
We would do well to turn the TV off for a few minutes and shut down the computer and lay aside the phone and just spend time in honest prayer before the Lord.
[31:01] Just honestly saying, God, I need joy. I want to rejoice in you. Help me to think through what you've already done for me that's given me reason to rejoice.

Lord, I want to be a reasonable, gracious, considerate person. Help me to think about who you are and what you have already taught me and what you've done in my life and let me respond to all things in a way that would honor you.

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And Lord, I want to lift my requests to you. I want to lift up to you the things that only you can do, that I'm asking you to do, that I'm believing you to do, and what you'll find if you live like that is a spirit of rest rest and of God's peace that guards over your heart and guards over your mind.
There's a song that a lot of you in this sanctuary would know. I wasn't familiar with its author, the background of it until recently.
It was written by a man who had enrolled in military college. Because of poor health, he had to withdraw from that.
[32:19] He got engaged, and the night before his wedding, this is in the 1840s, his fiancee drowned.

Later on, he would get engaged a second time, but before that wedding, his fiancee would die from pneumonia. It would be in between that time that his mother was ill, and he wrote to his mom, trying to encourage her soul.
He wrote a poem that was essentially just buried there, just left between his pen and his mother's reading.
Until this man in his own illness had a neighbor who came and was sitting with him and spending time with him. And while his neighbor was there, he discovered this poem.
until until that point, only the author and his mother had read it. Not written to be famous, not written to be sung, not written to be in hymnals, just written to encourage his mom, because of that providential discovery, it ended up being set to music and sung in churches all over the world for close to 200 years.
[33:47] Most of you will recognize it. It says, what a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer, oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

The words of that hymn are the very heart of Philippians 4, 4-7. Oh what peace we often forfeit, peace that could be ours that we don't take hold of, joy that could be ours that we never possess because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.
When faith gets real and you get pressed and life becomes hard and you find your heart and your mind being prone to worry and prone to anxiousness, stop and rejoice in the Lord and let the truth of who He is impact your heart and mind and lift up your needs to the Lord and you battle for peace and battle for joy on your knees in prayer and live in the rest available only in the person of Jesus Christ.
And should you be here this morning and you would say to me I need what you're talking about but I don't know how to get it.
the text tells us this is available in Christ Jesus. How do you have a relationship with Christ Jesus?
[36:07] Here's what the Bible tells us that all of us have sinned and because of our sin the wrath of God is upon us and if we were to have to pay for our own sin we would have no hope at all because none of us are good enough to do that but here's the good news of the gospel that the father sent his only son Jesus to live in our place tempted and tried as we are yet without sin that's what makes him our perfect substitute when he goes to the cross as a payment for our sin and on that cross he bears on his own body the sin for all of us who believe and he absorbs the punishment for us and then freely offers to us his grace his peace his joy our salvation is found not in our works not in our attempts to be good or better than somebody else but by simply by faith receiving what Christ has made possible for us

I don't have a book to give you to read that's going to make you peaceful I don't have a YouTube video to recommend to you that's going to give you peace what I do have is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who said come unto me and you will find rest would you call out to him even today asking him to forgive you and to give to you the peace that only comes from him and let the world see the difference grace makes Lord your word for us is our joy today we are thankful for how you minister to us through your word I pray for the power of your Holy Spirit to encourage hearts
Lord for those this morning who find themselves in the midst of struggle looking for peace longing for joy may they today find it in your son the Lord Christ Jesus we pray amen in who are they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they they fathers they fathers they they they they fathers they they they bye they ma

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