



60A PENTECOST 19A - LITURGY

Peace of mind

Abstract

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Philippians 4:4

Jim de Jong
jim@dejongs.id.au

60A Pentecost 19A - Liturgy

Peace of mind

Sunday, October 11, 2020 | After Pentecost | Proper 23 | Year A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Exodus 32:1–14

Psalm Psalm 106:1–6, 19–23

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Isaiah 25:1–9

Psalm Psalm 23

New Testament Philippians 4:1–9

Gospel Matthew 22:1–14

Philippians 4.1-9

As Paul signs off his letter, he urges the community to support two women named as co-workers, and to be always rejoicing, praying, pursuing whatever is honourable, pure and praiseworthy, and – he says – the peace of God will be with them.

This week's resources explore: how the Philippians were prepared for life without Paul.

	<p>Pre-Service Christ be our light</p>
	<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> <p>and also with us</p>
	<p>We Gather</p> <p>Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say: REJOICE!</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Lord God, faithful and loving, we do not always feel like rejoicing. Even as we gather to worship you, our minds are sometimes distracted and elsewhere, weighed down by the burdens of our lives. Help us, in this moment, to find it within our hearts to REJOICE in your constancy and loving care for us. People of God,</p>

	<p>let us rejoice. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song</p> <p>Rejoice! Graham Kendrick – Album: the first ever March for Jesus album</p>
	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Lord God, we never know what the future holds or where life will take us next. We never know what is just around the corner and what the outcomes of things will be. But we know that whatever follows on from this moment, you are here with us, by our side, above and beneath us, entwining your life with ours, surpassing all human understanding.</p> <p>In this moment, bless us and awaken us to your abiding presence. Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings New Testament</p> <p><i>Philippians 4:1–9</i> 4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! ² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.¹</p>

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

	<p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/song/video Purify my Heart (Refiners fire)</p>
	<p>We say Sorry</p> <p>Eternal God, so often we give up if something goes wrong or doesn't go our way. So often we are overwhelmed by our own problems that we forget to look out for others. So often we are consumed with negatives and endings that we lose sight of the positives and beginnings.</p> <p>Eternal God, forgive us for our self-centeredness, our blindness and our deafness, and reawaken your Spirit within us. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/Song Never Lose Sight Album: Never Lose Sight © Mainstream Worship (2015)</p>
	<p>Response</p> <p>Seeking Joy Philippians 4:1-9</p> <p>Ever wondered about the technical instructions for products we use.</p> <p>A T-shirt manufacturer had these wash instructions to the inside tag: "For Best Results: Machine wash cold. Tumble dry low. Never iron [the design on the shirt]." It adds, "For Worst Results: Drag thru puddle behind car. Blow dry on roof rack." If you see these instructions being ignored it may be appropriate to warn the perpetrator.</p> <p>A dog shampoo suggests: "Remember to eliminate all escape routes well in advance. Once wet, your dog is suddenly smarter and faster than you are." And on the bottom of a coffee cup "For best results, use other side."ⁱ(1)</p> <p>Our Bible passage for today has one purpose. It offers us clear and practical instructions on how to find joy in our lives. Stop and think for a moment: when was the last time you experienced true, undisturbed joy? Have you ever experienced it?</p> <p>Why is it so hard for adults to find joy? Why is it so hard for us to maintain complete peace and overflowing good cheer? But there is a saying, "there is no such thing as a sad saint."</p>

I'm sad to say that if evidence of joy is one of the criteria for sainthood, then I don't know if some of us would make the cut. And that's why I appreciate these clear and practical instructions Paul gave us in Philippians 4.

Paul doesn't just tell us how to find joy. He commands us to be joyful and then repeats the command in case we weren't paying attention.

He writes: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

But then, like a set of washing instructions he tells us what to do rejoice; how to do it—in the Lord, and how often to do it—always. There are three essential steps to take us from where we are now to a life of rejoicing.

The first step—are you ready?—is to replace worry with trust in God.

Paul writes, "Let your gentleness be evident to all.

The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything.

But our minds were not made to be empty.

We experience thousands of thoughts each day.

And, unless we are a very special person,

some of those thoughts are not pleasant ones.

How do we go about choosing only positive thoughts?

Supposedly, the most popular verse in this online Bible is Philippians 4:6.

It reads like this: "Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything.

Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done."ⁱⁱ (3)

Maybe we need to ask ourselves this question:

If there is a God—which there is

and if that God is all-powerful—which He is

and if He is the embodiment of love—which He is

then what in the world do we have to worry about?

Worry comes from two erroneous beliefs:

God's character and God's purposes cannot be trusted.

But God's character consists of goodness and love.

When we doubt God's goodness and His love and then doubt His plans and purposes for us,

then we get twisted up in worry and anxiety.

The second instruction for walking the path to joy is to develop a gratitude attitude.

Notice that sixth verse again: "Don't worry about anything;

instead pray about everything.

Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done." And can I add, every day?

A gratitude attitude is the source of wealth and happiness says one of the world's richest men.ⁱⁱⁱ

It sees possibilities and opportunities in all circumstances.

More importantly, an attitude of gratitude reminds us
that God is present with us in all our circumstances.
We are children of God, and we take God's Spirit with us into every circumstance.
If we can see God in every circumstance, good or bad, then we can have
hope.

And that brings us to the final instruction for walking the path to joy:
First, replace worry with trust in God.
Secondly, develop a gratitude attitude.
And finally,
focus your thoughts on that which is noble and praiseworthy.

Beginning with verse 8, Paul writes some of the most beautiful words in the
scriptures:
"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true,
whatever is noble,
whatever is right,
whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think
about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me—or
seen in me
put it into practice.
And the God of peace will be with you."

What about your thoughts
are they noble, are they pure, excellent or praiseworthy?
What does that say about a society, that is increasingly crude
in our language, in our entertainment, in the things we value?
And the reason is that our values reflect those of our neighbours rather than those
of God.

When you walk with God and trust in God,
your thoughts will reflect the character of God.
It doesn't mean that your life will magically change.
Your circumstances, your outside world, may remain the same.
But your ability to see God in your circumstances will change your inside
world.
And that's where joy comes from.

When we walk with God,
we are able to take a Big Picture view of our lives.
We are able to replace worry with trust in God,
choose a gratitude attitude,
and focus our thoughts on those things that are noble,
pure, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy.
And the result is joy.

A Catholic priest tells of meeting a poor man along the road one day.
"God give you a good day, my friend," said Tauler.
The poor man answered, "I thank God I never have a bad day."

astonished, the priest kept silent for a moment, then added,
 “God give you a happy life, my friend.”
 The poor man answered, “I thank God I am never unhappy.”

“Never unhappy!” cried the priest, “What do you mean?”

“Well,” came the reply, “when it is sunshine—I thank God, when it rains—I thank God, when I have plenty—I thank God, when I am hungry—I thank God; and since God’s will is my will, and whatever pleases God pleases me, why should I say that I am unhappy when I am not?”

The priest looked upon him with awe. “Who are you,” he asked.

“I am a king,” said the poor man.

“A king?” The priest asked, “Where is your kingdom?”

The poor man smiled and answered simply, “In my heart.” (7)

As followers of Jesus, we carry around a kingdom in our hearts.

We are children of the Most High God.

We are the recipients of God’s promises and God’s incredibly gracious love and mercy.

If we really understand that, our joy will overflow.

If we want to be set free from our circumstances, our stresses and our worries,
 then follow the instructions God gave us to live in joy:

replace worry with trust in God,

develop a gratitude attitude,

and focus your thoughts on those things that are pure, noble and excellent.

The God of peace will then be with you

and you will be able to rejoice in the Lord always,

“and again I say, rejoice!”

Hymn/song

What a beautiful name it is - Hillong

Prayers for all people

*Invite people to think about something positive or negative
 that is going on in their life (nothing that can identify individuals). Gather
 Offer it all to God,*

recalling that we live in the shadow of the cross

that is both negative (death) and positive (life).

*Imagine placing all the thoughts in a fireproof bowl and burning them
 a negative act (destroying them)*

symbolising a positive outcome (releasing light and warmth).

We do not always know who we are or what we want, Lord.

We are sometimes happy in our skin

and sometimes we just want to leave it all behind.

Sometimes we want to be ‘out there’ and be noticed

and other times we want to be alone and obscure.

	<p>Sometimes, Lord, our tears are of joy and sometimes of sorrow and anguish.</p> <p>But always, Lord, you know our innermost thoughts, even those we do not understand ourselves help us to rest always in you.</p> <p>O God, we come to pray not for ourselves, but for each other for those we know and those we don't, for situations we understand and for those that confound us.</p> <p>The news tells us of trauma and heartache across the world and we try to grasp the intensity of it all. Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing.</p> <p>We hear of death and dying, of grieving and weeping... We hear of pain, scarring and disfigurement... We hear of anguish and confusion... We hear of those in need of help, and those who struggle to find it... We hear of the grieving and the sorrowful... We hear of the lost and the alone... And we know, Lord, there are myriad others known only to you. Bless them all in their hurting and their healing. Amen. Amen.</p>
	<p>Lord's Prayer Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN</p>
	<p>Hymn/song May the Mind Artist: Emu Music Album: New song in my heart</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>We go our separate ways, Lord perhaps with smiles or frowns; with our hopes and with fears; with answers but also questions; maybe crying and with heavy hearts; or with anxieties, or relief.</p> <p>We go our separate ways, Lord, but we never go alone.</p>

	<p>With thankful hearts, we share the journey of life with each other and with you. Be with us as we go. Amen</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	Benediction
	Thank you

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- ⁱ “65 of the funniest product instructions and tags” by Greta Jaruševičiūtė, Bored Panda, https://www.boredpanda.com/funny-product-instructions/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_
- ⁱⁱ “Bible App announces ‘most popular Bible verse’ of 2019” by Caleb Parke, Fox News, <https://www.foxnews.com/faith-values/bible-verse-popular-app-2019>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Robbins, Tony. Unshakeable: Your Financial Freedom Playbook (p. 186). Simon & Schuster. Kindle Edition.