

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 16 August 2020

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 723

All I once held dear, built my life upon,
all this world reveres and wars to own,
all I once thought gain I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you;
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness
and I love you, Lord.*

2 Now my heart's desire is to know you more,
to be found in you and known as yours;
to possess by faith what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift of righteousness.

3 O to know the power of your risen life
and to know you in your sufferings;
to become like you in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live and never die.

Graham Kendrick

Reading: Philippians 4:1-9, ESV

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

² I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³ Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have laboured side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practise these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Hymn

Who has held the oceans in his hands?
Who has numbered every grain of sand?
Kings and nations tremble at his voice
All creation rises to rejoice

*Behold our God, seated on his throne
Come, let us adore him
Behold our king, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore him*

2 Who has given counsel to the Lord?
Who can question any of his words?
Who can teach the one who knows all things?
Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

3 Who has felt the nails upon his hands?
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man
God eternal, humbled to the grave
Jesus, Saviour, risen now to reign

Jonathan Baird, Meghan Baird, Ryan Baird, and Stephen Altrogge

Prayer

Hymn: Praise 2! 47

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you,
to receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;
shape and fashion us in your likeness.
That the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak O Lord and fulfil in us
all Your purposes for your glory.

2 Teach us Lord, full obedience,
holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
let their truth prevail over unbelief.

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3 Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises;
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your church is built
and the earth is filled with your glory.

Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

Sermon: Philippians 4:8-9 – Knowing the Peace of God

“...practice these things and the peace of God will be with you” (9b)

How are you feeling?

Peace? A popular concept, but not easy to attain.

Corona Virus, Racism, personal problems, not to mention the multitude of problems in the world – is it possible to find peace?

Paul shows us how we can have a sense of peace – and even joy – in the midst of trials and difficulties. We can't change what happens outside us, but we can change the way that we think about them and how we respond to them.

We are to be guided by the one who knows – and who does all things well.

It is because of the love of our Heavenly Father that we can respond to persecution well (1:12-18); we can face death well (1:21); we can cultivate humility in a world that is so self-obsessed (2:1-11); we can rejoice in all things (4:4-7).

In verses 8-9, Paul shows us how this knowledge leads to us being able to know “the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.”

1. Our Incredible Mind

Proverbs 28:26: “Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.”

Isaiah 26:3: “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”

Matthew 22:37: And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Romans 7:25: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”

God made us and loves us, he cares deeply about our minds. The complexity of our minds should cause us to worship the Creator God who knit us together in our mother’s womb. His creation is, indeed, “very good!”

Our brains are made up of twelve to fourteen billion cells, each of those cells sends out thousands of tiny connecting tendrils, so that a single cell might be connected to up to 10,000 neighbouring cells, each of which is constantly exchanging data with another. There is more electronic equivalent in a single human brain than in all the television and radio stations in the world, combined!

But, the greatest achievement the human mind can perform has already been revealed to us in Scripture – it is the possibility of possessing the mind of Christ by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:16: “But we have the mind of Christ” – a mind that is constantly being renewed (Romans 12:2).

No computer will ever be able to think God’s thoughts, or any device be able to discern his will or do his works. But that is what our minds were created for – to have the mind of Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 - “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” –Jesus added, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...”

Cornelius Plantinga says, “Here is a change worth a gasp. What if a four-year-old prayed outright, ‘Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my brain to keep’? You would notice.” But that is what Jesus demands. He wants to keep our minds.

Paul gave commands to Euodia and Syntyche which, if obeyed, would bring the peace of God to the church: rejoice, be gentle, not be anxious and pray.

The result, verse 7: “The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”.

Now Paul wants them to seek inner practices, to enhance God’s presence and peace with them, verse 9: “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the peace of God will be with you all.

2. Thoughts Which Bring God's Peace

Six commands to dwell upon: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable..."

1. "Whatever is true" begins with God the Son – the embodiment of truth. He is all truth. His gospel is truth. God's Word, Jesus declares in John 17:17, "is truth". The Christ-like mind seeks, "whatever is true" in every area of life – from faith to science, to relationships to public life, to business – to whatever we interact with.
2. "Whatever is honourable" - those who are older and in leadership must look like this (Titus 2:2; 1 Timothy 3:8,11). We should aim for a personal moral excellence that is dignified and worthy of both honour and emulation.
3. "Whatever is just" - the word "just" is defined by the character of God himself. We too are to act justly.
4. "Whatever is pure" We are to pursue purity in all of our speech and all the things we do. We are to focus on things that are not tainted by evil.
5. "Whatever is lovely" Peter T. O'Brian says in his commentary that by using this word, "Paul means those things that put themselves forward by their attractiveness." So Paul means those things which are morally lovely, but also what is aesthetically lovely, as another commentator says, "all that is beautiful in creation and in human lives".
6. "Whatever is commendable" Walter Hansen: "Whatever words, works, or persons are well spoken of by people deserve our careful consideration."

Verse 8: "if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Nothing that would earn the praise of God or man must be left out of our thinking – we are to ponder these things without ceasing.

We are to consciously put away negative things in pursuit of their positive opposites.

We must be careful to hide God's Word in our hearts.

Only by committing to God's Word daily can we hope to tune out the noise of the world that daily assaults our minds.

3. Action That Brings God's Peace

Paul was a man who had the mind of Christ: "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

They had seen this teaching lived out, as Paul had lived his life amongst them.

Lehman Strauss puts it, "Noble thoughts are of little value unless they be translated into deeds. Living surpasses learning; practice outshines priority, living supersedes learning."

The result of living like this, as we saw at the start, was that “the God of peace will be with you all.”

On the one hand, we must consciously reject all that is not in keeping with the mind of Christ, and on the other, there is the conscious taking on of exalted thoughts – and not only thinking them, but practicing them day after day, so that the mind of Christ shines out into a world which so desperately needs the peace that only he can offer.

Hymn: Praise! 810

May the mind of Christ my saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

2 May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart, from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

3 May the peace of God my Father
in my life for ever reign,
that I may be calm to comfort
those in grief and pain.

4 May the love of Jesus fill me
as the waters fill the sea,
him exalting, self abasing,
this is victory!

5 May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking all the while to Jesus
as I onward go.

6 May his beauty rest upon me
as I seek the lost to win;
and may they forget the servant,
seeing only him.

Katie B Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Closing Prayer