

Think on These Things, Pt. 1

Having a Peace that Prevails

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Intro to new series — Think On These Things — Having a Peace That Prevails

Anchor scripture passage for series

Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, 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 minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Pray

- **Isaiah 26:3-4**

God, you will keep us in perfect peace when our minds, thoughts, meditations are fixed and focused on You. When we trust You, we receive Your everlasting strength!

***FACT — as followers of Jesus,
we believe things that the world thinks are crazy!***

We believe

- **We believe** in a 2,000-year-old Jewish man, who is fully God and fully man. **We believe** He is the Creator, Giver, and Sustainer of life.
- **We believe** He was crucified, died, buried, and resurrected to pay the price for our sins so we could have eternal life in a perfect heaven, rather than tormented life in a horrific hell. **We believe** He's coming back for us—every eye will see Him in the clouds.
- **We believe** His teachings are the foundation and purpose of our very existence.
 - **We believe** we must lose our lives for His purposes, if we are going to find life for ourselves. **We believe** in dying to self, we live to God. We think if we do right, all works right, not in this broken world!
 - **We believe** we should bless those who curse us, not repaying evil for evil. **We believe** it's more blessed to give than receive. **We believe** all things will work out for our good when we love God and walk in His purposes for our lives.
 - **We believe** we should rejoice in the Lord always. **We believe** we shouldn't be anxious over anything and should pray about everything. **We believe** when we rejoice, relax, request, and rehearse truth that we'll realize a peace that is beyond human understanding, and it will stand guard over our hearts and minds to keep us in faith and out of fear. Not dependent on circumstances.

POINT — what the world thinks is crazy, we know is supernatural, powerful, life-changing!

So — *We mustn't shape our lives around the world's opinions of what's crazy or not —*

We must give ourselves to the time-tested, supernatural, powerful teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ!

***FACT — while unpacking this series —
we'll see crazy principles produce beautifully-changed life!***

Background is so important — gives dimension of power and credibility

- Paul wrote Philippians while he was in a Roman jail — not pleasurable circumstances.
- what Paul wrote to the Philippians was based on an experience he had in Philippi, 8-10 years earlier, again, while he in jail.

Listen — *Paul's words to **rejoice, relax, request, rehearse** and **realize** didn't come from a place of leisure, but of torture... WE MUST HEAR THIS FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE... otherwise it can sound like cheap, dime-store, spiritual make-believe!*

Paul in Philippi

- Heals demon-possessed slave girl, who brought her owners money by fortune-telling. The owners get irate, create a mob scene, and get Paul and Silas thrown in jail.
- **Acts 16:22-31**
Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

NOTICE — Paul and Silas are doing the right thing, preaching, delivering, saving...

BUT GOT WRONG RESULTS — arrested, beaten with rods, imprisoned, bound, guarded.

Response — crazy as it may sound...

- **Rejoice in the Lord** — Paul is singing in jail because regardless of circumstances, you can always rejoice in the Lord. "Always" and again I say rejoice! He loves you, He's for you, He's with you, He won't leave you, forsake you, He's got grace now, glory later, etc. Sounds crazy, try it!
- **Relax in His Presence** — Paul looks pretty relaxed! "your gentleness known to all, Lord is at hand." Gentleness is a strained translation. Sweet reasonableness, Moderation, Calm, Chill,

Composure... because the Lord is at hand, He's with you, He's got you... BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING!

“There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human's mind against God.”¹
~ C.S. Lewis

- **Request His Assistance** — Paul is singing and praying in jail! “in everything by prayer and supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

“Satan dreads nothing but prayer. His one concern is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.”²

~Samuel Chadwick

- **Rehearse His Truth** — as Paul is worshipping and praying, He's clearly rehearsing the truth of Who God is and what He does. “Think on these things.”
 - True, noble, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtue, praiseworthy. *More in coming weeks.*
- **Realize His Peace** — as Paul rejoices, relaxes, requests, and rehearses, he realizes God's peace guards his heart and mind. He experiences a composure, a calm, a confidence that surpasses understanding, it's supernatural, it's other-worldly. He realizes the God of peace is with him. He tells us to follow his example — and God's peace will be with us too.

Crazy?

- Maybe to some — but to those who have practiced it — life, joy, and peace that prevails!

The book “The Screwtape Letters” by C.S. Lewis is an allegory on spiritual warfare; written as the dialogue of a senior demon Screwtape with his student Wormwood. This following passage is in that context:

“Our cause is never more in danger, than when a human, no longer desiring, but intending to do God's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.”³
~ C.S. Lewis

Friend

Maybe your circumstances have you past feeling, that God has disappeared, you feel forsaken...
Still Obey... Rejoice, Relax, Request, Rehearse, Realize peace!
The Devil trembles to think you'll do that.
God beckons, invites, longs for you to do that!

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (Zondervan, Feb 6, 2001)

² Samuel Chadwick, *The Path of Prayer* (CLC Publications, Jan 1, 2012)

³ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (Zondervan, Feb 6, 2001)

Discussion Questions

1. Do you personally know anyone who thinks you are crazy for what you believe?
2. Do you ever remember thinking that Christians were crazy for their beliefs?
3. Why is it important to know the background of Paul's writing of Philippians 4?
4. Is Philippians 4:4 a suggestion or a command? How does that change how you receive it?
5. How does "be anxious for nothing" manifest in your life?
6. How do you need to make your requests to God?
7. How can you stay up to date to pray about things going on in world without being overcome with despair?