Philippians 4

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Philippians chapter 4 says this, Paul writing to the church at Philippi, remember the setting, maybe some of you haven't been able because I know the internet connection is not that good, but we've been going the last three weeks, this will be week 4 through the book of Philippians, understanding that Paul is writing to the church at Philippi while sitting in a jail cell in Rome awaiting his eventual execution.

Okay, Paul was beheaded for the faith, so he paid the price. He writes here, Therefore, my beloved brethren, whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

I urge you, Odia, and I urge Cynthia to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companion, I ask you to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 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 comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

[1:21] The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. But I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me.

Indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from won't, but I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity.

In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, of both having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but you alone. For even in Thessalonica, you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek the profit, which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance. I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

[2:29] And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus.

The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirits. Philippians chapter 4.

You may be seated. We've been looking at the book of Philippians. And you may remember, if you have been with me or you have seen any of the past three weeks, if not, then we'll catch you up on it real quick.

The most often repeated word in the book of Philippians is the word joy. In some wording or some sense, Paul continuously writes about this thing of joy.

He has joy. He rejoices. He's urging people to rejoice. And we have titled Philippians in its overview, Having a Mindset of Joy in Trying Time.

[3:30] How to have a mindset of joy in a trying time. Philippians chapter 1 tells us that we have this mindset of joy, number one, by having a gospel focus.

Paul says, I may be sitting in a jail and people are ridiculing me and people are falsely accusing me of things. But there are others who are preaching the gospel because they're emboldened by my faith.

He says, and that's great. He said, then there are others who are talking about Jesus because they're mocking my faith. And that's great. Because as long as they're talking about Jesus, they're doing what I want.

And he says later on in Philippians 1, he says, if I live, it is Christ. If I die, it is gain. He says, my focus is all about the gospel. And when we focus on the gospel and we don't focus so much on circumstances or on seasons and on times, and when our focus is completely on Christ Jesus, we cannot help but have a mindset of joy.

Philippians 2 takes it even further. It says, we're not only gospel focused, we are others focused. More than being focused on self and having an abundance of self-concern and being so absorbed with self-preservation, Paul says he lived his life and he urged others to live others focused.

[4:45] And as we begin to focus on others and how we may serve others and long to be with others, then joy begins to creep in. Philippians 3 continues this theme of just walking in perseverance and following Christ faithfully.

And now we come to Philippians 4 and we're just continuously looking at this mindset of joy, how to have a mindset of joy in a trying time. And Philippians 4 says, we have a mindset of joy by having a standing on a firm foundation of faith.

A mindset of joy, despite the times, in all times, comes from standing on a firm foundation of faith. Paul writes here, He's writing to the church.

Philippians 1 tells us he is writing to the elders and the deacons, the leaders of the church. He is writing to those who are in a teaching capacity and a serving capacity.

And he's writing to them that they may share it with others. And this is a letter for the church. This isn't an evangelistic letter. As a matter of fact, it is really a church letter. And these promises and these corrections, which there are few in Philippians, it's not really a book of chastisement, it's a book of encouragement.

Some have said, many Bible scholars say that Paul wrote this near the end of his life and it is here in the book of Philippians that we really begin to see the aged Paul with more of a compassionate heart than, say, when he wrote the early pages of his writings, like 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, and then you get into 1 Corinthians where he's handing people over to Satan and leading them to the destruction of the faith.

Well, now he's a little bit older and he's a little bit more compassionate, but I think it's just a matter of church. He's writing to the church at Philippi, and he's writing and he's addressing the issues that are there at the church at Philippi.

And the leading issue they had was a lack of joy. And a lack of joy among believers really is an issue because Jesus says, my joy I leave to you, not as the world leaves, but my joy I leave to you.

And Paul here is continuing that. The church at Philippi needs to be a joyous gathering of believers. You say, well, we don't know what was going on. And Pastor, you don't know what's going on in my life, and you don't understand the circumstances that are going around me.

You're right, and we're not talking about happiness. We're talking about joy. We're talking about how to have a mindset of joy because it is a mindset, a mindset of joy in a troubling time.

[7:29] And Paul says the way you do this finally is you stand on a firm foundation of faith. In this way, he says, stand firm in the Lord. And he's going to tell us how. Now, four truths I want you to see, and we'll make our way through them very quickly for the sake of time.

Four truths I want you to see. Number one, we stand on a firm foundation of faith when we are a member or a part of a united fellowship. When we are a part of a united fellowship.

Unity and the fellowship of the believers is absolutely important. Look at what he says here. If there is one issue that Paul addresses head on, it is this issue that is existing between two ladies.

Two ladies whose names are very hard to say, especially in a southern drawl. And I butchered them, and I will butcher them again later on, and I'll continuously butcher them. But I'm not naming my daughter Euodia, and I'm definitely not naming her since she, okay?

I don't know what those mean, and if that was my name, I'd probably be mad at somebody too. But anyway, we see here that Paul says, finally, my brethren, in this way stand firm in the Lord.

[8:33] And he says, I urge Euodia, and I urge sent you to live in harmony in the Lord. Now, these aren't unbelievers. These are believers. As a matter of fact, he said that they were partners with him, that they labored for the gospel.

We need to go ahead and admit this. It is absolutely possible for born-again believers. I know this may catch some of you off guard, and it may blow you away, but it is absolutely possible for born-again believers, people who love Jesus Christ with all their heart, to disagree, to not get along.

Which means it is absolutely possible. There are going to be times where you disagree with me, and I disagree with you. But we need to reconcile that disagreement in a proper way.

We're not here to be uniform, everybody looking the same. We're here to be united, everybody heading the same way. Tony Evans gives that great thing, right?

He says, a football team, everybody's not uniform. Everybody on the field is not a quarterback. Everybody's not a running back. Everybody's not a receiver, but they are united. Now, NFL does have a uniform policy, and we understand that too, that you get fined if you wear the wrong cleats or you do something to all those things.

[9:49] But it is a united team going in one direction. And we're not talking about uniformity here. We're talking about unity. And he says, I urge them to live in harmony. You can be angry and sin not, right?

You can be upset and still live in harmony and understand where the battle is. He says, indeed, true companion, I ask you to help these women. Now, all of a sudden, wait a minute here, Paul is not there, but Paul is asking other church members to get involved in their life.

You say, well, isn't that meddling? No, that shows us the importance of the unity of the body. He says, my dear companion, help these women get along.

Help these women settle their disagreement. Help them to live in harmony. Why? Because very great harm has been done to the body of Christ by the enemy of the church over the smallest matters of disagreement.

And we would be very, very unwise to underestimate how much joy is robbed from the believers simply because of a lack of harmony among one another.

[11:05] The backbiting, the bickering, the gossiping, all those things. You know, it says that root of gossip and that root of bitterness all throughout Scripture. Those are real issues.

And Paul says, if you're going to have a firm foundation, you have to stand together. One of the greatest examples of that throughout science is the great red oak trees.

The great, you know, we've got some beautiful doors back there in the back when you look at them and you see the redwood and you see all those things. But the great red oaks that are out in California, those super tall trees that are just massive and they extend to the sky forever.

And you would expect that their roots would go down, but they're not like cedar trees. They don't have very big, deep tap roots, right? As a matter of fact, their roots are fairly shallow, which kind of doesn't make sense because we know that the taller the building, the deeper the foundation's got to go.

And that's not that way, at least in that instance, because those trees can grow so tall with such shallow roots. And you say, well, how do they do that? It's because their roots go long. And what happens is their roots get tied to the roots of another tree, which get tied to the roots of another tree, which get tied to the roots of another tree.

[12:16] And all of their roots are intermingled. That's why you have to have so many trees, the redwood forest, to be together so that they could grow together with one another and get tall. Because when you only have one, it doesn't have very far to go.

And they have to be joined with one another. And that happens in the church. A lot of times what we see is discord and disharmony among believers. And it begins to rob joy and it begins to steal that firm foundation.

It is a united fellowship. As a matter of fact, he says, Indeed, true companion, I ask you to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

I want to urge you. I know we haven't been around one another as much as we have in the past, but these things still pop up every now and then. One thing that would do us well to remember is even in disagreements, your name and my name and other believers' names, they're all written in the Lamb's book of life, which means we will spend eternal life together.

And you say, yeah, but maybe they'll be on the other side of heaven and I'll be on this side. Maybe their mansion won't be next to mine. But we'll all be gathered in one place. That's around the throne, right? Unity is a big deal for the foundation that the believers stand on.

[13:23] A united fellowship. Number two, we understand that we stand on a firm foundation not only through a united fellowship, through overruled feelings. Feelings are real, but feelings are subjective.

Feelings are something that is a response to things that are done to us, right? Overruled feelings. I remember listening to this gentleman who actually has this great gospel ministry now among men and he does a great men's ministry and he was in special forces.

And one of the things he talks about, he's like, it's not that I don't hurt. He started talking about the number of things he did. He was a member of the special forces in the military and he served a number of campaigns. And he went and played NFL football and he did all these things.

He was a standout in college. He was a standout in NFL. And he endured all these things and he got to talking. He was talking to men. He's like, it's not that I don't hurt. It's not that my feelings aren't real. He says, I can just bear more than you.

I can stand more than you can. And I'm not going to break before you do. He acknowledged his feelings, but he begins to overrule those feelings because feelings are real.

[14:33] Feelings are something that is a response to something being done to us or either physically, mentally, socially. But we understand this, that in Christ, we overrule those feelings.

Because look at what he says. Paul says, rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. I've told you this before and I'll tell you again. Adrian Rogers used to say to rejoice is a choice, right?

And it is also a command. Paul here writing to the church says, rejoice in the Lord always. Now, he's not writing from a soft cushion on a couch somewhere.

He's not sitting next to the seashore. He's not over here enjoying these pleasantries of this life. He is in a jail cell being guarded by Roman soldiers awaiting his execution under the rulership of one of the most wicked rulers that Rome ever had.

And he writes this letter, says rejoice in the Lord always, even in this season. And again, I will say rejoice. What is he saying?

[15:32] He doesn't say be happy. He doesn't say not have bad feelings. He doesn't say don't hurt. He doesn't say not be uncomfortable. He says to overrule those and understand where your joy is found.

Rejoice in the Lord. Not in the circumstances. Not in people. Not in comforts. Not in discomforts. Not in all these things. Not in pleasures. But rejoice in the Lord always.

Overrule your feelings. He says, let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Friend, listen to me. The nearness of the Lord is reason enough for the believer to rejoice.

We don't serve a distant God who is disconnected from us and wants nothing to do with us. As a matter of fact, the Lord is near, which means he is a very present help in a time of need

He is there when we need him. He is present in us. As a matter of fact, Jesus said that if I leave, I will go to the Father and the Father will send the helper to you and he will dwell in you. And then I and the Father will come and make our tabernacle in you, which means the believer has the fullness of God dwelling inside of him.

You can't get more near than in me. Right? You can be beside me, but you're not in me. And the presence of the Lord is near. And that's reason enough to rejoice.

He says, be anxious for nothing. So that sounds good in theory. Right? Paul, that makes a lot of good sense. Well, he's making a choice here. Right? He's overruling his feelings.

Because being anxious or being worried, worry is a thief of joy. Right? He says, be anxious for nothing. But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Many people say this is an intentional order. In everything, by prayer. Which means that whatever it is you're anxious for, whatever it is you're worried about, go to prayer and be specific about that.

We have this tendency a lot of times to have concerns and to have worries and even have sins. But then when we go to prayer, we speak in generalities. Lord, help me. Lord, I just pray your hand would rest upon me. And those things are good.

But we need to go with an intentional focus to God and say, God, this is what I'm worried about. This is what I'm concerned about. Lord, this is what is plaguing me right now. This is what Satan is putting in my mind right now.

Lord, this is the concern I have. This is what is making me anxious. This is be specific in prayer and supplication, which means you're asking him to intervene and you're praying on behalf of others with thanksgiving.

Friend, listen, if you take your worries to God in prayer, then you begin to pray for other people in prayer. And then you begin to thank God in prayer. By the time you get up from prayer, guess what?

You're rejoicing. Because when you humble yourselves in the presence of him and all of a sudden you begin to thank him for all that he is, whatever was plaguing you before you hit your knees in prayer, all of a sudden it's far from you.

And you overruled your feelings by being in his presence with thanksgiving. Over and over again, the Bible tells us that we are to offer up to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Satan likes to put in us an attitude of complaining and an attitude of worrying.

But we need to make a choice to go to God with an attitude of thanksgiving. You say, well, you don't know what's going on in my life. No, but I still know you have life. And I know the Bible says in the book of Job that if God was to call his spirit back to himself, no man would live, all men would perish, yes, all men would fall away.

The very breath in our lungs, the very days of our life, they're all dictated by the Lord. He's given us the opportunity and today is the day of salvation, which means he's working in each one of our lives. We are to overrule our feelings. Why? Because if we do this and the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, you won't even know why you have such peace.

You won't even understand how it could be possible. We'll guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. When we make this choice and we say, Lord, right now I don't feel like rejoicing. Lord, right now I don't feel like, I'm not feeling happy.

I'm not feeling thankful. But Lord, I know I have to be thankful. I know there's so much I have to be thankful for. And I begin to open up my word and thank him for what he's done for me. All of a sudden, God begins to respond to my prayers.

He begins to respond to my decisions. He begins to respond to my overruling. And it says, and the peace of God, not the peace of Billy Joe, not the peace of man, not the peace of this world, but the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, begins to guard my heart and my mind, which, by the way, is the very seat of all worry.

[19:59] It stirs your heart. It upsets your mind. And all of a sudden, the peace of God begins to guard that. Why? Through the mind of Christ. We understand here that it is an overruled feeling.

So not only do we stand on a firm foundation because of a united fellowship and overruled feeling number three, we stand on a firm foundation because of an intentional focus, living intentionally focused.

I want to ask you, just to be quite honest, and you don't have to answer this to me because most of us wouldn't want to. What do you think about when you're worrying? What do you think about when you don't have joy? What is it you've been thinking about all day long?

What is it you've been thinking about? What is it you've been consumed with? What is it you've been focusing on? What is it that because whatever it is we focus on begins to be played out in our life, right? And this is why Paul says we need to be intentional in our focus.

Verse eight says, finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Listen to this. If this is what we dwelled on. Now, I want to be honest with you. You may have to cut some stuff off and you may have to stay away from some people. Right? And if you dwell on these things, if you dwell on what is true, if you dwell on what is honorable, if you dwell on what is right, if you dwell on what is pure, if you dwell on what is lovely, if you dwell on what is of good repute, if you dwell on what is excellent, if you dwell on things worthy of praise, you won't have to worry about not having joy.

So you don't understand the people I'm around and you don't understand how things go on. And I believe it was, I know Tony Evans has shared it, but Warren Wearsby has also written it and talked about the reality that we're in one of two people in the world.

We are the thermometer or thermostat. Right? If we are a thermometer, all we're doing is we are reflecting back something that is being done to us. Right? A thermometer tells the temperature, doesn't do anything else.

A thermometer is always responding to whatever's around us. So you live your life, you're a thermometer, which means however the people around you are, that's how you are. You're just being a reflection of them.

You're telling if they're on fire for the Lord, you're on fire for the Lord. If they're not, you're not. If they're thinking on things lovely, you're thinking on things lovely. If they're thinking on things unholy and impure, then you're thinking on those things. You're a thermometer.

[22:13] You have the choice to either be that or you can be a thermostat. A thermostat doesn't reflect the temperature. A thermostat dictates the temperature. Some of you came in this morning and our thermostat wasn't dictating any temperature because the heat wasn't kicking on.

I think they got that fixed because it's either that or I'm talking a lot. Because we had ours off last night and I got up this morning and I had cut it on, the heat on, because I had frost the night before.

And I guess throughout the day, my wife said, we're not wasting any energy. So she cut it off. And I woke up this morning and we had a thermometer on the wall that told me the temperature of the house. And I saw the temperature of the house and I knew that Carrie was still covered up with blames.

I said, if she gets up and that thermometer reads 62, I'm in trouble. So I turned a thermostat on to bring it back up to an acceptable temperature, right? So that it could get back up because a thermostat dictates the room.

Friend, you are one of two people. You're either a thermometer reflecting what everybody around you is or you're a thermostat dictating what everybody around you is. You will either think on what the people around you are thinking on, what they're talking about, or you will dictate what they think about.

You say, I can't do that. Yes, you can. I haven't always been a full-time pastor, but the moment I came to Christ, I began to dictate what the people around me thought about, how they taught, how they responded, how they dwelled on.

There were things that weren't accepted around me. You say, man, I bet that made you kind of an outcast. People don't want to be around you, right? But maybe I didn't need to be around those people. And all of a sudden, I found myself not falling into the same things they fell into because we need to dwell on these things.

Whatever we are intentionally focusing on will dictate the joy we have in our life. I don't say you have to be mean about it. I don't say you have to be ugly, but you need to be bold about it.

Fourth and finally, we stand on a firm foundation when we live and we exist in a part of a united fellowship, when we overrule our feelings because our feelings can be wrong quite often, and when we have an intentional focus.

And number four, when contentment is found. When contentment is found. It says, but I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me.

[24:28] Indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want. I love this. Paul says, I don't need anything. I don't need anything, right? I don't speak from want because, I mean, what do I need?

I'm in a jail cell. I can't have anything. For I have learned. Listen to this. The wording is very clear here. For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I want you to understand this.

Contentment is not something you get free. Contentment is something you learn. Right? Paul says, I have learned to be content. He says again later, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, of having an abundance and suffering need.

He said, God has allowed circumstances in my life to teach me to be content with having an abundance and to teach me to be content with not having anything. God has allowed circumstances in my life.

Shipwreck, beating, stoning, having an abundance, not having anything. Paul says, all these things were there to teach me how to learn to be content. The reason that we see so much discontentment is because we see so little people wanting to learn that lesson.

[25:39] Because it's a hard lesson. Right? It is a very difficult thing. It says that we have to learn to be content. Which means we have to allow God to work in our life and to lead us through those struggles and those pains and those valleys.

Those things aren't learned in ease and discomfort. I mean, those things aren't learned in pleasures. Right? We understand this. The older generation, I mean, the much older generation, those people who threw nothing away, you know, those who went through the Great Depression, guess what they did?

They learned contentment and they learned survival. Right? They learned how to make it on nothing and they learned not to waste anything, but they also had a great contentment about them. They went through some of the worst times ever.

They allowed the lessons to be learned and taught them things. He says, for I know how to get along in humble means and I also know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having an abundance and suffering need.

Well, what is that secret? Paul, please tell me. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. What is the secret? I have learned it is not what I have, but it's who I have. It's not what things are with me, but it is who is with me.

[26:42] It is the one that is near me, not the things that are around me that matter. I have learned that when I'm hungry, he's there. When I'm full, he's there. When I'm in the sea floating around because of shipwreck, he's there.

When I'm over here walking around in pleasures and comfort, he's there. What matters is he's always there. Friend, don't lose the opportunities to understand that he is there.

And don't get caught up in what's not there. Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. You yourselves also know, I mean, just think for a minute. How many people can use the word affliction, speaking of themselves and rejoicing in the same paragraphs, right?

I rejoice in my affliction. He says, it's okay. You yourselves also know, Philippians, that the first preaching of the gospel after I have left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but you alone.

For even in Thessalonica, you send a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift. This is it. This is where Paul is showing his focus on others. Not that I seek the gift itself. I don't need what you're sending me.

But I seek for the profit which increases to your account. He says, what's good? He said, you're sending me this, and I know that because you are ministering to me, God's going to minister to you much more than what you do to me.

But I have received everything in full and have an abundance. I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And here it is. And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

What is it saying? I know that the God I trust will not fail you or let you down. He will supply all your needs. And I'm standing on that firm foundation.

And joy is a very present reality. Now, to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Joy. Joy. A mindset of joy is a very present reality simply by having a standing on a firm foundation of faith.

[28:50] Living and breathing as a member of a united fellowship. Overruling our feelings. Intentionally focus on the things that are lovely and pure and right and true and excellent.

Things worthy of praise and learning. Learning. Contentment. What a joy when contentment is found and our joy is found in Jesus Christ and Christ alone.

Sounds good in theory, but it's so much better in practice. What is Paul's saying? Don't even think about these things. Do these things. Don't miss this.

He said, whatever things, dwell on these things and practice them. Do them. Let's pray. We're going to pray. We'll have a song. We're also going to, I'm going to do the drawing for the Mother's Day.

I know they have one back there. So I'm going to pray with you. We'll have a song. Do the drawing. If your name is called, you can come forward. You don't have to get it from me, but the cards are up here. You can get your gift card and then we'll be dismissed.

[29:45] So let's pray together. Lord, I thank you so much for this day. Lord, what a joy it has been to gather together with your people, the believers, to proclaim your word. Lord, I pray you have your hand upon each one of us.

Lord, whatever is going on in our lives and circumstances, you know each one of them. Lord, we know there are so many things out there that long to steal our joy. So Lord, I pray that we would focus on you.

We would learn the contentment being found in you. And we would rejoice in you, Lord Jesus. Always and forever. A very present help in every time of need.

Lord, thank you. May your spirit and power work in each person, each life for your glory and honor. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

[31:19] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. [33:49] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. [36:19] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. [38:49] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

> Thank you. Thank you.