

Rx for Peace in Troubled Times Philippians 4:1-9

Pastor/friend's experience

in El Salvador years ago,

During revolution, I was speaking at pastors' retreat, he came to see me. "I haven't been able to sleep"

"I've been suffering from a tremendous headache"

Pain in back of my neck– in my chest –in my stomach

"I haven't been hungry."

"Doctor told me: "Nothing's wrong with you medically"

"All he could do: treat symp-toms with pain relievers."

What had happened?

Tension from situation brought depression.

In his case, cause was tense political situation.

For us, causes vary,

but symptoms are recognizable

Phil. struggling with discouragement brought on by suffering

"*Joy Book*"– talks about *joy* because they're *discouraged!*

COMMON CAUSES OF DISCOURAGEMENT:

1. Other people–

World around us–different world views, lack of respect.

Christians don't always act the way they should.

Carnality–even among church leaders!

2. Circumstances –Pressure–political/economic sit.

World PANDEMIC!

3. Things =>(or lack of them) esp. *money*

Godly people aren't *suppose* to care about *money & things!*

But we do! Don't we?

4. Ourselves => Fear of failure –frustration–weakness

Don't always perform as people expect!

We don't always perform as *WE* expect! We fail ourselves!

We let someone down who's counting on us.

Phil. knew about such problems. That's where they live!

HOW WE USUALLY DEAL WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

Faced with affliction, we turn our attention inward

We focus on ourselves

We defend ourselves

Age of Rx bottles—Our lives are filled with prescriptions.

Phil 4 provides 7 Rx that are “good for what ails us.”

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH DISCOURAGEMENT?

All elements of this prescription come from the Lord.

These aren't attitudes *WE* produce by *our* efforts.

ONLY GOD CAN PRODUCE THESE ATTITUDES IN US!

1. Stand firm in the Lord 4:1 *“My brothers, you whom I love & long for, my joy & crown, that is how you should **stand firm in the Lord**, dear friends!”*

Not new theme—concludes preceding verses.

Yet it introduces discussion about discouragement.

Fear's a huge cause of discouragement

In frightening circumstances, “stand firm in the Lord”

Our foundation isn't ourselves, or our efforts.

Basis for firm foundation is God—we stand firm *in Him!*

Stability in hard times comes from GOD—NOT us!

2. Be of one mind— UNITY 4:2 *“I plead with Euodia & I plead with Syntyche to **agree with each other** in the Lord.*

Euodia & Syntyche: “Resolve problem between you!”

True fellow-worker, *help them resolve it!*
Resolve personal conflict & get back to pulling together!

3. Rejoice in the Lord 4:4

“Rejoice in the Lord always; I’ll say it again, rejoice.”

Instead of complaining, dis-couraged by grumbling spirit,
 praise God for what He’s done for us.

You can’t rejoice & complain at the same time!

Our rejoicing isn’t in *ourselves* or our achievements!

Our rejoicing is *in the Lord*—in what He’s done for us.

When our focus is on Him, there’s always plenty to celebrate!

4. 4:5 *“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord’s near”*

Think calmly, from God’s perspective.

Don’t let circumstances get to us or shake us up! Don’t panic!

Be reasonable, rational—think calmly

Consider struggle from God’s perspective.

“The Lord’s near!” View circum-stances in light of His coming!

5. Present concerns to God 4:6-7 *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer & petition, with thanks-giving, present your requests to God. ⁷=> & the peace of God, which transcends all under-standing, will guard your hearts & your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

“Stop worrying!” Implies they are. *Cut it out!*

Continually take requests to God. PRAY!

Present your requests with thanksgiving—

Prayer of faith: We pray with thanksgiving...

because of what God has done in the past

...what we expect God to do in the future

Change the situation – OR change us.

God *will* resolve problem for His glory

=> we can thank Him.

Result: God's peace pro-TECTS our heart & mind.

When we pray in faith, we experience His peace.

He guards heart *and* mind!

For most of us the head's OK – we have that down!

The truth controls our *minds*

Doesn't always control *hearts* – emotions panic.

When we entrust concerns to God in prayer – with *faith*,

His peace controls our hearts as well

How? Commit petition to God w/ thanksgiving – *FAITH!*

=> God's peace becomes shield to protect us from worry

6. Focus on things that lead to godliness. 4:8

“Whatever's true, whatever's noble, whatever's right, whatever's pure, whatever's lovely, whatever's admirable – if anything's excellent or praise-worthy – think about such things

Think properly! NOT “power of positive thinking”

This is “power of godly thinking!”

When you feel pressure building – worry increasing –

Take a moment to think about what's positive:

What's true – honorable – right (just) – pure – lovely – of good
repute – excellent – worthy of praise

Contrast: 2 sources of *negative* thinking:

1. Garbage in – garbage out

Whatever we fill our minds with takes control of our thoughts!

If we fill mind with negative, destructive, critical, bitter thinking, it will produce angry, fearful, bitter, discouraging attitudes!

Fill mind with garbage – pornography, violence, concentrating on such produces its natural fruit.

We can't feed body garbage & grow healthy bodies

We can't feed mind garbage & grow healthy minds

Fix mind on things that lead to godliness

[2nd source of negative thinking:]

2. Influence of pessimism

News articles on economy, politics, pandemics...

If we concentrate on the negative, it will consume us:

Personal negatives – our problems – our failures

Church negatives – failures among God's people

What should we concentrate on?

Epitome of issues Paul suggests: *Christ*

– personification of such things – God sees us *in Him!* Do we?

Epitome of proper thinking: Think about Jesus!

We're prone to think about ourselves & our problems

Refocus: **FIX OUR FOCUS ON GOD – NOT OURSELVES!**

7. Practice what you've learned. 4:9 “*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. => & the God of peace will be with you.*”

Uses PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLE:

Theory + Example + Practice

To experience God's peace, walk in a way that gives you confidence to come into His presence boldly.

That's how we're able to enjoy His peace.

NOT basis for salvation; *IS* way to peace with God

Thinking properly (4:8)

+ **Acting properly (4:9)**

=> **peace with God**

=> *solution* to discouragement: "**JUST DO IT!**"

Do what you already know God wants you to do!

People with problems frequently know what God wants us to do.

We just aren't doing it.

All we have to do is **DO IT!**

But we're slow learners!

We'd rather spend weeks (or months!) *struggling!*

When we finally DO what God's trying to tell us.

VOILA! – God of Peace is with us! We find His peace!

What does God want us to do with principles?

Simple solution: JUST DO IT!

Spiritual maturity isn't measured by what we *know*

God's peace doesn't come from what we know,

but by what we DO!

When we apply these 7 prescriptions in our life,

The God of peace will be with us.

He'll fill us with HIS peace!