



Transcendent Joy: Learning How to Rejoice No Matter What

Message #20: **Keys to Living the Stable Life** (Philippians 4:4-9) – April 23, 2023 - Pastor Jeff

- Stability seems to be in decline today in so many different aspects of life and it is something believers need to pay close attention to and model. Between sin, self, Satan and the system of evil, people will always be barraged by stressors on the inside and outside that can destabilize us. Job said, *“Man is born for trouble as the sparks fly upward.”* (5:7)
 - Those without Christ will be victims of their own fallenness (James 1:8)
 - Those who follow Christ can be victims of their own spiritual ignorance, neglect, and disobedience.
- God is highly concerned about our stability and went to great lengths to provide all we need to build strong and stable lives that are pleasing to Him and beneficial to others and our own lives. God wants stability (Eph. 6:10; Col. 2:5-7), equips us for it (Eph. 3:16) and commands that we live a stable life (Phil 4:1)
- Paul uses seven commands in this section (v. 4-9) to identify five spiritual stabilizers for every believer to embrace and express.

① Let your joy resonate (4:4)

- Joy is a great stabilizer in life, but it is only as strong as its kind and object. God gifts believers with a supernatural kind of joy (John 15:11) and its object is always *“the Lord”* (Neh. 8:10; Ps. 16:11; Gal. 5:22)
- Rejoicing is a continuous command (*“rejoice always”*). Sorrows and troubles will always come our way, but God’s joy allows us to rise above the circumstance and deal with all the joy-robbers.
- Rejoicing has a calming cure. We rejoice *“in the Lord”*, not in all the fluctuating circumstances of life. The key to experiencing joy’s stability is keeping it focused on the Lord who never vacillates or changes whether life is good (Neh. 12:43) or bad (Hab. 1:2; 3:16-19).

② Let your humility radiate (4:5)

- Humility is not normally viewed as a stabilizing force, but it is in God’s world since it is all about adjusting your attitude and awareness about what is true.
- Humility is an attitude that needs to be displayed (*“let your gentle spirit be known to all men”*). In a world that is full of demanding, insensitive, rude, and thoughtless people, God wants us to display a big-heartedness and charity toward others, not demanding our rights or letting people get under our skin.
- Humility is an awareness about God’s presence (*“the Lord is near”*). Paul is either identifying God being *“near in time”* (soon return) or *“near in location”* (His presence with us). Either way, humility recognizes we are blessed to have God as One who is planning to come to us and is always with us.

③ Let your peace regulate (4:6-7)

- Anxiety is a powerful destabilizer, but God’s peace is a great stabilizer and has a way of regulating our stress. Peace is both the absence of disputes and mental stress and the presence of a tranquil heart that finds its well-being in Christ (John 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 14:19; Col. 3:15; 2 Thess. 3:16)

- We need to let God's peace overrule anxiety (v. 6). The word for anxiety is also the word for care (1 Cor. 12:25) and concern (Phil. 2:20). It means to be pulled in different directions internally and there are two kinds: the godly care and concern kind and the ungodly anxiety (Matt. 6:25-34; Ps. 38:18). Anxiety is a mild form of atheism that claims to trust God, but acts as if He cannot be trusted.
- We need to let God's peace activate prayer (v. 7). Our heavenly Father can be trusted to comprehensively care for us and He invites us to pray to Him (1 Pet. 5:6; Phil. 4:6-7). We can take *"everything"* to God in prayer and be thankful for His amazing power (Eph. 3:20), purpose (Rom. 8:28-29), providence (Rom. 11:36), provision (Ps. 68:19), and promises (Ps. 55:22; 94:19; Phil. 4:7).

④ Let your mind ruminate (4:8)

- In a world driven by feelings and pragmatism, God wants us to *"dwell on"* (think, consider, be credited, ponder) virtues that will keep us stabilized.
- Before we came to Christ, our minds were depraved, ignorant, foolish, blind, and futile, but at salvation, our minds were transformed by the gospel and we were given the *"mind of Christ"* (1 Cor. 2:16). This new mind is a new capacity to understand truth (reality) from God's point of view.
- To grow stability, Paul gives us a list of virtues to *"dwell on"* that keep our hearts protected and strong (the *"true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute, excellence and worthy of praise"*). Allowing our minds to be marinated in the unworthy and ungodly vices of the flesh and culture will destabilize our life and faith.

③ Let your learning replicate (4:9)

- All the stabilizers Paul mentions get tied together when God's truth is put into action. Christianity is all about following Jesus Christ and this involves living out a message (things you *"have learned and received"*) and the modeling of the faith by others (like Paul in what you have *"heard and seen in me"*)
- The blessing of being a doer of the word is *"the God of peace will be with you"* and our stable God blesses us with His stabilizing peace if we walk in it.