Rejoice in the Lord Always

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Elder Lee Roberts teaches on Philippians 4, verses 4-7.

Tonight we're going to look at Philippians 4, verses 4-7. The hardest thing about doing a single lesson is deciding what passage to cover.
Because we're only two weeks away from Thanksgiving, we'll look at a Thanksgiving-themed passage tonight. As we read Philippians 4, verses 4-7 now, listen for the many absolutes, things that apply to all people or things that apply to every situation.
So here are Philippians 4, verses 4-7. It says, all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Did you catch the absolutes in there? In verse 4, Paul tells us to rejoice always. In verse 5, he says that we should make our reasonableness known to everyone.
[1:26] Then Paul says to avoid being anxious for anything, but in everything we are to go to God. Doing those absolutes seems impossible.

We can be tempted to think that perhaps Paul is just being unreasonable. But consider where Paul was when he wrote those words. Philippians is one of the letters that Paul wrote from prison.
Most likely he had a Roman guard chained to him as he was writing this letter. We might also be tempted to think that it was easier for the Philippians to heed Paul's words because life must have been simpler for them than it is for us.
Just a quick look at other places in Philippians and Acts shows that Paul's letter is timely because the original readers face the same types of struggles that we do.
Paul and his friends face the pain of rejection. In Philippians 3, verses 5 and 6, Paul recapped the stellar resume that had once brought him honor among the Jews.
[2:26] He had belonged to the right nation, clan, family, and religious party. But when Jesus invaded Paul's life, Paul lost all that he had considered gain, forfeiting his standing in the Jewish community.

Now he was accused of leading people away from the law of Moses and violating the sanctity of the temple. We've seen that in Mike's study on Wednesday nights. The believers in Philippi faced similar social rejection.
Their first church planners had been smeared as disturbing civic order and advocating anti-Roman practices. Those were serious accusations in a city that boasted its status as a colony of Rome.
When Paul wrote this letter, the Philippians themselves were facing social ostracism. Christians in Asia Minor, to whom Peter wrote his first epistle, were likewise suffering social stigma from the pagans whom they resided with.
If the pain and fear of rejection by family, co-workers, former friends, or civic leaders has put you on the defensive, you need Paul's prescription just as much as the first century believers of Philippi did.
[3:35] The believers in Philippi also were facing outright resistance. Listen to what Paul wrote earlier in the letter. Here are Philippians chapter 1, verses 27 through 30.

Philippians 1, verses 27 through 30 say, Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents.
This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation and that from God. For it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ that you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

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The Philippian believers also faced recession or financial hardship. Philippi was part of Macedonia. In 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verses 1 and 2, Paul summarized the conditions in Macedonia.
2 Corinthians 8, 1 and 2 say, We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia. For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.
[5:05] That's not all. From at least two other places in Philippians, we see that the believers had issues with relationships. Listen to Philippians chapter 2, verses 1 through 4.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others.
Immediately prior to our passage for tonight, Paul addressed a specific conflict within the Philippian church. Listen to chapter 4, verses 2 and 3. Paul said, Even though Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 through 7 were written thousands of years ago, the verses were written by someone and to some people who faced the same types of problems that we do today.
Those are rejection, resistance, recession, and relationship struggles. Obviously, we should pay attention to these verses simply because they are part of God's Word, but given Paul's own personal situation and the hardships of the people to whom Paul wrote, these verses show us things that benefit any believer facing difficulties.
[6:53] Here's the main idea for this passage. Regardless of our earthly circumstances, true believers should rejoice because of what Jesus has done for us.

Regardless of our earthly circumstances, true believers should rejoice because of what Jesus has done for us. Let's start digging into our main verses to see what Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has to tell us.
We'll break tonight's passage into three sections, beginning with just verse 4. And in Philippians 4.4, we see the precept. The precept is your first blank.
Let's read verse 4 again. It says simply, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice. The precept or command in this verse is obvious.
That is, of course, rejoice. This verse expresses the theme of the whole book of Philippians, that believers are to rejoice in the Lord always. Joy is such a vitally important factor in believer's spiritual stability that Paul repeats his command for emphasis when he says, Again, I will say, rejoice.
[8:06] This repetition assumes the reality that it was hard to be joyful. The Philippians needed to rise above their circumstances. We sometimes can think that joy is a feeling or an emotion.

But joy is not a feeling. It's the deep down confidence that God is in control of everything for the believer's good and his own glory, and thus all is well no matter what the circumstances.
Understanding the proper meaning of the word joy is the key to understanding how and why we can rejoice always. So here's that definition of joy again. Joy is the deep down confidence that God is in control of everything for the believer's good and his own glory, and thus all is well no matter what the circumstances.
The word translated rejoice is a present imperative, calling believers to the continual habitual practice of rejoicing, so they are to rejoice and they're to keep rejoicing.
Neither Paul's imprisonment nor the Philippians' trials should eclipse their joy. Paul tells us what we're to rejoice in. He says that we are to rejoice in the Lord.
[9:22] John MacArthur said, Believers often cannot find reason to rejoice in their specific circumstances. Certainly the general wickedness, sorrow, misery, and death in the world evoke no joy.

Nor are people a reliable source of joy. They can change, hurt, and disappoint. The only sure, reliable, unwavering, unchanging source of joy is God.
That is why Paul commands believers to rejoice in the Lord. The phrase, in the Lord, introduces an important principle. Spiritual stability is directly related to how a person thinks about God.
Knowledge of God is the key to rejoicing. Those who know the great truths about God find it easy to rejoice. Those with little knowledge of God find it difficult to rejoice.
Psalm 1, verses 1 through 3 remind us, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

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[10:29] But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers. Paul is telling his original readers, and us by extension, to be like that tree. We need to be planted solidly in the Lord.
We get planted by knowing God's word. Just in case some of the Philippians thought that they may have misunderstood the bold command to rejoice, we've already seen that Paul repeated the command immediately, emphasizing its importance.
Their joy was to be in the Lord, and that joy was to be unchanging. The circumstances of Paul's life reminded him of the joy available in the Lord, and he wanted that joy for them as well.
Paul knew that no situation is beyond the Lord's help. Christians can always rejoice in that fact, if nothing else. Notice what Paul says about rejoicing, though, when he says, Rejoice in the Lord always.
[11:41] Joy comes from our relationship with Jesus rather than our circumstances. Remember that Paul is writing this letter from prison. Surely some of the Philippian readers remembered when he and Silas sang hymns in prison despite being beaten and bruised.

How then could Paul say this? Well, where did Paul's joy come from? And he answers it by saying that we are to rejoice in the Lord. His joy came from the Lord Jesus.
Every one of us has sinned against God and still sins against God daily. If you don't believe that you still sin, when have you loved the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?
Or when have you loved your neighbor as you love yourself? The Bible is clear that the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Anyone who confesses sins, repents, and puts faith in Christ and Christ alone for salvation will be saved. That's the good news of the gospel.
[12:46] We cannot save ourselves from the wrath of a holy God. God's wrath is what we deserve. We deserve that wrath every time that we sin. But Jesus came to this earth in the form of a human.

He lived the perfect life that nobody else could ever live. For those that put their faith in him alone, Jesus paid the perfect sacrifice by dying on the cross so that every true believer becomes reconciled to God.
In Romans chapter 5, verses 1 through 11, Paul summarizes the salvation that all believers have. Listen for the echoes of tonight's Philippians passage.
Here are Romans chapter 5, verses 1 through 11. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.
[14:02] And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Since therefore we have now been justified by his blood, much more will we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Did you notice all the rejoice in peace references in that passage?
The only way to rejoice in the Lord always is to know the Lord and to know his word. When we know the Lord and his word, we will understand the amount of grace that we have received.
[15:17] Jesus, Holy God himself, willingly paid once and for all the penalty for the sins we have committed and ever will commit. Tony Morita wrote, When we consider what we deserve because of our despicable sin and what we have because of the redeeming love of God through Christ, that realization should give rise to joy.

When you ponder how the Savior has lifted you out of the miry pit, it should give you a new song, as David says, Rejoice in the Lord, in the Savior and Lord, who loves to redeem and forgive despicable people.

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The reference to David's song comes from Psalm 40, verses 1 through 3. Here are Psalm 40, verses 1 through 3. David said, I waited patiently for the Lord.
He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. If you have yet to trust Christ and Christ alone for salvation, the precept in Philippians 4.4 is impossible.
[16:41] Unbelievers are unable to rejoice in the Lord. However, as long as you are breathing, you have another opportunity to seek God's forgiveness of your sins and to trust in Christ alone for salvation.

If you have trusted in Christ alone for salvation, Paul has more encouragement for us and more commands for us as we continue through tonight's passage. From verse 4, we've seen that we are to rejoice always.
We also have considered why we can rejoice always. In the second section of the passage, Paul tells us how we can rejoice always. In verses 5 and 6, we see the process.
So the process is your second blank. Here are Philippians 4, verses 5 and 6 again. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
[17:52] Depending upon the translation you're using, you may see a different word than reasonableness in the first sentence of verse 5. Many commentators noted how difficult the original Greek word is to translate.

John MacArthur said, the Greek word has a richer meaning than any single English word can convey. Hence, commentators and Bible versions vary widely in how they render it.
And here are some of the things that they have used. Sweet reasonableness, generosity, goodwill, friendliness, magnanimity, charity toward the faults of others, mercy toward the failures of others, indulgence of the failures of others, leniency, big-heartedness, moderation, forbearance, and gentleness.
Those are just some of the attempts to try to convey the meaning of that one word. Then MacArthur said, perhaps the best corresponding English word is graciousness.
The graciousness of humility, the humble graciousness that produces the patience to endure injustice, disgrace, and mistreatment without retaliation, bitterness, or vengeance.
[19:08] In other words, it is contentment. If we thought rejoicing always is difficult to do, now we get another challenge, trying to embody all of those characteristics that Paul conveys with that one word in verse 5.

And Paul says that those characteristics are to be evident to everyone. Everyone means everyone. That includes believers, unbelievers, family, co-workers, strangers, people we like, people we may not like.
So when you think about that, why would Paul tell us to do that? Well, obviously, possessing such a disposition helps our witness.
But possessing such a disposition also helps us to rejoice always. Here's another MacArthur quote. He said, Gracious humility runs counter to the cult of self-love that was rampant in ancient society and is rampant in modern society as well.
But focusing on self-love, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment leads only to greater and greater instability and anxiety. On the other hand, those whose focus is not on themselves cannot be knocked off balance by inequity, injustice, unfair treatment, lies, or humiliation.
[20:32] They can say with Paul, I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. And of course, that quote from Paul comes just a few verses later in Philippians chapter 4, verse 11.

MacArthur then said, Spiritual stability belongs to the graciously humble. Let me rephrase one of those sentences to make it a little more positive.
Those who focus on others instead of themselves will never be knocked off balance by inequity, injustice, unfair treatment, lies, or humiliation.
Does knowing that truth help you to be nicer to those difficult people in your life? Treating them well perhaps gives you more benefit than it does them, and you never know when God may use your example to bring those people to salvation.

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Peter echoed this concept in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 12. Here is 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 12. Peter said, Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
[21:49] Peter's reference there to day of visitation is a reference to their salvation. Those same difficult people who make fun of your conduct now or who falsely accuse you now may be some of the people whom God later saves.

If they are saved, those once difficult people will glorify God for the example that you set. The question for Christians then becomes what kind of example do we want to be?
Do we want our conduct to imply that there really is no difference between believers and unbelievers? When you think about it, unbelievers should see a true Christian's conduct and think, I don't understand him and I really don't even like him, but something is different about him.
I want to find out what that difference is. Believers have an example to follow. That example, of course, is Christ. Here's Peter again.
This time it's 1 Peter 2, verses 20-25. 1 Peter 2, verses 20-25 say, For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?
[23:01] But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judged justly.
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed, for you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.
Early in the Philippians letter, Paul wrote about the same thing. We read about that when we quoted Philippians chapter 2, verses 1 through 4.
Here are Philippians 2, verses 3 and 4 one more time. Paul said, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
[24:14] Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others. Some of you may be thinking, well, it was easy for Jesus to think about the interest of others.

After all, Jesus is God. Jesus is sinless. And just a few minutes ago, the funny-looking guy at the podium reminded me that I sin every day even if I'm a believer.
Surely, I can't treat others the way Jesus treated them. Well, maybe the funny-looking guy at the podium is the only one who had those thoughts cross my mind, but regardless, the Bible has an answer for that too.
Listen to 2 Peter this time, 2 Peter chapter 1, verses 3 and 4. Writing to believers, Peter wrote these words in 2 Peter 1, 3 and 4. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
We see there that believers have become partakers of Jesus' divine nature. Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 2, verses 14 through 16.
[25:43] 1 Corinthians 2, verses 14 through 16 say, The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?
But we have the mind of Christ. We see there somebody else saying that believers have the mind of Christ. So here is another question to ponder.
Which mind are we going to let the world see? Will the world see our sinful mind that we must battle against every day? Or will the world see the mind of Christ because we yield to the Holy Spirit's control more and more every day?
If those questions fail to convict you to let a gracious spirit be known to everyone, the second sentence of Philippians 4-5 gives us another reason. It simply says, the Lord is at hand.

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[26:56] Depending upon which commentaries you read or which preachers you prefer, you will hear two different interpretations of this sentence. Scholars differ about whether Paul is referring to the Lord's return or if Paul is talking about the Lord being present and observing our daily lives.

Let's talk about each of those perspectives and then talk about why those perspectives really don't matter. If Paul is speaking of the Lord's return, then perhaps he's saying something like, Jesus is returning, so live appropriately.
Do you want him to return and find you being harsh and self-promoting? But if Paul is referring to the Lord's presence, he may just be calling their attention to the fact that God is close to the Philippians and he's ready to assist them in their pursuit of Christ's likeness.
The Lord's nearness should certainly inspire believers to pray as the next verse commands. The idea of the Lord's presence supplying sweet assurance to the believer can be found throughout the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, and Paul may be echoing the psalmist.
We read passages like, the Lord is near to the brokenhearted in Psalm 34, 18. Here's why the debate really doesn't matter.
[28:14] Both interpretations are theologically correct, and Paul may actually have had both in mind when he wrote those words. Christ's return should cause us to live differently in the present, and Christ's closeness should encourage us and cause us to call on him for blessing and help in the areas of resolving differences, rejoicing, being gentle, and overcoming anxiety.

The reference to anxiety takes us into verse 6. Philippians 4, 6 says, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.
Here we go again with more commands that are absolutes. But these commands are key to the process of becoming people who are always rejoicing in the Lord. Notice the first one.
Paul says, Do not be anxious about anything. He is echoing Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 6, verses 25-34.
Jesus said there, Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life. what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.
[29:37] Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing?
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.
But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you, of little faith?
Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.
[30:39] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself, sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

We could easily make a full study out of these words from Jesus. If you want more detail on those, check out our sermon archive online for more depth on the verses.
For our purposes tonight, suffice us to say that we can resist anxiety because our heavenly Father knows what we need. Our heavenly Father will take care of us.
Many of us were blessed with godly, earthly fathers who gave us a good but imperfect example of what a father should be. Some of us who had earthly fathers may have had fathers who were anything but good examples.
Regardless, believers can take comfort that we have a perfect heavenly Father who loves us and cares about us. God knows what we need and God will provide what we need.
[31:47] 1 Peter 5, verses 6 and 7 is another good cross-reference for how to deal with anxiety. Here are 1 Peter 5, verses 6 and 7.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that, at the proper time, he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

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The best way to cast our anxieties on the Lord is to pray. And Paul reminds us of that in the Philippians text. Look at Philippians 4, 6 again. It says, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. Martin Luther crypt, Pray and let God worry. D.A. Carson says, I have yet to meet a chronic worrier who enjoys an excellent prayer life.
So, here's the antidote to anxiety. This is basic Christianity, but how are you doing in the discipline of unhurried, unhindered time with God?
[32:58] Paul knows that we will have hard times, yet he understands that in those hard times, we can offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Hard times can serve us occasions to offer our request to God.

Remember again where Paul is writing this. We can be thankful as we reflect on the manifold mercies of God, even if we're in a prison. We should also offer up our petitions to God when we're in need.
We should ask and keep on asking as Jesus instructed us, because our Father loves to give good gifts to his children. And that's not just from me, that is from Matthew 7, verses 7-11.
You can see God about any care that you have. You see how that truth can help us rejoice in the Lord always, regardless of our circumstances?
In verse 6 of Philippians 4, Paul uses three different words to describe right praying. He talks about prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving. The word prayer is the general word for making requests known to the Lord.
[34:07] It carries the idea of adoration, devotion, and worship. Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get along with God and worship him.

We must see the greatness and majesty of God. We must realize that he is big enough to solve our problems. Too often we rush into God's presence and hastily tell him our needs when we ought to approach his throne calmly and in deepest reverence.
The first step in right praying is adoration. The second step in right praying is supplication and that's an earnest sharing of our needs and problems.
This is no place for half-hearted or insincere prayer. Our Father wants us to be earnest in our asking. This is the way that Jesus prayed in the garden.
While his closest disciples were sleeping, Jesus was sweating great drops of blood. supplication is a matter of spiritual intensity. After adoration and supplication comes appreciation or thanksgiving.
[35:19] Certainly, God enjoys hearing his children say thank you. We are eager to ask, but often slow to appreciate what God has done for us.

Are you feeling challenged and convicted yet? Paul has been building toward our final verse for tonight. Rejoicing always is hard, even when the reference is rejoicing in the Lord.
Desplaying graciousness to everyone is hard. Avoiding anxiety is hard. And even making all our requests known to God is hard.
Adding to those challenges, we know that even the godliest Christians can never perfectly obey those commands. If you're still wondering why we should bother to even try obeying those commands, the last verse of tonight's passage gives you the answer.
So far, we've seen the precept and the process. In our last verse to cover tonight, Philippians 4-7, we see the promise. So the promise is your last blink.
[36:26] Look at Philippians 4-7 again. It says, And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. So here we see more absolutes, but these are absolutes that we will like.

For example, everyone wants to have peace. Paul tells us that when we strive to obey the commands in the previous verses, we will benefit from the peace of God.
John MacArthur wrote, once the sinner has made peace with God, that is, in salvation having ceased to be God's enemy and become his child, he can enjoy the peace of God, the inward tranquility of soul granted by God.
It is a confident trust in God's flawless wisdom and infinite power that provides calm amid the storms of life. The possibility of peace with God is a truth that we see illustrated throughout the Old and New Testaments.
Here are just a few examples. Isaiah 26.3 says, You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you.

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[37:39] Numbers chapter 6 verses 24 through 26 have the famous blessing that God told Moses to say to Aaron and to the people. Here are numbers 6 24 through 26.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.
How about Psalm 29.11? May the Lord give strength to his people. May the Lord bless his people with peace. In the New Testament, Romans 15.13 says, May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
If you still need another cross-reference to encourage you, John 14.27 has some words from Jesus himself. In John 14.27 Jesus said, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you.
Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. In the midst of considering God's promises of peace, we need to remember that God's peace applies only to believers, people who have repented of their sins and who have trusted in Jesus' perfect sacrifice alone for salvation.
[39:06] Isaiah 48.22 reminds us of that. Isaiah 48.22 says, There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked. Going back to our Philippians text, we see other amazing things about peace with God.

Paul says, And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. John MacArthur said, The peace of God transcends human intellectual powers, human analysis, human insights, and human understanding.
It is superior to human scheming, human devices, and human solutions. Its source is the God whose judgments are insearchable, and whose ways are unfathomable.
The peace of God is experienced in the transcendent calm that lifts the believer above the most debilitating trial. Because it is supernatural, it resists any human comprehension.
The real challenge of the Christian life is to trust in the good purpose of our infinite, holy, sovereign, powerful God in every difficulty. Those who honor God by trusting him will experience the blessings of his perfect peace.
[40:20] The peace promise to believers is active. Paul says that this peace will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. The word translated will guard is a military term that's used of soldiers on guard duty.

This picture would have been familiar to the Philippians. The Romans stationed troops in Philippi to protect their interest in that part of the world just as soldiers guard and protect the city.
So God's peace guards and protects believers who confidently trust in him. Consider why Paul mentioned that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.
The heart is a reference to feelings. The mind is a reference to thoughts. Paul is saying that the peace of God will guard both our feelings and our thoughts.
And of course those are the two main internal things that can cause doubts, worries, and fears to spring up inside us. And it says the peace of God guards our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.
[41:26] Here's a quote from Dennis Johnson. He said, those who trust in Christ can face every threat and wound that the twisted world can inflict. Tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword, death, and life, things present and things to come, or anything else in all creation because we are assured that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And you probably recognize that he was simply paraphrasing Romans chapter 8 verses 35 through 39. Refocusing on your faithful Lord, treasuring Jesus and his grace as your life's foundation, is what imparts joy and gentleness, enabling us to combat worry by praying with gratitude, by pondering Christ's character, and by practicing the pattern of gospel-shaped conduct.
We grow anxious when we fail to remember God's promises. So take God at his word. Believe that he gives peace to those who seek his presence. And that, of course, is the peace of God.
Believe that he will provide for his children and fight fear with God's promises. What we've studied tonight is much different than prosperity theology.
God never promises material possessions and earthly treasures. God promises something much deeper, much more important, and much greater. And that, of course, is God's peace, God's presence, and God's provisions to do kingdom work.
[43:03] Seek first the kingdom and then trust God. Think about the implications of this if every believer lived out the teaching from this passage. Think of all the sins that would be overcome by a heart that rejoices in the Lord always.

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Would this practice conquer sins like envy, gossip, stinginess, arrogance, or discontentment? How about complaining? All those sins grow out of a heart that lacks trust and joy in Christ.
Further, when we rejoice in the Lord while we serve the Lord, we honor Him. Our attitudes as we serve the Lord matter to God. So let's regularly reflect on how graciously the Lord has treated us, and may that reflection lead us to live a life of joy.
Also remember that only believers through the power of the Holy Spirit can come close to obeying the commands in tonight's passage. Only believers can experience the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.
If you have yet to put your faith in God alone for salvation, you can be saved. Then you will have an eternal reason to be thankful as we approach the Thanksgiving holiday this year.
[44:17] Romans 10.9 reminds us, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for this reminder that you expect your followers to rejoice, and to rejoice always in every circumstance.
Lord, we also thank you that you didn't just give us this command and then tell us to figure out how to do that for ourselves. You also showed us how that we can rejoice always, and that, of course, is to rejoice in the Lord.
Lord, whenever we face difficulty, Lord, help us remember that, and help us face those difficulties with true rejoicing in the Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
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