

January 30 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

Anxious for Nothing: Chapter 1: Less Fret, More Faith

How does the world teach us to cope with anxiety?

How does the world's solution for anxiety differ from God's solution?

What does "Rejoicing in the Lord" and "Delight in the Lord" mean to you?

Philippians 4:4-8

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 letter to the church of Philippi, the first Christian church in Europe, is one of the most personal of Paul's writings. Paul wrote this letter from prison and at a time when he was suffering greatly and when he wondered if he might soon be killed. He wrote to the people he loved who had supported him so faithfully in his ministry. From Paul's perspective, they could well be his final words of advice and heartfelt thanks to his faithful friends. Paul shares joy, hardship, humility, love, service, hope beyond suffering; all centered on living and preaching Christ and resting in God's glory. Paul tells the Philippians that even though they face persecution and danger, their lives as Christians should be consistent with the truth of God in Jesus who gave himself up in love for others.

Poignantly, Paul reflects the joy of the Christian experience to this church that he held most dear. The words "joy" and "rejoice" are used 16 times in the epistle. Philippians 4:4-8 is supposedly the most highlighted scripture in the Bible. Paul speaks of "rejoicing in the Lord", which is so important that he repeats this charge. Paul's prescription for anxiety is this call to rejoice in the Lord, which is not a call of a feeling, but to a decision.

Paul employs the phrase, 'in the Lord,' which he uses throughout his letters. Alexander MacLaren, a noted Christian expositor, writes that the phrase 'in Christ Jesus' is the signature stamped upon all the gifts of God, and upon all the possible blessings of the Christian life. 'In Him' we have the inheritance; in Him we obtain redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; in Him we are 'blessed with all spiritual blessings.' The deepest description of the essential characteristic of a Christian life is, to Paul, a life 'in Christ'. It is this union with Christ that is the foundation and the source of all gladness, which he desires to see spreading its light over the Christian life. 'Rejoice in the Lord, being in Him be glad, then there is no room for anxiety in anything.

The psalmist writes *"Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart."* (Psalm 37:4) The great promise does not mean that, if we will be good, God will give us the earthly blessings which we wish. God Himself is the heart's desire of those who delight in Him. Our truest joy is in His fellowship and His grace. To delight in God is to possess our delight.

Solomon, in all his wisdom, shares in Proverbs 13:12: *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.* We are reminded not to allow our hope to become distorted to the temporal, leading to an anxious heart, but we are to remember that the Lord is our only hope (Psalm 39:7). Our unfulfilled desires and deferred hopes can lead us to rich encounters with our Savior: *“The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:25-26).* We know that the Lord alone is the true fulfillment of our longings, the Vine who is Life itself.

Jesus, in Matthew 6:33-34, proclaims: *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”* He instructs us in Luke 21:34: *“Do not let your hearts become drowsy with the anxieties of daily life.”* In each moment, let our life in Christ be the dominant desire, which controls and underlies all the rest. Seek for God in everything, and for everything in God. In doing so, we are to *cast all our anxiety on Him and to put our trust in Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 56:3),* while remembering that *Christ’s grace is sufficient, and that His power is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

A song to reflect and pray on:

[The Afters - I Will Fear No More \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

Looking ahead – Sunday February 6

Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World

Section 1: Celebrate God’s Goodness

Chapter 2 – Rejoice in the Lord's Sovereignty