

Dealing with the Issues of Life

Scripture

“Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, 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 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 things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:1-9 NKJV)

Thesis

A believer may live successfully by learning to pray and not react; and by dwelling on good things and not negative things.

Commentary

Paul has been dealing with the Christian life through this whole epistle. He began by mentioning there were some who preached Christ out of envy and strife to cause Paul trouble (1:16). Paul is not upset by this but rejoices in the fact that Christ is preached.

He wants the Philippians to understand that living for Christ is not about getting your own way, but living sacrificially for the glory of God. Therefore, he gives Christ’s suffering as an example of how we are to live. Now, this is not an easy thing to accomplish. Therefore, in our passage above he gives the Philippians a two-fold plan by which they may have good success.

It is clear from the context, and accounting of your own life, that personal conflicts are one of our greatest struggles. These struggles in turn become a great impetus to sin. It would be very easy for Paul to be bitter with the men who sought to do him harm. However, he has learned the blessings of prayer. The first thing we are to do when dealing with personal conflicts is to pray with thanksgiving. Therefore, he gives this advice to two women who apparently were not on the same page, Euodia and Syntyche.

When someone has hurt you or offended you, prayer is your weapon against bitterness. Do not run to your neighbor to find comfort. Do not seek revenge. Seek the Lord! Pray with thanksgiving until God gives you peace. He promised just that, peace that passes all understanding.

It may be difficult to pray with thanksgiving at first, but continue until you are able to be thankful. God will make you thankful through your prayers. Just remain steadfast until He answers.

The next or another thing to do is to meditate on good things. He gives a long list of things for you to consider. Focusing on the evil will just cause more bitterness. Don't compare yourself against that one who has wronged you, but compare yourself with God.

Realize the blessings you have in Christ. None of this other stuff will have much power over you if you live for Christ and not yourself.

The outcome will be a heart and mind that is under the control of God's Spirit. There will be no anxiety to distract you, no anger, but the peace of God comforting your soul.

Father, there are many times when we struggle with others. Forgive us when we gossip or grumble. Let us learn to walk with you at all times. No person can guard our hearts and minds but you. Running to others just causes us to dwell on the bad things. Give us the wisdom to heed this advice from Paul, and to focus on the good things, things that are true and virtuous. We want you to be glorified for you are worthy, and we know that you are glorified when we are of one mind. Have your way Lord, amen.