

SUNDAY

June 26, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verse 1)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What does Paul mean to stand firm in the Lord? How does one do that? (review 3: 17-21)

KEY CONCEPT: Paul instructs the readers to “join together” and watch those who are living godly lives. We may take instruction in modeling our lives after those who are leading a life that honors the Lord.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: What do you do to stand firm? How effective is it? What might you add to help you do this (Bible, prayer, accountability partner, etc.)? Do you have a spiritual mentor whom you seek when important life questions arise? Who are some of the people you have sought out over your lifetime when you needed perspective? What were the results of those encounters? Do you need to find someone new who can give you a more godly perspective than those you have gone to in the past?

PRAY: Proverbs 15:22 counsels that is good to have many advisors when making plans. Similarly, being able to observe how godly people “do life” can bring God’s wisdom into your own. If you don’t have such people around you, ask Jesus today to help you discover a few people you might begin to have as mentors and role models that will help you to “stand firm in the Lord.”

MONDAY

June 27, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verses 2-3)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What is happening regarding these two women? Are they friends or adversaries of Paul and the cause of Christ? How is Paul urging others to help out?

KEY CONCEPT: Unity within the body of Christ has a very high value, as it gives testimony to those outside the faith of who Jesus Christ is. We need to strive for unity in our relationships with other believers. (See John 17: 20-23)

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Do you have any broken relationships with people who are committed to the same causes as you? What can we learn from these verses about how God feels about the relationships we have? Are you good at reconciling damaged relationships quickly, or do you let the wounds fester and bitterness develop? How can we overcome the challenges to a healthy, positive relationship with others?

PRAY: Before going to prayer today, read Matthew 5:23-24. Notice how God wants us to reconcile with others even before worshipping him! Ask the Lord to reveal to you those with whom you need to mend some fences. As He does so, thank Him, and continue to pray for His wisdom in how to begin this reconciliation process.

TUESDAY

June 28, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verse 4)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What does Paul exhort the Philippian church to do? How many times does he say this? What do we infer because of this?

KEY CONCEPT: A rejoicing attitude is not a product of our circumstances, but of our redemption from sin and reconciliation with God. This brings us new life in the Spirit here and now, as well as the promise of our eternal destiny with God in heaven.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: How does one simply “rejoice?” Is this an attitude that one can just conjure up of one’s own strength? What part do your circumstances have to do with your ability to rejoice? When you take time to consider what you have that was provided by way of Jesus’ sacrifice, is it possible NOT to have a rejoicing spirit? What would your spirit be like if you were not living under the grace that God has provided to you?

PRAY: Make this a day of total rejoicing in the Lord. As often as you can, lift up prayers of adoration to God for who He is, and thanksgiving for all the ways you know He is at work in your life and in the world around you.

WEDNESDAY

June 29, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verses 5-7)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: Paul describes a “recipe” for receiving God’s peace in these verses. What are the “ingredients” of this recipe? According to verse 7, what will peace do for us? How would you rephrase this passage in your own words?

KEY CONCEPT: We have an interactive relationship with God (not a static one), based on our humility and His wonderful grace. He desires our pursuit of that relationship through prayer...and will bless us as we do so.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Do you have a general sense of peace about you? Do you know what Paul means by peace transcending all understanding? What are the things that seem to block you from having true peace? Have you been actively cultivating your relationship with God through prayers of petition and thanksgiving on a regular basis? What attitude do you have when you approach God in prayer? Do you think this makes a difference in your relationship with Him?

PRAY: Remind yourself that God is the potter and you are but the clay (Isaiah 45:9-10). Approach Him in prayer with a humble and thankful spirit today. Lift up today’s Scripture to God and tell Him what is on your heart. Thank Him for how he will choose to answer your prayers...and remember that the timing of those answers is up to Him as well. Count the byproduct of a peaceful spirit as one of God’s blessings, and be sure to thank Him for it.

THURSDAY

June 30, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verses 8-9)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What kinds of things does Paul encourage the readers of this letter to keep in their minds? What does he encourage the Philippian church to do? What will be the result?

KEY CONCEPT: Knowledge is important, but so too is focusing your mind and thoughts on the noble things of life. Put into action those things which will honor God. "Faith without action is dead."

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: In your own life, what are the things that distract you from thinking as Paul encourages the Philippians to think? Take some time right now to read over the words in verse 8 (i.e. "noble," "lovely," "admirable" etc.) and consider an example of what each of them would be for you. Now think about the opposite of those words and what an example would be that tempts you to dwell on it. What can you do to help you move away from negative thinking and closer to Paul's instruction on what to set your mind upon? What are some of the things that you have learned or received from God that still need to be put into practice in your life?

PRAY: Today ask God to help you move proactively toward Him in your thought life and in your deeds. Pray that He will protect you from temptation and ungodly thoughts. Pray also that He will reveal opportunities to "put legs" on the concepts that He has taught you...helping you to move from a life of intellectual understanding to a life of action for the cause of Christ.

FRIDAY

July 1, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verses 10-13)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What gave Paul reason for rejoicing in this passage? How do you think the Philippians showed their concern for Paul?

KEY CONCEPT: While we have certain needs for survival, much of what we consider a need is merely a want. With God's help, we can experience contentment in all circumstances that we find ourselves in.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Paul says he is content in any situation. Are you? What causes Paul's contentment do you suppose...is it his wealth or material possessions? Where does Paul get his strength? Have you experienced times of wealth or poverty? What has been the impact of those situations upon your sense of joy and peace? In what ways have you experienced doing "all things through Him?" Have you had an opportunity to share with others who may need some help in overcoming their struggles how Jesus gives you strength in a time of need?

PRAY: Peace and contentment are true, non-material blessings that come from God. Jesus has told us that in our lives we will have trouble. Yet He also says that He has overcome the world. With these thoughts in mind, come before God in prayer today and just open your heart up to Him. Share your joys and your hurts, your frustrations and your thanksgivings. Let Him know where you are anxious and need His peace. When we are fully open and transparent, we will experience a deep fellowship with God that will bless us richly.

SATURDAY

July 2, 2011

READ: Philippians 4 (Focus: verses 14-20)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What important principle is Paul speaking about in this passage? What was the value of the Philippians' support of Paul? What does Paul mean in verse 17 that he desires more be credited to the Philippians' account? What does Paul claim about God's response to their support for him in verse 19?

KEY CONCEPT: We cannot out-give God. As we freely share with others that which God has provided, He is pleased and is faithful to meet our needs. The key to our security is not in our stuff, it is in our relationship with God through Christ.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: How does this example from the Bible relate to our church? How does it relate to your personal use of the money and resources that you have control over? What is the value of sacrificing for the benefit of others in their time of need? How have you seen, in a personal way, the fulfillment of verse 19?

PRAY: In your prayer time today, ask God if He is pleased with how you are stewarding the resources He has given you to keep watch over. Ask Him to help you see ways in which you may re-allocate your resources that will allow Him to work more effectively through you to bring about His plan.



Personal Devotional Guide - June 26 - July 2, 2011
McLane Church :: Erie County, PA