

Unity and joy are signs of a healthy church
(Phil 4.1-7; 05-24-20am)

Central Thought: Rejoicing helps prepare our hearts for praying and trusting (v4-7)

I. Guarding unity in the church (1-3)

A. Shepherding begins with love (1) *whom I love . . . my beloved*

B. Shepherding includes correction (2-3) *entreat . . . agree in the Lord*

1. Two ladies People of influence
2. *True companion* Also a person of influence
3. *Clement* *fellow worker* with Paul

II. Joy is at the heart of spiritual health – for the believer, and for the church (4-7)

A. Joy is not optional for the believer (4) *rejoice in the Lord always*

1. To be in the Lord should produce a constant state of rejoicing
2. Our joy is actually nurtured or made more constant through rejoicing

B. Be reasonable in all weathers: Jesus is coming (5) *let your reasonableness be known to everyone*

Reasonableness (gentleness) should be evident to others.
When folks think about you, do they generally consider you to be a reasonable person?

C. The cure for anxiety is prayer (6-7) *do not be anxious; pray*

1. Believers are commanded to avoid anxiety (Ps 139.13-16 & 23-24)
2. Prayer is the antidote to every form of anxiety

Prayer: broader or more general term; speaks to regular praying (cf. 1 Thess 5.16-18)
Supplication [petition]: more specific or more earnest praying – perhaps about a more serious matter
(Matt 7.7-11)

3. Gratitude feeds our faith and bolsters our trust; gratitude starves discontent and dissatisfaction
Gratitude says we remember that God is good, and He will not forsake us and He will keep us
Gratitude echoes David's confidence in Ps 23.4: God comforts us in our darkest valleys
Gratitude reminds us to lift our hands in praise while we are on our knees seeking help
Gratitude fuels our confidence as we approach God's throne in need of grace and mercy (Heb 4.16)
4. God wants to hear our prayers; His promise for our prayers is peace
This peace is a supernatural peace; a divine peace – it comes from the God of the universe
This peace is transcendent – it is often beyond normal human logic or understanding
This peace is protective – it is able to guard hearts and minds
This peace is a sanctuary from every threat of anxiety

The peace of God becomes a sentinel for our hearts and minds; it is able to guard us against doubt & fear