

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, **that we may continually be given to good works**; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*

Philippians 4:1-9

My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, **for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-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 everyone. **The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to the people in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Philippians 4:1-9

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord....

...Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything,

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

let your requests be made known to God. ...

...Finally, beloved,

whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,

whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,

if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise,

think about these things....

...And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to the people in parables, saying:

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to...

1. -a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet (INVITATION TO REJOICE 1)
 2. but they would not come. (REACTION=REJECTION 1 (REFUSAL))
 3. Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ (INVITATION TO REJOICE 2)
 4. But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. REACTION-REJECTION 2 (CHOOSE TO DISMISS & PRIORITIZE WORK, CHOOSE VIOLENCE):
 5. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. REACTION=JUDGEMENT 1
 6. Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ INVITATION TO REJOICE 3:
 7. Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. REACTION=MIXED
 - a. INSERT COMMENTARY re: Wedding Garments
 8. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ REACTION=JUDGEMENT
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Today's Epistle—MOST PRACTICAL ADVICE EVER

Good Memory Verse; Good Pop Psychology; Good Clinical Psychology; Good Marketing Swag (Stickers)

Conflict & Anxiety (both internal & external) are an ever present reality for humans—both individually and corporately)—in life, in community, and in the church.

Conflict leads to anxiety. Anxiety leads to conflict.

CONTEXT of today's epistle is conflict (and presumably anxiety)

[I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.]

ADVICE: “Prescription”

- 1) *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.*
- 2) *Let your gentleness (aka temperance, forbearance, moderation, patient grace) be known to everyone.*
- 3) *The Lord is near.*
- 4) *Do not worry about anything, (???????)*
- 5) *but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God....*
- 6) *....Finally, beloved,
whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things (let your mind dwell on these things). (FOCUS:
SINGLEHEARTED)*

DETOUR-GOSPEL

(distressing “Parable of the Wedding Banquet”, one of Matthew’s “parables of judgement”...ends w/weeping and gnashing of teeth)

In the Kingdom of God—Celebration is SERIOUS BUSINESS!!!

(as we did a couple weeks ago, we can put Epistle in conversation w/the Gospel)

Once more Jesus spoke to the people in parables, saying:

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to...

9. *-a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet* (INVITATION TO REJOICE 1)
10. *but they would not come.* (REACTION=REJECTION 1 (REFUSAL)
11. *Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’* (INVITATION TO REJOICE 2)
12. *But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.* REACTION-REJECTION 2 (CHOOSE TO DISMISS & PRIORITIZE WORK, CHOOSE VIOLENCE):
13. *The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.* REACTION=JUDGEMENT 1
14. *Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’* INVITATION TO REJOICE 3:
15. *Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless.* REACTION=MIXED
 - a. INSERT COMMENTARY re: Wedding Garments
16. *Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’* REACTION=JUDGEMENT

Tough passage:

Joy & Judgement cannot coexist.

You can choose Joy. Or you can choose Judgement.

(Passage from Philippians offers good advice for for Wedding Guests AND Wedding Host—throughout the story there are numerous hinge points where anyone could make a different choice and change the trajectory of the story)

REJOICE-HANG IN THERE-REMEMBER the Lord is near!-PRAY/GIVE
THANKS/ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED-FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

GP-Who are you in the parable???

KING-REJOICE! LET YOUR GENTLENESS BE KNOWN TO ALL

INVITED TO THE PARTY-TAKE IT SERIOUSLY! WELCOME & THANK THE
MESSENGER! PRIORITIZE THE PARTY! AND BE
SINGLEHEARTED/WHOLEHEARTED IN THE CELEBRATION! (don't hedge your
bets)

CONCLUSION

Postcommunion prayer: "GLADNESS & SINGLENES OF HEART"

...Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you with *gladness* and *singleness of heart*...

From now on, whenever we pray that prayer, I will call to mind today's reading from Philippians, and Paul's good advice

CLOSING MEDITATION: PICTURE CONFLICT (external or internal anxiety)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ...

The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything,

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

let your requests be made known to God.

Finally, beloved, ...

whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,

whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,

if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise,

Let your heart and mind dwell on these things....

In the face of conflict and anxiety,

This is your assignment, your prescription, your medicine, your work

And, if you devote yourself to this work “with gladness and singleness of heart”

The Scriptures promise that

.... the peace of God,

which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds

in Christ Jesus.

Amen.