

Philippians 8

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[0 : 00] As we continue then our progress through this part of the letter to the Philippians, in this final chapter, chapter 4, we begin with this term, therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, I'm long for.

And the therefore obviously has reference to the immediately foregoing verses. Bearing in mind that in the original there would be no chapters and verses, it would be one continuous narrative.

And the conclusion of chapter 3, as we looked at last Lord's Day evening, says our conversation, that means our citizenship, is in heaven.

From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we say that that would be something the Philippines could relate to, Philippi being a colony, which meant that in Roman terms, they planted colonies of ex-soldiers as the sort of basis for a colony, for a city, a town.

And throughout the empire, and the distinctive feature of each colony was it was meant to be a little microcosm of Rome, a real chip off the old block of exactly the same style and method of government.

[1 : 07] Latin was the language used, Roman dress, Roman customs, Roman forms and culture and everything throughout. Regardless of where it was, regardless of climate or culture or circumstances, it was a little plantation of Rome everywhere that such colonies were placed.

And in such colonies, only certain people had citizenship. And if you had citizenship of Philippi or any other such Roman colony, you had citizenship of Rome.

And that gave you that certain privileges. And this is what it means. Our conversation, our citizenship is in heaven. Just as Philippi was not geographically in Rome, but it was like a little outpost of it, so Philippi in terms of the church is not actually physically, geographically heaven, but it is a little outpost of it.

And their citizenship is in heaven. Our conversation, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that is our earthbound, fleshly body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

But our body, it has a nobility about it, because that is what Christ himself took on our human flesh. Therefore, my brethren, in the light of these things, in the light of the nobility that Christ has put upon you, that he has taken your flesh to become a human being, that he has given you citizenship, not in Rome, but in heaven.

[2 : 43] Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for, this expression underlines the fact he is separated from them physically at the moment, though not by the Spirit, longed for, my joy and crown.

So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Now, this indicates to us his deep love for this, his favourite church, I think you can see that, as I mentioned previously, without too much of a shadow of a doubt, his favourite church.

And also the fact that they will themselves experience pressure, hostility, opposition. Otherwise, there's no need to stand fast. You know, if the tide is never coming in, then it doesn't really matter whether you build your little sandcastle on the sand or on a rock.

If the sea isn't going to come in and threaten it and wash it, it doesn't matter too much. But if there's going to be a threat, if there's going to be opposition, then you've got to be able to stand.

Then it matters whether it's on a rock or whether it's on the sand. So stand fast, my dearly beloved, because the tide is going to come against you.

[3 : 56] The opposition is going to come. The minute you stand as opposed to lie down like a craven lost soul and stand upon your feet like a man or woman groaned into the fullness of humanity because you are in Christ, the devil will see, will take note and will act upon that.

He will come against you with every conceivable temptation and attempt to undermine you. Some of it may be hostile and aggressive. Some of it may be more subtle or seductive.

It may be to try and pull you back with sweetness back into the world. But either way, it is an attempt to knock you off your feet and back into your craven prone position as a lost soul.

But stand fast. How are they to stand fast? Fast in the Lord. You might think, well, of course, you would say in the Lord. No, it's not just a phrase. Paul uses it three times in these two or three opening verses.

We see it in verse one. We see it in verse two. And we see it in verse four. And it is distinctive. And it is necessary in each case. Because there is no way that you and I can stand unless we stand in the Lord.

[5 : 09] If we are in the power of his strength, the devil doesn't have the power to overcome us. The world, the flesh, and the devil in sin cannot overcome Christ.

It can easily overcome us. But it cannot overcome Christ. See, the devil is not scared of us. He has far more power than we do. He is a pure undiluted.

I don't mean pure in the sense of holy. But he is a spirit in the sense of the ultimate evil spirit. He has far more power than we do. He knows his Bible much better than we do.

He could quote scripture to Jesus when he was tempting him in the wilderness. He can undermine whatever strength you have. You and I simply do not have the power to stand against him. We are as putty in his hands.

We are flesh and blood. He has all the power of the demons of hell against us. But, whilst he is so much stronger than we are, he is so much weaker than Christ.

[6 : 06] It is why when Jesus comes into a synagogue, the demons that possess the souls there tremble and say, What have we got to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Why have you come here? Have you come to torment us before the time?

They are always kind of whinging and crying and not wanting him to come near them. Because they are terrified of Christ. If you are going to stand, my friend, you will not stand in how moral you are.

You will not stand in what a good show you have been putting up. And how much you have tried to keep God's laws and commands. And hope that he will be pleased with you at the end of the day. Jesus said you must be born again.

It means that we must die to the old self and be clothed in Christ and his righteousness. That his is the life that lives in us.

His is the heart that beats in us. His is the righteousness which the devil comes up against and cannot overcome. Therefore stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

[7 : 07] That is the only way you will stand at all. It was true in Philippi and it is true in Scalpic. It was true in the first century. It is true in the 21st century.

If we would stand at all, we must stand in the Lord. Not in the church or denomination or any sense of our own righteousness.

But in the Lord. That is the thing which matters most. And the second verse follows on from this. I beseech you, Odias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Now these two, these are women's names, so given here, well technically Udias, as the authorised version has it, would be a masculine name, but it's thought by most people to it should be Udias and Syntyche.

These are two women who clearly are church workers in Philippi. We don't know whether they were amongst the first women that Paul met there in Acts 16 at verse 13, where we read on the Sabbath, we went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

[8 : 16] The only one that we read of that was converted at that time is Lydia, of whom the following verses go on to speak. But Udias and Syntyche clearly were church workers of some kind or prominent in the congregation.

And it's not just a case of, oh, two swaddling women, just leave them to it and we'll get on with our lives. Where there is division in the church, Paul is saying they must be of the same mind in the Lord.

It means that if they're not of the same mind, they're out of the Lord. And I think, oh, come on, that's a bit steep. You know, Christians can disagree with each other. It is one thing to disagree with each other in the Lord.

To say, well, brother, sister, you know, that's your genuine opinion from Scripture and I respect it because I can see where you're getting it from. But I've always understood these verses differently and I think this is the case and I respect where you're coming from, but I take a different view.

But hey, you know, let's just disagree in love and let's go on in the Lord as brethren and sisters together. That's disagreeing in the Lord. That's having a different opinion and, you know, we'll all find out who's right when we get to heaven and who's wrong and so on.

[9 : 23] But it doesn't matter too much if it's a disagreement in love in the Lord. But if they're not in the Lord, then that is the very poison that gets in to a church body and begins to infect it.

Because Euronius and Syntyche will not be living their lives in a vacuum. They will not be two isolated individuals with no connection to anybody else. Almost certainly they will belong to families.

They may or may not have husbands. Guess which side their respective husbands will take. If one of their husbands is a deacon or an elder or something, then that will likewise bring the conflict into the eldership meeting or the deacons meeting or the church's ruling council.

It will affect the internet, interact-acting network of the families throughout the church, people taking this side or that side. And before you go, there is a hole falling out within the church of Jesus Christ because two individuals, whether they're male or female or whatever, it doesn't matter if they're at loggerheads with one another and out of the Lord in doing so, that will affect and infect the entire body if it is not dealt with.

That is why Paul is very, very careful here. He doesn't perhaps know all the details. Perhaps he has heard it from Epaphroditus. But he is pleading with them both absolutely equally.

[10 : 55] It's not, I beseech you, Odius and Syntyche, because we all know how to say, oh, he put her name first instead of mine. That means he thinks she's right and I'm wrong. I beseech you, Odius and beseech Syntyche.

There's equal pleading to both individuals that they be of the same mind in the Lord. It doesn't mean they have to necessarily say, well, actually, I think you were right all along.

It doesn't mean that they have to absolutely reflect each other's position perfectly. But if they can agree in the Lord, then they are able to unite around this ultimate leader and everything else pales into insignificance.

Now, what happens, for example? Why, let's say you have an election in this country. If you have an election, then the different parties will be out there campaigning trying to get your vote. Now, political parties, I am sure, are just like any other body of people where you'll have different interpretations, different views, different wings within the party, but they will all unite around their figurehead leader, especially if the figurehead leader continues to deliver results.

Now, if, let's say, that figurehead leader is removed, then suddenly you've got him fighting amongst parties, who's going to be the leader next, this faction or that faction or whatever, and only once a new leader is imposed or elected, then everybody gels around that leader again.

[12 : 22] And whatever their differences of opinion within the party or within an army or a body of people or any group of people, if they are united around especially a strong or successful leader, then all their other differences will melt into the background.

They'll all campaign for the same platform. They'll all follow the same manifesto. They'll all be urging the votes for the same party, different candidates standing in different parts of the country, but they'll all be united on this ticket and around this leader if they're convinced of his or her leadership.

Now, this is the point that Paul is making to you, Odeus and Syntyche. Unite in the Lord. He is the ultimate leader. He is the one who delivers results. He is the one who is stronger than any other leader.

Unite in the Lord. Be of the same mind in the Lord. Whatever your own thoughts, your own opinions, your own differences, you can come together at least and unite in the Lord.

If you don't unite in the Lord, you'll never unite outside of him. And this is what so often causes difficulties in churches, yes, as well as in parties or other bodies or families or whatever it may be, when people lose that unity in the Lord.

[13 : 41] He is not the ultimate focus of their belonging together. I beseech you, Odeus, and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Paul is humbling himself here and pleading with these women that they come together at least in Christ and unite around this ultimate leadership.

We'll come to the third in the Lord in just a minute. But then verse three, it's quite an interesting verse here. I beseech thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women. The reference is almost certainly back to verse two, Odeus and Syntyche, which laboured with me in the gospel.

So they are workers for the gospel, workers with Paul, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers whose names are in the book of life. We can preach a whole sermon on this verse, but we'll try and be brief as we can.

First of all, true yoke fellow. An individual. It's an odd thing. Philippi's a big city. It's a colony. Who's this nameless individual that Paul is saying?

[14 : 44] You know, everybody should know who he is. This letter is not written to an individual. It is written, verse one, chapter one, as we see, to those of Philippi with the bishops and deacons, all the saints in Christ Jesus.

Somebody is being identified as a true yoke fellow. And an individual, a personal, one person here who's helping these women. I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers.

Who is it? Well, truth would be saying, we don't know. But there's another possible twist here, because the actual word that has been translated to this true yoke fellow in almost every translation is the word zynzegus, or zynzegus, however you pronounce it, which is a Greek word that means, well, the yigus means a worker or labourer or fellow or yoke worker and that.

And the syn, as in, you know, symphony or synchronicity or a synthesis, you know, two different theses, bringing two sides together. So true yoke fellow could possibly be a pun on a proper name, because zynzegus was a name that was used in Greek at that time.

And if that was the case, it would be not unlike what Paul writes to Philemon, verses 10 and 11 of Philemon, where we read, I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me.

[16 : 21] Now the name Onesimus means literally profitable. So Paul is doing a pun, a play on words, Onesimus, profitable, whom I have begotten in my bonds, which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to both to thee and to me.

He's punning on the name Onesimus. And it is entirely possible that this here of verse 3 is also a pun, true yoke fellow, synchronicus, you whose name means yoke fellow, be a true yoke fellow.

Well, why does anybody translate it that way then? Well, almost every translation going simply translates it as true yoke fellow or comrade or companion or whatever the case may be.

The only one which translates it as a proper name, synchronicus, is ironically the message, which is the most colloquialized, paraphrased, almost comic book type language at times.

And yet, if I were giving a personal opinion, I think I'd have to say, in the context, it is most likely that this would be a proper name. Why do I say that?

[17 : 30] Because proper names is what Paul is doing here. In verse 2, I besiege you odious and syndicate. They be of the same mind in the Lord. And should he also, proper name would make sense there, help those women who laboured with me in the gospel.

With Clement also, another proper name thrown in there. And with other, my fellow labourers, whose name's from the book of life. He's throwing in proper names, right, left, and centre. And suddenly, there's this one that isn't named.

In a large city church, this true yoke fellow is meant to be automatically identifiable by everybody who reads the letter. In fact, of course, now, we don't know who that is at all.

Some have said, oh, it could be Epaphroditus. No, he's made reference to Epaphroditus in chapter 2. And he's named it. If it was going to be Epaphroditus, he would have said it. It can't be Timothy he's referring to, because Timothy, chapter 1, verse 1, is one of the fellow authors of this letter.

He's the one writing the letter with Paul. So he's not going to be writing about himself. And maybe it could be Silas. Well, maybe it could. Silas was there in Philippi with Paul in the jail, you know, when the earthquake happened.

[18 : 37] But why would he not just say Silas, who was an apostle, not just a fellow worker with Theorius and Syntyche and so on. So if I were venturing a personal opinion, much as I would hate to say it, I would suggest the message has the right translation here, which I think in the context would be a proper name, Synzygous.

It means yoke fellow. It means fellow labourer, companion, comrade, true yoke fellow. In other words, you're a fellow comrade. You're a fellow worker.

You truly are. Now be a fellow worker and help these women which laboured with me in the gospel. With Clement also, another named person. So you can take it or leave it, whether it's a proper name or whether it's just a description.

But I think in the context, it would imply a proper name. Clement also. There was a famous Clement at Rome who became a bishop there. But I think what's interesting about this Clement here is it implies now that given that Paul is writing this maybe a year or two before he is executed, so we're looking at the early 60s AD, that by this stage, probably this Clement is a young man born and brought up in a Christian home.

Why do we say that? Because Clement is, we can't say it's purely a Christian name. There were some Romans with names like Clemens and so on. But it means merciful.

[20 : 07] Now, mercy is not a concept that was great in the pagan religions with the martial Romans and their legions and their strength and force and so on.

It wasn't a big deal to the Greeks and their gods. The fact that somebody has given their child the name Clement, meaning merciful, would suggest that we are seeing here the beginnings now of those brought up in the Christian faith.

Still, yes, young men there would be at this stage. Clement would almost certainly be a very young man, but faithful worker, no doubt. It's a theory. It's not a certainty. But it is a likely boot.

Because those who were born into pagan households wouldn't likely give their son a name that meant merciful. But those who were Christians very probably would.

So it is likely that we are seeing here the beginnings of second generation Christianity. The green shoots of it coming through here in this verse 3.

[21 : 11] With other my fellow labourers whose names are in the book of life. Quick throwaway comment here. But something we also need to bear in mind. That as far as the Lord is concerned, there is a book of life.

And there are names in that book. Not just characteristics and conditions. It's not just, well, who will be in the Lamb's book of life? Those who are kind, those who are merciful, those who are good and true and faithful.

If somebody has those characteristics, they will be there. No, it's not just characteristics. It's not just conditions or types of people. It is names which are in the Lamb's book of life.

Whose names are in the book of life. And this is a concept we find, of course, elsewhere in Scripture. Most notably in Revelation chapter 20. At verse 12. I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.

And the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.

[22 : 15] And this is what we read. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Likewise, chapter 21, verse 27.

There shall no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or makeeth a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Now, earlier on in the book of Revelation, in chapter 3, verse 5, the risen Christ had addressed this comment to Sardis. He said, He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

Now, it's over the cave. Fine. It's there in Revelation. It's there in Philippi. Is this just a Greek concept? No. It's there way back in Old Testament. Hebrew Scriptures.

Exodus, chapter 32, verse 32. Moses is pleading for the people. Oh, this people of sin, the great sin, have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written.

- [23 : 32] And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore, now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee.

Moses is recognizing way back in the book of Exodus, there is a book of life. There is a book which the Lord has written, and there are names in that book.

Names written from all eternity, from the heart of the Father. With other, my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

Now, they think, well, would the Philippines be able to relate to that? Well, yes, they would. We've talked a few verses earlier about citizenship, about their belonging to Philippi, and thereby belonging to Rome.

If they were citizens. Now, every free city maintained a register of its citizenship. And when you were granted the privilege of citizenship, your name was added to the register of citizens.

- [24 : 34] It was their, effectively, book of free men, book of privilege, of citizenship, of life, you might say, for them, for their city. The Philippines would have known exactly what that related to.

Those who were on that register had their citizenship in Philippi, and thereby in Rome. Those who had their names in the Lamb's book of life were those who had their citizenship in heaven.

However, in we're going. Rejoice, verse 4, in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice. It is the third occasion when the term in the Lord is used.

We've already seen it used previously in verse 1 of chapter 3. Rejoice in the Lord to write the same things that you do to me.

Indeed, it's not grievous, but for you to say. And we said in chapter 3 how this rejoicing in the Lord was not merely a sort of don't worry, be happy kind of thing. It was a recognition of triumph, of what the Lord has accomplished, that his work is finished.

- [25 : 38] Because the appropriate time to rejoice, to triumph, is when the victory is secure. When the trophy is in your hands and you lift it, not when you're still playing injury time and anything could go wrong.

It is something which is a symptom of a completed triumph. And thereby it was a sort of rebuke to the legalists who said, oh no, you've got to obey the law.

You've got to be circumcised. You've got to do this. You've got to do that. And only when you've done all that legal righteousness will you be acceptable to God. No. You can rejoice in the Lord because of what Christ has done.

It was also a rebuke to those who, as we saw previously in chapter 3, were antinomians. Those who said, listen, you don't need the law. You don't need anything. I do whatever I like. Because I'm saved in Christ.

If we are to rejoice in Christ, we cannot rejoice in Christ and at the same time trample on their foot all that he teaches us and all his laws and commands.

- [26 : 37] Love for the Lord will motivate our obedience. Joy in the Lord will motivate our triumph. And recognize that when he bows his head and says, it is finished, it really is.

It is done, complete. All that is necessary for our salvation has been accomplished. All that is required of us now is faith. To believe in what Christ has done.

Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice. If we don't have the Lord, we do not have joy. And if you think about it, the world and atheism and other religions, they don't have joy.

They sort of delight in, oh yeah, party, be happy. They talk about happiness and you've got to enjoy life and be happy and have a good time and so on. Now, you ever notice how so much of that seems to involve blotting out reality?

Whether it's with alcohol or something else to give you a high or whatever to blot out the reality of this world. That's not joy. That's a recognition of the misery of this world. It can only be escaped by artificial means.

[27 : 46] And everyone says, oh, be happy, have a good time. How shallow that is compared to the deep, deep love of Jesus. To the joy of the Lord, which is your strength, as Nehemiah puts it.

If we are in the Lord, there is that deep well of joy. There is that life-changing, transforming joy, which will shine even through the tears of sorrow or bereavement or suffering.

The joy of the Lord will not be taken from us. Because no matter what the devil may do to us down here, God is still on his throne. Christ has still won the victory.

And he is still coming again to call his own unto himself. They cannot take that away. We can always rejoice in the Lord. Let your moderation be known unto all men.

The Lord is at hand. Well, yes, the Lord is at hand. And because the Lord is coming, we ought to behave always as those who expect him to arrive at any minute.

[28 : 48] James 5 puts it this way at verses 8 and 9. Be also patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned.

Behold, the judge standeth before the door. Now, as a wee boy, I used to sometimes seek him a home. If only Jesus would just come back and just walk into the room sometime, that would be so much easier.

Than just having to sort of read about him and learn about him in Sunday school. If only he would just come in, walk into the house. And her response was, well, when you consider how much you're swaddling and fighting with your sister, don't you think it's a goof thing?

And sometimes Jesus doesn't walk right in on you when you're in the middle of that. And, okay, that part possibly put me in my place. Of course, probably at the time I thought, no, he would come and he would take my side.

And he would say, tell her, what for? But, no, it is right that we should live as though Christ were at the door. That we would want to be found doing that which he would approve of.

[29 : 51] Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Now, moderation here, it doesn't mean just restraint and sort of behaving ourselves and being quiet. You know, moderation, it is a word which in the original Greek is extremely difficult to translate accurately into English.

And so lots of different versions of the Bible have translated it in different ways. Some have translated it as gentleness. Others as a sort of giving of place.

You can't put this in a single word. But the sense is of a giving of place to others. Not insisting on one's full rights in the name of justice. You know, justice might require, well, I can take my pound of flesh.

I can take every last penny that's entitled to me. But moderation, as we have it here, or this sense of gentleness will be, no, I'm not going to insist on my full rights. I'm going to let you take that which is perhaps more equitable.

I'll take a portion, but I'm not going to pursue the full remit of justice in all its harshness. One commentator has put it thus, that this word translated as moderation is, justice and something better than justice.

[31 : 04] Justice and something better than justice. There are times when the pursuit of the letter of the law would become inequitable.

It might be legal justice to the letter of the law, but it's not equity. It's not actual righteousness. This word means something which is justice and something better than justice.

More than even just equity. It is a kind of kindly self-restraint, even at cost to oneself. The example that some would give is of the woman taken in adultery.

And the objective of those who take her and are prepared to put a soul to death in order to catch Jesus out. That's their motive, is to target Jesus.

She's just collateral in the case. And so if Jesus doesn't come up with the right answer, he's the one who's in trouble. And so here they have this woman taken in the very act, and the law is quite clear.

[32 : 05] Somebody taken in the act of adultery, they've got to be put to death, they've got to be stoned. But Jesus, of course, goes beyond, not less than, but beyond the mere letter of the law.

Strict letter of the law, just as we say, yeah, well, ideally we would have the other party as well. We don't have them, but we have got one guilty party. Fine, execute them. And we'll hope we'll come up with the other one.

But he knew this was a stitch-up job. He knew this was all, if not physically faked, then certainly a set-up. Where was the man?

Where was the other party? This wasn't a random act. This was an act that had been set up so that this poor woman would be expendable collateral in order to catch Jesus out.

And when he convicts them by their own conscience, he doesn't fail to fulfill the law. But rather, what he says to her, as you all know, is, where are those who have condemned you?

[33 : 04] Has nobody condemned you? She's no man, Lord. Then neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more. It is justice. It is justice. Because it would be unjust if only one party to a mutual act is put to death.

But it is more than justice. It is better than justice. That is the word that is summed up with this ineffectual, to some extent, translation of moderation here.

It is justice and something better than justice. It is this self-giving kindness at cost to oneself.

It is more than the letter of the law. It is the spirit of the law and the mercy of God. And let your moderation be known unto all men.

It doesn't just mean tell everybody, display my righteousness. Everybody, I'm kind. I'm generous. I'm gentle. Everybody, see, let it be known to all men. But rather, let it be experienced by all men.

[34 : 08] Let this be the way that you behave with all men. Let them themselves have experience of your moderation, self-giving, equity at cost to yourself.

This gentleness, this kindness, this which is more than mere justice. Why? Because the Lord is at hand. The judge is at the very door.

He sees and knows all that you do. If you're swaddling, he doesn't need to walk in to catch you. He already sees it. He knows everything you've done. He knows everything about it.

But live as though he were about to walk in on you. How you would want to be found. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Be careful for nothing. It doesn't mean be careless. It means don't be full of care. Don't be burdened with anxiety and self-concern. But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be not made known unto God.

[35 : 13] Peter puts it this way. 1 Peter 5, verse 7. Casting all your cares upon him. For he careth for you. So be filled with care.

Careful for nothing. But if you've got a problem, if you've got a need, take it to the Lord. If you've got a political anxiety, if you could go straight to number 10, straight to the Prime Minister, or straight into Charlotte Square, the First Minister of England, the Scottish Parliament, whatever.

If you've got access straight to the top of the shop, then you hope your plea will be heard. Something will be done about it. You've got access straight to the King of Kings. He has the power to do something about it.

He desires to help. He has the, because of his love for you, he has the longing, the desire to do that which is best for you. Because of his wisdom, he knows what is best for you.

And because of his great mercy, sometimes he may, because of what is best for you, withhold what you ask for to the future time. But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

[36 : 26] Well, you can't give thanks in every situation, can you? Well, again, Paul is living out what he himself preaches. Remember how when he first came to Philippi. What happened? He got whipped publicly with Silas, and then they were cast into the inner dungeon.

And we read verse 25 of Acts 16. At midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them. Everybody knew that these guys who'd been publicly humiliated and painfully whipped despite their citizenship were giving praise and thanks to God in the midst of the innermost dungeon.

With thanksgiving in all situations, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

This is the sense of a garrison, always on watch, always protecting, always keeping hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Then we have these beautiful verses in the conclusion of this section.

Finally, brethren. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good report.

[37 : 41] If there'll be any virtue, if there'll be any praise, think of these things. Obviously, you can make a whole sermon out of that, and of course I have in the past. But if we can think of these one by one, reasonably briefly.

First of all, true, God is truth. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. All truth is God's truth. The problem with some things that some scientists think, oh, this proves God.

No, it doesn't. It just proves what God has done. Sometimes people distort the truth in order to present a falsehood because it makes them look better. Sometimes they hide the truth.

God doesn't do that. All truth is God's truth. Whatsoever things are true, if they are genuinely, truly true, even if they make us look not so great, we can acknowledge that truth.

Whatsoever things are honest. Now, again, this is one of these occasions when the word that is translated, honest, it means, at the time of translation, with the authorised version, the old sense of retaining honour.

- [38 : 45] Honesty was retaining honour. But most translations of the Bible put it as honourable. Some used the word reverent. Or worthy. In the senses of great, serious, dignified.

Or as one commentator has put it, that which has the dignity of holiness upon it. That which has the dignity of holiness upon it.

Whatsoever things are honest, filled with that which is honourable. Whatsoever things are just, God we know, God is a God of justice. But just is the sense of not only equity, but the diligence of doing one's duty.

If I have a bill that I own, I have the means to pay it out, well, leave it, not pay it next month or whatever. No, you get the means and you've got the bill, you go and you pay it.

You deal justly with men and you deal justly with God. Pay your vows to the Lord. Pay your duties to men. Love your fellow men as you love the Lord.

- [39 : 46] Be just because that is what God is like and we are called to be like him. Whatsoever things are pure. And the sense here is of chaste.

That which is purity in a physical, in a, I don't know, merely a sexual sense. But the sense of even the thoughts that are pure. These things which are not sunny, not smutty, not tainted by the world.

Think of the good things. Because the more we think on something, whatsoever it may be, whether it's good or bad or indifferent, the more we think and think and think and think upon these things, they end up taking us over.

And we end up reflecting our obsessions in our speech and in our lives and the way we spend our time, the way we spend our money. What we think and think and think and think. You say, oh, he's obsessed with cars.

Oh, he's obsessed with racing. Or she's obsessed with this particular aspect of a career or hobby or with meeting friends or whatever or shopping or whatever it might be. And we are known by our obsessions.

- [40 : 49] Therefore, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good rapport, think on these things. Think and think and think and think and think on them. So that these become your obsession.

These become what fills your mind. These become what flows out of your mouth. What fills your thoughts. You become a reflection of those things upon which you are constantly thinking.

Whatsoever things are pure. Whatsoever things are lovely. Which inspire love. Whatsoever things are of good rapport. Things which have a good name.

Yes, whatever has a good name. It's the word that's translated here. It's connected as a word with when the pagans, the Greeks, would have their sacrifices to the gods.

And then as they brought in their sacrifice, then the first part of that sacrifice was a sort of hush. A kind of silence before they began the process.

- [41 : 51] And that kind of sense of this quiet holiness almost in their temple. This is what is meant by a good report. Somebody has described it as, if somebody has a good report, as though they lived their lives walking through the temple of God the whole time.

We might sum it up in a short form in terms of that which is a good report is the things which are fit for God to hear. The things which are fit for God to hear.

And we're back again to the fact of the judge is at the door. As though Christ is right there. The Lord is at hand. If you don't want Christ to walk in and your mouth is coming out of the whole bunch of stuff that shouldn't be.

Then, you know, button it. And only utter that which is of good report. Worthy of being said. Fit for God to hear. If there be any virtue.

If there be any praise. Think of these things. Piety. Devotion has been described as love upwards to God. Morality, the outward expression of it, has love downwards and outwards to our fellow man.

[42 : 57] Now, these things means that we can find that which is good. If we find that which is good, even in false religions, we can say, well, we don't agree with them, but that's a good thing that they do.

You know, for example, it's not a bad thing. And Muslims pray five times a day. It wouldn't do us any harm to pray five times a day. Not the way they do and not to the God or the prophet that they do, but we pray five times a day and we would only benefit from it.

Likewise, when the Hindu gives alms to the begging monk at the side of the street, he doesn't say thank you because he's doing them a favor because in enabling them to give, they are working up credit for their next incarnation and reincarnation life.

The more good they do giving alms to these monks, the higher up the ladder they go for the next incarnation. Now, leave aside all the nonsense of the doctrine. It's not a bad thing when we give, when we share, when we give alms or when we give charity for us to think we're not the one benefiting them.

They're giving us an opportunity to show our love, to serve the Lord. They're giving us a privilege, an opportunity to help. Now, these are things we can learn, little bits and touches we can take, even from false religion, where there's any virtue, where there's any praise, take it and claim it for the true God and use it aright.

[44 : 19] Little examples such as that. If there be any virtue and there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which you both learned and received and heard and seen and need to, and the God of peace shall be with you.

Now, in a recent piece of legislation going through Parliament, they said it was a sort of a four-lock safety. I won't make reference to what it was, but here we've got a four-lock safety.

Not just the things you've learned, you've read about, or you've heard about, you know, but the things you've learned and received that have been taught you through the church by the apostles. And heard that you've heard within the church and that the apostles have passed on you.

And also you've seen them acting out. You've seen Paul or the other apostles do these things. Learned and received and heard and seen in me. Do. Now, Paul is not shy about making himself the example, as we mentioned last week.

He's living it out so they can say to him, well, what's wrong with doing this? What's wrong with doing that? He might turn and say, well, do you see me doing that? You know, if that was okay, wouldn't I be doing it? If I thought that was in line with God's wording, with God's teaching, I'd be doing it.

[45 : 28] But you don't see me doing that, do you? He is able to make himself the example for them to follow. He lives out his faith. That's not pride. That's just being a living witness, living example.

Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me do. And the God of peace will be with you. This is even better than verse 7. The peace of God, that which comes out of God.

This is the God of peace himself will be with you. When you are thinking it, living it, loving it, practicing it, the Lord himself is with you.

That is what so much of the world was supposedly celebrating in the past couple of weeks. Because that is what Emmanuel means.

God with us. Let us pray.