

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN PHILIPPIANS

Session 2

A Life of Constant Salvation with Forbearance and without Anxiety

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2:12-16; 4:1-9

- I. In Philippians 1 and 2, the Apostle Paul uses the word salvation to denote a subjective salvation which is experienced not once for all, but moment by moment—Phil. 1:19; 2:12:**
- A. These two chapters show us, on the one hand, a salvation that is for a particular person in a particular situation and, on the other hand, a salvation that is for all believers in the common situations of their daily life—1:12-21; 2:12-16; 4:1-8.
 - B. God’s salvation in Christ is not only eternal, saving us from God’s judgment and eternal perdition, but a practical salvation that can be applied to our daily situations hour by hour—1:13.
- II. I know that for me this will turn out to salvation denotes the particular salvation Paul experienced during his imprisonment in Rome—Phil. 1:19:**
- A. Salvation did not mean Paul expected to be released from prison, but that in the particular situation of his imprisonment he would not be put to shame by not magnifying Christ—2:17.
 - B. No matter how insulting and how difficult Paul’s situation was, he did not weep or complain but instead rejoiced in the Lord, sang hymns of praise to Him, and testified concerning Him to others, which was actually to live Christ—4:4, 21-22; Acts 16:23-25.
 - C. Our family life and particular situations can be compared to a “prison,” with the persons we live with and contact as our “jailers,” along with the church life with its many saints of different nationalities, dispositions, and personalities—Eph. 3:1; 4:1; cf. Col. 4:18b.
 - D. In order to stay in the church life in the midst of our particular situations, we need to experience a present and practical salvation—1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 3:10-11; cf. 2 Tim. 1:17; 4:10-16.
- III. Work out your own salvation denotes a constant salvation for us to be saved from the ordinary things of our daily living, including murmurings, reasonings, blame, guile, blemishes, crookedness, perverseness, and darkness—Phil. 2:12-15:**
- A. The daily situation of fallen man includes all these negative things:
 - 1. Do all things without murmurings and reasonings indicates that our natural life is a life of murmurings from our emotion and reasonings from our mind that result from our disobedience to God and which frustrate us from experiencing and enjoying Christ—v. 14.
 - 2. That you may be blameless and guileless children of God without blemish indicates that we are not blameless in our outward behavior, not guileless in our inward character, and full of blemishes, spots, and wrinkles that come from our natural life and old man—v. 15; Eph. 5:27; cf. S. S. 4:7a.

3. Crooked indicates that we are dishonest and not straightforward—Phil. 2:15b.
 4. Perverted indicates that we are “warped” and “twisted” in the way we think and consider others and ourselves—v. 15; cf. 2:3-4.
- B. Day by day we need a constant and practical salvation that can be applied to our daily situations to save us from anything that is not Christ so that we are brought into a condition where spontaneously we live Christ—1:19-21; Gal. 2:20.

IV. “Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near”—Phil. 4:5:

- A. Forbearance is sweet reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others and means that we are easily satisfied with less than our due—it is an all-inclusive Christian virtue that includes: love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness.
- B. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable, who has the ability to supply others with what they need, and who has the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it—Isa. 50:4-5; 2 Cor. 6:1a; 10:1; Col. 1:28; cf. Isa. 11:2.
- C. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, to live Christ is forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:
 1. Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today—Gal. 2:20.
 2. To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify and whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men, expressing Christ as the totality of all of our human virtues—Acts 27:21; 28:6, 9.

V. “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving”—Phil. 4:6a:

- A. Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers’ life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites—Matt. 6:25-34; 1 Pet. 5:7.
- B. The words in everything refer to the many different things which happen to us day by day—Matt. 10:29-30; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Cor. 4:15-18.
- C. As we pray to worship and fellowship with God, petition for our particular needs, and give thanks to the Lord, we will enjoy the peace of God, which is actually God Himself as peace infused into us, to patrol our hearts and thoughts in Christ and to keep us calm and tranquil as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety—Matt. 11:28; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 3:15.

VI. “Finally, brothers, what things are true...dignified...righteous...pure...lovely...well spoken of”—Phil. 4:8a:

- A. These virtues are the expressions of God’s attributes lived out from within the pursuers of Christ and are the six governing aspects of a life that lives Christ.
- B. To be a proper human being is to express God through His divine attributes in our human virtues, to have a human life filled with Christ as the reality of the attributes of God—1 Tim. 2:2, 10; 3:15-16.

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KEY VERSES

Phil. 4:5-7 **5** Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. **6** In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

v. 9 The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

MINISTRY EXCERPTS

WITHOUT ANXIETY

In verse 6 Paul goes on to say, "In nothing be anxious." Often when we hear bad news, we worry and fall into anxiety. Anxiety undermines the living of Christ. Instead of being anxious, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving we should make our requests known to God. Then the peace of God will guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The peace of God saves us from worry and anxiety. Paul's word here proves that our interpretation of these verses according to our experience is correct. Being free from anxiety is for the purpose of keeping us calm and tranquil.

In verse 6 Paul charges us "in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." The words *in everything* refer to the many different things which happen to us day by day. Under the Lord's blessing, many positive things happen, and we hear good news. However, we also experience negative things and hear bad news. Nevertheless, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known to God. Prayer is general with the essence of worship and fellowship; petition is special for particular needs. Notice that Paul says "with thanksgiving," not "and thanksgiving." This indicates that both our prayer and petition should be accompanied by thanksgiving to the Lord.

It may seem easy to understand Paul's word, "Let your requests be made known to God." But we should not take this word for granted, assuming that we understand it. I have spent considerable time studying the phrase *to God*. It may also be rendered "before God" or "in the presence of God." The Greek preposition is *pros*, often translated "with" (John 1:1; Mark 9:19; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Cor. 16:6; 1 John 1:2). It denotes motion towards, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship. Hence, the force of *to God* here is in fellowship with God. We should let our requests be made known to God in such a fellowship, in such a union and communion. This requires that we pray to contact God.

In our prayer to God there must be the essence of worship and fellowship, and also petitions for particular needs. Even if we do not have specific needs, we still need a time of prayer day by day to worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him. As we worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him in prayer, we enjoy communion with Him and practice the organic union with Him. (*Life-Study of Philippians*, pp. 229-230)

You can talk with [the Lord] and confer with Him in everything. The Lord's Word says, "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let

your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). Hence, if you have some problem, you just need to tell Him. He is right within you, and He is with you face to face. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is in us not to trouble us but to be our Paraclete, Comforter, and Supporter. I always pray, “O Lord, now I am going to take a walk. Support me, sustain me, and strengthen me.” This is to drink the Lord. In this way I have no anxiety. When anxiety comes, you should say, “O Lord, this anxiety is Yours, not mine; I give it to You because You bear it for me.” Thus, you receive the Lord's element into you, and metabolism will work constantly in you. Consequently, what is expressed through you outwardly is Christ. This is to live Christ. Those who do not know this secret consider that to live Christ is a difficult thing. Actually, you just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ. (*The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation*, pp. 54-55)

The issue, the result, of practicing the organic union with the Lord is that the peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9), infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer. This peace is the counterpoise of troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

Bad news or difficult situations may cause us to worry or to be anxious. We find the antidote to this anxiety when we pray, practice communion with God, and enjoy the organic union. Then spontaneously, even unconsciously, the peace of God is transfused into our inner being. This transfused peace becomes the counterpoise of trouble and becomes the antidote to anxiety. From experience we know that through prayer we receive this antidote to anxiety when the peace of God is infused into us. Having the peace of God as the counterpoise to our troubles does not mean that the troubles will disappear. The troubles remain, but we have a counterpoise. Furthermore, the poison of anxiety is still within us, but we have an antidote—the peace of God transfused into our being through our fellowship with God in prayer. When we enjoy God as our peace, we are made calm within.

In verse 7 Paul says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. The Greek word rendered “guard” may also be rendered “mount guard over.” The God of peace patrols or stands guard before our hearts and thoughts in Christ. The heart is the source, and the thoughts are the issue. The peace of God guards both our hearts and our thoughts. This means that in Christ Jesus the peace of God patrols as a guard who goes back and forth before our hearts and our thoughts. The peace of God which patrols within our inner being in such a way keeps us calm and tranquil. Even though we may have many troubles and much anxiety, nothing will disturb us. This is not a mere teaching, but a word which corresponds to our experience. From experience we know that the peace of God infused into us keeps us calm.

Toward man we need the forbearance mentioned in verse 5, and with God we need the fellowship to which Paul refers in verses 6 and 7. As two leading aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ, forbearance and fellowship cause us to remain calm inwardly. In this way we shall become a tranquil people. This does not mean, however, that nothing negative will happen to us. Rather, it means that we need not be disturbed by negative things. Do not complain about your living situation. Live Christ! The first expression of your living of Christ will be forbearance.

To say that we should be forbearing and free of anxiety does not mean that every day we shall receive only good news. Quite often Satan will send us bad news. But we need not be troubled by this bad news, for we have the peace of God, God Himself as peace, within

us, guarding our inner feelings. However, if we would experience this peace of God, we need to pray and have fellowship with God.

In 4:5-7 Paul does not mention a third thing apart from forbearance and not having anxiety. Instead, he simply points out two important aspects of a life that lives Christ—that we have forbearance, but no anxiety. When we are forbearing and free from anxiety, we are kept tranquil and in a calm atmosphere. Then we can live Christ and have the full enjoyment of Christ. (*Life-Study of Philippians*, pp. 230-232)