

CLOSING EXHORTATIONS, PT. 4; PHIL. 4:6b-7 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL TAKE UP ~ PAUL'S FOURTH CLOSING EXHORTATION, ~ 4, ~ verses 6b-7.

▶▶ As we'll see, ~ **verse 6b** contains the exhortation.

▷▷ Now, ~ if you read carefully, ~ you will note that Paul presents this fourth exhortation as an alternative to anxiety.

↪↪ We're going to focus on the 4th exhortation itself.

→→ For homework, ~ you can draw out the implications of the fourth exhortation being an alternative to worry.

▶▶ So, ~ **verse 6b** contains the 4th exhortation.

▷▷ Then, ~ in **verse 7**, ~ as we'll see, ~ Paul states ~ a result ~ of carrying out the exhortation.

OK, ~ VERSE 6b (LEB) CONTAINS PAUL'S ~ FOURTH EXHORTATION.

"BUT IN EVERYTHING ~ BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION ~ WITH THANKSGIVING ~ LET your requests ~ be made known to God."

BOILED DOWN, ~ THE BASIC EXHORTATION IS THIS:

▶▶ "Let your requests ~ be made known ~ to God."

▶▶ And I want to make ~ three observations ~ regarding the basic exhortation.

1st, ~ HERE IS ANOTHER INSTANCE ~ IN WHICH THE ENGLISH ~ IS EASILY confused with a permissive idea. ↴↴ 1/13

▶▶ Once again, ~ someone might think ~ that ~ this is a suggestion ~ or ~ something optional.

▷▷ For instance, ~ they might think it means, ~ "If you feel like it, ~ make your requests known to God."

▶▶ But, ~ as I explained a few weeks ago, ~ the Greek is stronger.

▷▷ It indicates that this is not something optional. It's not a suggestion ~ or a recommendation.

↪↪ The Greek text ~ shows it ~ to be a command.

▶▶ We could read it as, ~ "present your requests to God."

▷▷ So, ~ the basic exhortation: ~ "Present your requests to God," ~ Paul says.

▶▶ And, ~ as we noted last week, ~ and this command is no exception, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ every ~ one ~ of God's commands in Scripture: ~ ¶¶

↪↪ are for our good, ~ help us grow spiritually, ~ and help us become more and more like Jesus.

HERE'S THE SECOND OBSERVATION ~ ABOUT THE BASIC EXHORTATION, ~ Present your requests to God."

▶▶ The Greek text indicates ~ that this command is calling ~ for repeated action.

▶▶ E.g., ~ when we find ourselves ~ in some difficult circumstance, ~ it's not to be ~ a "one prayer and we're done" ~ type of thing.

▷▷ Paul says that we are to continue to go to the Lord about it.

▶▶ So, ~ we could read the basic exhortation in [verse 6b](#) ~ this way: ⇔⇔ "Continually ~ present your requests to God." ¶¶ 2/13

NOW THE THIRD OBSERVATION ~ ABOUT THE BASIC EXHORTATION. ⇨⇨ "Continually present your requests to God."

▶▶ The word "requests" refers ~ to specific ~ requests. ~ IOW, ~ We are not to mouth ~ vague generalities.

▶▶ E.g., ~ when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, ~ we should not simply pray, ~ "O Lord, ~ help me with these circumstances."

▷▷ Rather, ~ we are to pray ~ about the specifics of the situation.

↳↳ Say someone doesn't have the money ~ to pay their mortgage payment. ~ They should pray specifically ~ for the amount of the mortgage payment.

▶▶ So, ~ we could read the basic exhortation in [verse 6b](#) ~ this way: ⇨⇨⇨ "Continually ~ present ~ your specific requests ~ to God."

▶▶ But hold on, ~ a side note here. ~ doesn't God ~ already know what we need?

▷▷ In [Matt.](#), ~ chapter 6, ~ verse 8b, ~ Jesus said, ~ "for your Father knows ~ what you need ~ before you ask him."

↳↳ But what's interesting, ~ is ~ that right after Jesus said this, ~ he taught us how to pray.

▷▷ Jesus ~ is not ~ contradicting himself.

▷▷ And Paul ~ is not ~ implying ~ in his fourth exhortation ~ that God ~ is ignorant of what we need.

▷▷ Rather, ~ prayer ~ seems more designed ~ for our benefit.

↳↳ Presenting ~ our specific requests to God ~ makes us keenly aware ~ of our needs ~ and ~ of our total dependence on him.

↳↳ And just think ~ how fast we would take the Lord for granted ~ 77

→→ and never express our gratitude to him ~ if he just gave us what we needed ~ without us asking. 77 3/13

↪↪Prayer ~ certainly does ~ seem more designed for our benefit ~ than to inform our Heavenly Father ~ of what we need.

OK, ~ THAT'S THE BASIC EXHORTATION IN VERSE 6b.

AND AGAIN, ~ WE COULD READ IT AS, ~~ "CONTINUALLY PRESENT ~ YOUR SPECIFIC requests ~ to God."

▶▶But Paul doesn't just give us this exhortation. ~~ He elaborates on the exhortation, ~ by adding three phrases.

▷▷He says, ~~ "in everything ~~ by prayer and supplication ~~ with thanksgiving ~~ continually present your specific requests to God."

↪↪Let's look at each one, ~ and expand on the basic exhortation.

FIRST, ~ HE SAYS, ~ "IN EVERYTHING."

▶▶"in everything ~ by prayer and supplication ~ with thanksgiving ~ continually present your specific requests to God."

▶▶Not just ~ in some situations, ~ but ~ in all ~ situations.

▷▷There are ~ no circumstances ~ in which we will find ourselves ~ that do not ~ call for prayer.

↪↪Every situation ~ we find ourselves in ~ calls for prayer on our part.

▶▶The old hymn teaches us this.

▷▷Have we trials and temptations? ~~ Is there trouble anywhere? ~~ We should never be discouraged, ~~ Take it to the Lord in prayer. ~~ 77

▷▷Can we find a friend so faithful ~~ Who will all our sorrows share? ~~ Jesus knows our every weakness, ~~ Take it to the Lord in prayer. ~~ 77 11 4/13

▷▷ Are we weak and heavy laden, ~ ~ Cumbered with a load of care? ~ ~ Precious Savior, ~ still our refuge; ~ ~ Take it to the Lord in prayer. ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Do thy friends despise, ~ forsake thee? ~ ~ Take it to the Lord in prayer; ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ In His arms ~ He'll take and shield thee; ~ ~ Thou wilt find a solace there.

▶▶ "In everything." ~ ~ So, ~ we could read the expanded exhortation this way: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "in every situation, ~ by prayer and supplication ~ with thanksgiving ~ continually ~ present ~ your specific requests ~ about that situation ~ to God."

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE SECOND PHRASE PAUL ADDS TO THE EXHORTATION.

"BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION."

▶▶ "In every situation, ~ by prayer and supplication ~ with thanksgiving ~ continually ~ present your specific requests ~ about that situation ~ to God."

▶▶ The Greek terms behind these two words, ~ prayer and supplication, ~ are synonyms, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so it is more than likely ~ that Paul wrote it the way he did ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to emphasize something about prayer, ~ not to suggest ~ different types of prayer.

▶▶ So, ~ when Paul says, ~ "In every situation, ~ by prayer and supplication ~ with thanksgiving ~ continually present your specific requests about that situation to God," ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he's not pointing out different types of prayer.

↳↳ Rather, ~ most likely ~ he's calling us ~ to be engaged in serious prayer, ~ ~ and not ~ haphazard, ~ superficial ~ prayer.

▷▷ So, ~ we could read the expanded exhortation this way: ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "In every situation, ~ continually, ~ seriously, ~ specifically, ~ and with thanksgiving, ~ pray ~ about that situation." ¶¶ 5/13

▶▶ But Paul ~ may also ~ be emphatically implying ~ that we need to pray ~ in every situation.
~~~ The message is clear.

▷▷ We cannot go through the circumstances of life ~ relying on our own strength, ~ ingenuity, ~ or thinking.

▷▷ As Zechariah, ~ chapter 4, ~ verse 6b, ~ states, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "Not by might, ~ nor by power, ~ but by my Spirit, ~ says the Lord of hosts ~ [i.e., ~ the Lord of heaven's armies].

▷▷ And ~ we must once again ~ recall Jesus' words ~ in John, ~ chapter 15, ~ verse 5.

↳↳ "I am the vine; ~ you are the branches. ~ Whoever abides in me and I in him, ~ he it is that bears much fruit, ~ ¶¶

→→ for apart from me ~ you can do ~ [how much?] ~ nothing."

▷▷ Loved ones, ~ this is not some arrogant statement on Jesus' part.

↳↳ I believe ~ that it's a statement ~ of comfort and encouragement.

→→ I have confidence ~ that Jesus ~ is trying to save us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ from the futility, ~ stress, ~ and frustration ~ of trying to do things ~ apart from him.

▶▶ We need to realize this ~ and learn the truth of the old hymn.

▷▷ "I need Thee every hour; ~ Stay Thou near by; ~ Temptations lose their power ~ When Thou art nigh. ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "I need Thee every hour, ~ In joy or pain; ~ Come quickly and abide ~ Or life is vain."

▶▶ My . . . , ~ we need to understand and acknowledge ~ that we need to pray ~ in every situation.

▶▶ Ok, ~ "In every situation," ~ Paul says, ~ "continually, ~ seriously, ~ specifically, ~ and with thanksgiving, ~ pray ~ about that situation." ¶¶ 6/13

AND NOW THE 3<sup>rd</sup> PHRASE PAUL ADDS TO THE exhortation. ~ "with thanksgiving."

"IN EVERY SITUATION," ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "CONTINUALLY, ~ SERIOUSLY, ~ specifically, ~ and with thanksgiving, ~ pray ~ about that situation."

▶▶ Our prayers ~ are to be accompanied ~ by thanksgiving.

▶▶ In our prayer life in particular, ~ and in the Christian life in general, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we need to have ~ an attitude ~ of gratitude ~ toward the Lord.

▶▶ Paul also links thankfulness to prayer in Col., ~ chapter 4, ~ verse 2, ~ LEB.

▷▷ "Be devoted to prayer, ~ keeping alert in it ~ with thanksgiving."

▶▶ And he links gratitude ~ to the Christian life in general ~ in Colossians, ~ chapter 3, ~ verse 17.

▷▷ "And whatever you do, ~ in word or deed, ~ do everything ~ in the name of the Lord Jesus, ~ giving thanks ~ to God the Father ~ through him."

▶▶ Paul also links thankfulness ~ to the Christian life in general ~ in 1 Thess., ~ chapter 5, ~ verse 18a.

▷▷ "give thanks ~ in all circumstances."

▶▶ And in Ephesians, ~ chapter 5, ~ verse 20, ~~~ "giving thanks ~ always ~ and for everything ~ to God the Father ~ in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

OK, ~ LET'S GET BACK ~ TO THE CONTEXT ~ OF THANKFULNESS IN PRAYER ~ HERE IN Philippians.

▶▶ "In every situation," ~ Paul says, ~ "continually, ~ seriously, ~ specifically, ~ and with a thankful attitude, ~ pray ~ about that situation." ¶¶ 7/13

▶▶ Thankfulness ~ is a key component ~ of a meaningful ~ & effective ~ prayer life.

▶▶ Being thankful to the Lord reminds us of our total dependence on him.

▶▶ And being thankful for answered prayer in the past, ~ will give us confidence ~ that he will answer us in the present.

▶▶ And we have much ~ to be thankful for.

▷▷ We should be grateful that, ~ through Jesus, ~ we have access to God in prayer.

▷▷ We should be thankful for God's goodness in the past ~ and ~ his blessings to us in the present.

▷▷ We should be thankful to Jesus for who he is ~ and what he has done for us.

↳↳ He bore ~ every one of our sins ~ in his body on the cross.

→→ He suffered the full wrath of God, ~ so we wouldn't have to.

▷▷ We should be thankful to Yahweh ~ for every one of his infallible promises.

▷▷ We should be thankful to our heavenly Father ~ ¶¶

↳↳ for rescuing us from the domain of darkness ~ and transferring us ~ to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

▷▷ Yes, ~ we have all of this ~ and much, ~ much, ~ more ~ to be thankful for.

I WOULD SUGGEST ~ THAT THE ABSENCE OF THANKFULNESS IN PRAYER ~ MOST likely short circuits our prayers.

ALSO, ~~ A LACK OF GRATITUDE TOWARD JESUS ~ SHOWS ~ THAT WE LACK A GOOD understanding of the gospel.

▶▶ My . . . , ~~~ how can we not ~ be thankful to Jesus, ~ for his awesome mercy, ~ love, ~ and grace ~ shown to us in the gospel? ¶¶ 8/13



▶▶How can we not ~ be 100% grateful to Jesus ~ for taking our place on the cross?

▶▶How can we not ~ be thankful to the Lord ~ for purchasing us from the slave market of sin?

▶▶How can we not ~ be grateful ~ to the One who conquered sin, ~ death, ~ and all the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, ~ ¶¶

▷▷and who now holds the keys of Death and Hades?

▶▶And ~ how can we not ~ be thankful ~ to the One ~ ¶¶

▷▷who ~ always lives to make intercession for us?

MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~~ I WOULD SUGGEST TO YOU ~ THAT ~ ¶¶

▶▶thankfulness to Jesus ~ is more important ~ than we sometimes realize.

▶▶Indeed, ~ thanksgiving ~ is a key component ~ of a meaningful ~ and effective ~ prayer life.

▷▷Let us never ~ approach the Throne of Grace ~ without ~ an attitude ~ of gratitude.

▶▶And if we have been guilty of ingratitude. ~~ I call us to repentance this morning.

▷▷And remember what John says, ~ in 1 Jn., ~ chapter 1, ~ verse 9, ~ NIV.

↪↪"If we confess our sins, ~ he is faithful and just ~ and will forgive us our sins ~ and purify us ~ from all unrighteousness."

OK, ~ THE EXPANDED EXHORTATION. ~~ PAUL'S FOURTH CLOSING COMMAND.

▶▶"In every situation," ~ Paul says, ~ "continually, ~ seriously, ~ specifically, ~ and with a thankful attitude, ~ pray ~ about that situation." ¶¶ 9/13

NOW VERSE 7, ~ AND A RESULT ~ OF CARRYING OUT PAUL'S FOURTH exhortation.

WHEN WE ~ CONTINUALLY AND SERIOUSLY, ~ & WITH A THANKFUL ATTITUDE, ~ ¶¶

▶▶pray specifically ~ about every situation in which we find ourselves, ~ the following will result, ~ Paul says.

▷▷"And the peace of God, ~ which surpasses all understanding, ~ will guard your hearts ~ and your minds ~ in Christ Jesus."

▶▶Notice, ~ Paul doesn't say ~ that our situation ~ will immediately change, ~ or ~ how the Lord will answer our prayers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷or what answer we'll receive from the Lord, ~ yes, ~ no, ~ or ~ wait.

BUT ~ THE DEFINITE RESULT, ~ PAUL SAYS WILL BE THIS.

▶▶When we continually, ~ seriously, ~ specifically, ~ and with a thankful attitude, ~ pray about every situation in which we find ourselves, ~ ¶¶

▷▷the promised result ~ is that the Lord will give us ~ an inner peace ~ ¶¶

↳↳an internal calmness, ~ right in the midst ~ of the situation.

→→And that should be very encouraging and comforting to us.

THE FACT THAT THIS PEACE COMES FROM GOD ~ MEANS ~ THAT IT'S THE BEST KIND of peace.

▶▶Because it comes from the Lord, ~ it is guaranteed ~ to be 100% effective ~ even ~ in a worse-case-scenario type of situation.

▷▷And because ~ the source of this peace is Yahweh, ~ ¶¶

↳↳it is not based ~ on circumstances, ~ human emotion, ~ or human anything.

## THIS GOD-GIVEN PEACE IS DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD'S PEACE.

▶▶ It is ~ the peace that Jesus promised us.

▷▷ John, ~ 14, ~ verse 27a, ~ "Peace I leave with you; ~ my peace ~ I give to you. ~ Not as the world gives do I give to you."

▶▶ The world cannot give this peace.

▷▷ All that the world can offer ~ is a peace ~ that is based on circumstances that are favorable.

↳↳ If things are going well, ~ then the person relying on this peace ~ feels peaceful.

→→ But, ~ when things go awry, ~ this peace ~ quickly dissipates.

▶▶ The peace that Jesus gives ~ is reflected in the testimony of the psalmist ~ in Ps. 46, ~ which we just looked at a couple weeks ago.

▷▷ Ps. 46 ~ verses 2-3.

↳↳ "Therefore ~ we will not fear ~ though the earth gives way, ~ though the mountains ~ be moved into the heart of the sea, ~ 77

→→ though its waters ~ roar and foam, ~ though the mountains ~ tremble at its swelling."

## THEN PAUL SAYS TWO THINGS ~ ABOUT THIS PEACE FROM GOD.

▶▶ Very briefly now. ~ I'll just mention them ~ and then you can think about them.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ he says that the peace that God provides "surpasses all understanding."

▷▷ We simply ~ cannot comprehend ~ or adequately explain ~ such peace.

↳↳ Which is quite logical ~ since it's from Yahweh. 11/13

▷▷ As Isaiah ~ 55, ~ verses 8-9, ~ LEB ~ says, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "For my thoughts ~ are not your thoughts, ~ and your ways ~ are not my ways," ~ declares Yahweh. ~ ¶¶

→→ "For as the heavens ~ are higher than the earth, ~ so my ways ~ are higher than your ways, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and my thoughts ~ than your thoughts.

▷▷ But, ~ Praise the Lord, ~ even though we cannot understand it, ~ or even adequately explain it, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ we can definitely experience ~ the peace that Jesus gives us.

▶▶ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ Paul says ~ this peace that God provides ~ "will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

▷▷ The Greek verb for "guard" ~ is a military term ~ used metaphorically here.

▷▷ God's peace ~ is like a soldier on guard duty.

↳↳ It protects ~ our emotions and thoughts from ~ anxiety, ~ worry, ~ doubts, ~ despair, ~ fear, ~ and temptations, ~ ¶¶

→→ that could emanate from the situation ~ in which we find ourselves.

## CONCLUSION.

AS I CLOSE, ~ JUST A PASSING THOUGHT ON THE PHRASE, ~ "IN CHRIST JESUS."

▶▶ The phrase indicates ~ the prerequisite ~ for receiving the peace ~ that comes from God.

▷▷ IOW, ~ only ~ those who have accepted ~ and publicly confessed ~ Jesus as Savior ~ and Lord ~ can receive this peace ~ that "surpasses all understanding."

↳↳ TPID, ~ only those who have ~ peace ~ with God ~ ¶¶

→→ can receive ~ the peace ~ of God. ¶¶ 12/13

▶▶I hope ~ that all of you here today ~ have peace ~ with God.

▷▷So that ~ you can experience ~ the peace ~ of God.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 13/13