

Philippians 4:2-23 Discussion Questions

Sermon Outline

Intro

- Reminder of why we did the series
 - Revelation 5- this is the picture we are trying to complete
 - Ecclesiastes- deconstructing pursuits that will not endure
 - Philippians- reconstructing pursuits that will endure
 - 1 Peter- hope in the in-between
- Reminder of why we have read Philippians 2.5-11 weekly
 - Liturgy calling us to pursue this together
 - A prayer asking the Lord to complete this in us
- Read Philippians 2.5-11
- **Table of Contents**
 - Unity Demands Reconciliation (v.2-3)
 - Unity Creates Steadfast Participation (v.4-9)
 - Unity Fosters Gratitude (v.10-20)
 - v.21-23

Unity Demands Reconciliation (v.2-3)

- Matthew 5.23-24
 - *Why should a church practice discipline? For the good of the individual, the good of non-Christians, the good of the church, and the glory of Christ.- Mark Dever, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*

Pursuing Peace (v.4-9)

- Defining reasonableness
- ***Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. (v.5, NIV)***
 - Quality of an elder (1 Timothy 3)
 - Quality of a citizen (Titus 3)
 - Quality of worker (1 Peter 2)
- Peace bookends prayer and Christian thinking
 - The Lord is near
 - Whether temporal or spatial, this is an assurance of the Lord's unity to his people
 - Removes anxiety

- Provides confidence in prayer
- A mentality that supersedes the lesser cultural version
 - Truth- truth in thought, speech and deed, not just the appearance of something
 - Honorable- dignified, serious, majestic, not common
 - Just- in accordance to divine standard,
 - Holy- stand in awe, in moral sense- holy or pure
 - Lovely- love-inspiring, pleasing, attractive
 - Commendable- well-spoken of
- Peace is a condition of freedom from disturbance, whether outwardly, as of a nation from war or enemies, or inwardly, within the soul." -The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Implications

Tips for prayer

1. Plan to pray
2. Adopt practical ways to fight distractions
3. Find and develop prayer-partner relationships
4. Choose models
5. Develop a system for your prayer lists
6. Mingle praise, confession and intercession, when you intercede try to tie as many requests as possible to Scripture
7. Become comfortable praying out loud
8. Pray until you pray

Discussion Questions

Read Phil 4:2-23

1. Paul begins this section by exhorting two of its members to reconcile and for the church to help them do it. These two ladies are clearly Christians and yet there is some unresolved issue between them. What might be most surprising and instructive is that Paul sees this as big enough of an issue to call them out in his letter that is being read publicly.

- a. How would you have felt if you were either one of these ladies?

b. Clearly, personal reconciliation in the church is very important. What has been your experience with it?

1) Have you seen it done?

2) Have you every had to do it? If so, what was it like?

c. What does this passage teach us about the role that the church needs to play in personal reconciliation between members?

d. Is there someone in the church that you need to reconcile with? If so, what is preventing you from doing so?

2. In vv. 4-9 the experience of the peace of God is closely tied with God's nearness to us, so that awareness of his presence should lead to peace.

a. When have you experienced the peace of God most in your life?

b. What is an area right now where you need the peace of God?

c. This passage exhorts us to walk in God's peace by both praying with gratitude and thinking about and practicing what is good.

1) Do you have any personal examples of how you have seen prayer and right thinking and living lead to the peace of God?

2) How can you apply this to your situation where you need more peace?

3. Paul continues in vv. 10-20 by expressing his own gratitude for their generosity towards him as they sent a messenger to bring him a monetary gift to support him while in prison. In that time, prisoners were responsible for purchasing their own food and so a person could literally starve to death in prison if they ran out of money.

a. Paul is very touched by the Philippians love and concern for him. What is a modern day example of caring for one another in the same way that we have seen the Philippians cared for Paul?

b. Do you have an example of a time when a brother or sister in the church supported you like that?

c. What keeps us from doing that kind of thing today?

4. This passage touched the subject of prayer. For many, developing a healthy and robust prayer life is a big challenge.

a. How have you grown most in your own prayer life? What did you do that helped you to grow?

b. How do you still want to grow in this area?

c. Pastor Mike provided some practical tips for growing in prayer, adapted from D.A. Carson's book on prayer. Perhaps some of these might be helpful for you:

- 1) Plan to Pray: carve out a scheduled time for it
- 2) Adopt practical ways to fight distractions
- 3) Find and develop prayer-partner relationships
- 4) Choose a biblical model of prayer (e.g. the Lord's Prayer, ACTS, etc.).
- 5) Develop a system to keep a prayer list
- 6) Mingle praise, confession, intercession and tie as many specific requests to Scripture as possible.
- 7) Become comfortable praying out loud.
- 8) Pray until you pray: even when it feels wooden and artificial keep praying until you break through and really start communing with the Lord.