

SHARING A PEACE OF GOD'S MIND



Scripture:

Exodus 32:1-14

¹When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” ²Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” ³So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. ⁴He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” ⁵When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD.” ⁶They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

⁷The LORD said to Moses, “Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” ⁹The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.”

¹¹But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’” ¹⁴And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

There is a practice in Yoga philosophy called Yoga Sutra. In this practice each session begins with: “Now the teachings of Yoga begin.”

It may seem simple but this sentence of introduction is powerful! The first word is the key: Now. Its focus is on the body, mind, breath and emotions now. You are to analyze only what is happening now, in the moment, not what is next or what we just did in the past.

So as we come to this second scripture reading, let us focus on the now and let the teachings of Jesus begin.

Philippians 4:1-9

¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, 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.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, 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. ⁹Keep 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.

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



(A video, “Peace on Earth,” was shown to the congregation.)

SHARING A PEACE OF GOD’S MIND

Have no anxiety about anything. Rejoice always. And the peace that surpasses understanding will guard your hearts and your minds.

Sounds good, but how is that possible? Is it possible that if we fill our minds with things to rejoice about, if we count our blessings, if we pray unceasingly, then there is no room for negativity, anxiety and fear?

God promises just that. In verse eight of this section of Philippians, it says, 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.

Paul is saying that if you can control your mind, you can control your fear and be at peace. Fill your mind with pure, pleasing, commendable excellent things. Then, and only then, you will be able to experience God’s peace.

Otherwise, you will go through life stressed, anxious, worried, and sick.

These verses in Philippians are a prescription for physical and mental health. God knows that the less you focus on negative things, the more healthy and peaceful you will be.

God knew it first, and since then it has been proven in many biological science studies.

DEEP PRAYER

Clinical psychologist, Dr. Paul DeBlassie, tells a story in his book *Deep Prayer: Healing for the Hurting Soul*. The story is about a Carmelite nun who ran into Dr. DeBlassie on the street one day. She had attended some of his seminars and worship services. The nun said to him, “I have made a marvelous discovery with your help! I begrudgingly attended one of your healing services during your conference last year. I wanted to see for myself if God could really heal people. So I entered the auditorium skeptical and doubting.

“For many years I had suffered from feelings of low self-worth and constant pain in my right arm. No doctor had been able to help me with my arm pain. Nothing they prescribed helped.

“But during your healing service you spoke about the healing power of Jesus for our minds, our spirit, and our bodies. You prayed with people and laid hands on them. But I still wondered if God could really come through for me. I still felt confused with regard to the ability of God to heal me. Yet, I felt something was changed inside me when I saw others receive prayers that gave them hope for healing. God touched me that day and I became certain that

God loves me. God healed my low self-worth that day, but not my pain.

“After the conference I met a doctor who finally found a diagnosis for my arm problem after many years of pain. I received healing for my arm. God healed me through the doctor. God helped me feel good on the inside and he partnered with the doctor to heal me on the outside.”

GOD’S HEALING WAYS

God’s healing ways are mysterious ways. We don’t always know in what form the healing may come or when. Sometimes the healing is spiritual rather than physical. Healing may happen in the next life and not in this one on earth. Healing is not always predictable. But we do know there is a five point formula for being peaceful. The way to peace is through:

- 1. Praying**
- 2. Thinking only good positive things about yourself and others**
- 3. Loving**
- 4. Forgiving**
- 5. Rejoicing (or counting your blessings no matter what)**

Basically, the way to peace is to act the way Jesus would.

When a person feels peaceful inside and out, the whole body and mind are healthier and happier. To be at peace is an important goal for your everyday life. And sharing in the peace of God’s mind is possible when you have the mind of God.

THE MIND OF GOD

Now what is the mind of God? In this passage in Philippians they are instructed to have the same mind in the Lord. The mind of God is the mind of Jesus. Think about how Jesus operated on earth. All that he did and said was guided by the works of God: love, faith, hope, compassion, truthfulness, humility, justice, and kindness.

In the beginning of this passage to the church in Philippi, which is in Greece, Paul is explaining how the church must help two women who were not getting along: Euodia and Synteché. Paul is exhorting, or appealing to the

church to do all they can to help them. And the way he proposes is to remind them of the power in God’s five point formula for healthy and happy living. If we do these things, we will get along with others.

So if you find yourself in a disagreement with someone and you force yourself to love them, pray for them, forgive them and rejoice with them while thinking about all their good qualities, then chances are your disagreement will soon disappear.

**Leo Tolstoy said,
“Everyone thinks about changing
the world but no one thinks
about changing himself.”**

When you change your perspective within yourself first, the things around you seem to change, too!

However, like the song, “*Let There be Peace on Earth and Let It Begin with Me,*” many people need to first reconcile with themselves before they can reconcile with others. This is so important because many people don’t truly like themselves.

I’M OK, YOU’RE OK

In the classic book, *I’m OK, You’re OK*, the author, Dr. Harris, pointed out that most of us don’t believe we are OK. We are restless and often striving to be someone else.

To be peaceful you must be reconciled with yourself, with your limits and your nature, whether young or old, man or woman, physically challenged or physically strong. You can be at peace with yourself if you use the five point formula which is a way of sharing in the peaceful mind of God.

Love yourself, pray for yourself, forgive yourself, think only good things about yourself, and count your blessings every day. Then you will feel at peace and sleep better at night. The other things in your life may not be cured or totally reconciled, but you will be at peace within yourself which will give you a new peaceful vantage point as you look out upon the rest of the world with your problems big and small.

Once you are at peace with yourself, you will be less irritated and less judgmental of others. You will realize that the diverse ways of humanity are to be enjoyed rather than judged. As your respect for yourself increases, your respect for others increases as well. Having an attitude of humble open inclusiveness and gratitude opens us up to learning from others and delighting in differences rather than being threatened by them.

"WE CHRISTIANS!"

The Deep Prayer book by Dr. DeBlassie ends with a story about being humble enough to change and learn to delight in the ways of others.

"When a bishop of the Church of England stopped at a remote island for the day, he strolled along the shoreline and came across three fishermen mending their nets. In broken English the men explained to the bishop that the people of the island had become Christians centuries before when missionaries visited. While enthusiastically pointing to one another the three said, 'We Christians!'

"The bishop was impressed, but he judged they were quite primitive Christians, so he asked if they knew the Lord's Prayer? They said they had never heard of it. The bishop was shocked! He asked, 'What do you say then when you pray?' They replied,

**'We lift eyes up to heaven.
We pray, "We are three,
you are three,
have mercy on us.'**

"The bishop was appalled and he spent the whole day teaching them the Lord's Prayer. The fishermen were slow learners so he went over and over it with them until they could recite it to him.

"Months later the bishop's ship happened to pass by the same islands and the bishop remembered the three men on the distant island that were now able to pray, thanks to his patient

effort to teach them. While he was thinking, he looked up and noticed a spot of light in the east. The light was approaching the ship! As the light got closer, the bishop could see it was a glow from three figures walking on the water towards him.

"When they were close enough to see the bishop they yelled, 'Bishop! We hear your boat go past so we come hurry to meet you!'

"The bishop couldn't speak he was so awe-struck. So they went on, 'Bishop! We sorry. We forgot the lovely prayer you taught us. Please tell us the prayer again.'

"The bishop felt humbled and said, 'Go back to your homes, my friends. And each time you pray say, 'We are three, you are three, have mercy on us!'" Amen.

Benediction:

Memorize Philippians 4:1-9, or use your fingers to remind you how to share in God's peace of mind: *Pray, love, forgive, think positively, and rejoice.*

And may the three, the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit bring you peace now and forever more. Amen



**Rev. Dr. Cindy Alloway
Presbyterian Church of the Roses
2500 Patio Court
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
October 12, 2014**