

## Keeping Your Hearts and Mind in Christ Jesus

We are surely living in challenging times. The pandemic of CoVid 19 resulted to a worldwide crisis, not just in health, but also in other aspects of our lives, like financial and social. Because of this, depression and anxiety among the people have increased since the pandemic, even an article by sciencedaily dot com reported that CoVid 19 has tripled the depression rate. Aside from keeping our bodies fit and strong, there is also the need to keep our hearts and mind healthy, so that we will not be overwhelmed by what is going on. Because of this, mental health is such a big issue nowadays. In our episode today, we will see in Paul's letter to the Philippians how we will be able to make our hearts and mind healthy and strong, by keeping them in our Lord Jesus.

The Apostle Paul, wrote his letter to the Philippian church while he was in prison in Rome, at around 62 AD. To be in prison is something that we do not want to experience, it is such a hard situation to be in. Despite, Paul encouraged and taught the Philippians in his letter.

To be in difficult situations is something that we need to expect in our lives. Christians are not excused from the hardships of life. We are even told to endure these hardships and count it as joy when we experience them!

James 1:2 to 4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Temptations here means trials, and we are supposed to count it all joy when we experience them, because it will result to patience, and when completed, we would become matured in our faith.

We must make sure that the trials that we experience would not be wasted, and we grow and mature from them.

If we see trials this way, we would be able to see things differently and therefore trust God completely. Paul saw his imprisonment as something God had ordained for the sake of the gospel.

Philippians 1:12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

So Paul was able to see things through the eyes of faith, where we would be able to see all things working out God's purpose; whether be good or seemingly bad, all things work together for the good of those who love Him, those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Tracing the fingers of God in every detail of our lives takes a complete trust in His character, that He is good all the time, and that all the time He is good. Meaning whatever He allows to happen in our lives would be working out for the purpose that was already placed in our lives even before the events happened.

We must always put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and look at Him as our example and goal:

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In the last chapter of his letter to the Philippians, Paul gave 5 things that we need to do for us to have the right mindset even when we are in difficult situations, and these can be found in verses 4 to 8:

Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 to 8: Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving 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. 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* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

So the first is, rejoice in the Lord always.

The apostle even repeated it for emphasis. Again I say rejoice. This is not an optional thing. Do we realize that when he said rejoice in the Lord always, that it was a command? This is an imperative! Meaning to say, rejoicing in the Lord does not depend on our feelings. It does not depend on our situation, hence the word, *always*. It is easy to rejoice when things are good, but how about things are hard, and situations are difficult? It would be hard to rejoice, that's why we were commanded to do it.

Psalms 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Psalms 33:1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: *for* praise is comely for the upright.

1Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

1Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

So even though when we don't feel like rejoicing, we are told and commanded to do so. While we must express our emotions, we must not let our feelings rule our lives, God and His Word must rule over us. So when we don't feel like rejoicing, do we let that feeling overrule God's command to rejoice evermore? No. So despite the situation, we will rejoice.

How and why should we rejoice?

Rejoice in the Lord. Even when there seems nothing about the situation that we should rejoice about, we still have the Lord. We still have our God. You may be sick, but we still have our Jehovah Rapha, so rejoice in the Lord. You may be in a difficult financial situation, but you still have Jehovah Jireh, so rejoice in the Lord. There may be trouble and persecution in the world, but greater is He that is in you

than He that is in the world, so rejoice in the Lord. When there is nothing about the situation to rejoice about, then don't rejoice about the situation, but rather, rejoice in the Lord our God. When there is nothing to rejoice about in our feelings, then don't dwell in that feeling, rejoice in the Lord our God.

When should we rejoice? Since the Lord said He will never leave you nor forsake you, then we should rejoice always. We must rejoice in the Lord always. A person who knows how to rejoice in the Lord always despite of the situation, will be able to maintain the right perspective of faith. He knows that no matter the situation, the Lord remains good and He remains in control.

The second is moderation. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

We must learn how to control our appetites, and restrain ourselves from excess. A man's excessive desires of things would lead him to be restless, and to be anxious.

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

We must think soberly, meaning, we must not let anything take control of us; just as alcohol would influence one's behavior, so can other things influence us, when we don't know how to control our passions and emotions. A sober man has a hold of his posture, his demeanor, his speech. So must we in our lifestyle, we must not let anything other than the Holy Spirit to influence and control us.

Let your moderation be known by all men does not mean we practice moderation only in front of the public, just to show off; but it means let your control be consistent and be disciplined, so that it would naturally show, they won't help but to notice and acknowledge that you have the mastery of yourself.

First Corinthians 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

Excess in some things and lack of discipline could lead to obsession or addiction, and so is harmful to our mental health. We must learn to be temperate in all things, as addiction or obsession to things, whatever they may be, is idolatry, which is, the affection and love that should be given to God, was given to something else; worshipping the creature instead of the Creator.

Many studies say depression heightened since the explosion of Social Media. Many people have been dependent upon social media, that it affects the life entirely. While it is not inherently bad, because there are numerous advantages this platform offers, but excessive usage or dependence on it will cause more harm than benefit. Most of the times, it even becomes a hinder to what it supposedly be promoting – real organic connection and socialization of individuals in many cases have been hindered instead of strengthened because of over dependence on gadgets.

Third is Be careful for nothing. The word careful here means to be anxious about. Too much worrying is a sure way to depression. While some of the things that we worry about are legitimate concerns, majority of them are not. And the energy spent in worrying is energy wasted and is unproductive.

Matthew chapter 6, verse 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Worrying accomplishes nothing, instead, it will be harmful to the person. Too much worrying darkens the mind, and fosters fear over our hearts. It may even cause actual physical harm to the health of a person.

Worrying may not be totally avoided, but being overly anxious about things, and staying there? It is a conscious decision. We must not. Overthinking about things would not help us, neither solve any problems. It will not make us heal if ever we are sick, nor will it contribute to the solution to any of our problems. It actually eats up a person, and prevents us from doing what we are supposed to do, and may even hinder us in acting by faith and facing the problems we may have.

So do not be anxious! The verse did not say that we must not face the problem, nor did it say we must not take care of whatever issue we may have. It says do not be anxious about it. Because being anxious is the opposite of acting, it is the opposite of facing the problem, because the more we worry about things, the more we try to avoid them because of our fears.

Do you know that a fog so thick that could cover one acre of land, so thick that you could not see anything, if condensed, the water that made that thick fog would just about one glass full? That is sometimes what happen to us, we become clouded with all dark thoughts and what-ifs, that we cannot clearly see things, just because of fears that were exaggerated by the enemy, and most of the time, by our own minds and worrying.

We do not say that all our worrying are not valid, some of them are, but most of them are not. But legitimate or not, we are instructed here by the word of God, to not be anxious over anything. Yes we heard it right, over anything. It may be valid and big concern, but the Lord said, do not be anxious about it. Do not worry too much. It may be about our family, our health, our finances, but still the Word of God says, Be anxious of nothing.

Fourth, the worrying, the anxiety, that we have over things, instead of dwelling there, we need to convert them to prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. *But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests be made know unto God.*

Instead of thinking all night about the situation, instead of dwelling in that state of mind of having fears about what would happen next, why don't we just pray to God? Instead of spending all those hours worrying, why not just spend it in prayer? We won't worry if we could easily solve the problem, but since we cannot, why not just go come to Him Who is able?

We are instructed here to channel our anxiety to prayers and supplications. We are not to ignore the fact that the anxiety is there, but instead of bearing them on our own, we bring them to God, and we

ask for His help. This we must do with thanksgiving, as a sign of faith, knowing and acknowledging that He is the only One who could help us.

We have to make our requests be made known unto God, not because He does not already know. He knows all things! He knows your needs, He knows your situation, so we do not tell Him for His information. We do it, so that we ourselves, make it known unto Him. He would like us, to present these needs to Him. He already knows, but He would like for us to come to Him and present them. We presenting our needs to God is not for Him, but it is for us, for our faith, for our assurance, for our unloading of these anxieties and worries. So instead of worrying, we come to prayers.

It is time for us worriers to become warriors!

Then according to the next verse, *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

After we pray, sometimes the answer is not given by God immediately. After prayer, the situation may still be the same. The problem may not be immediately solved. But do you know what do we receive automatically after praying in faith? The peace of God.

After praying and supplicating, the peace of God would arrive to our hearts. It is the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. It is beyond what we know and comprehend! We will feel this assurance from God, that although we may not see the results of our prayer immediately, we know that He is able, and He knows all things, and that He is good, and that He will not leave nor forsake us. This is the peace that we receive from the Lord, not as the world giveth, so we will not be troubled, nor be afraid (John 14:27). It is the peace that says to our hearts, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; for the Lord Jesus hath overcome the world!" (John 16:33)

This peace is what we need, and it is what will keep our hearts and minds through the Lord Jesus Christ. The word keep in the verse is a military term, meaning, to guard, or to protect. It must be guarded with all diligence, and it must be renewed, because in the hearts and the minds is where the battlefield is:

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Are you depressed? Are you in distress? This is what you need. The peace of God. It will guard and protect your heart and mind. The peace of God will uphold us and help us to not be overwhelmed by the things happening in our lives.

Then, when we already have the peace if God in our hearts, it is important that we protect it and not let anything take it away. That's why in the next verse, Paul said,

“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* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. “

Sometimes, the peace of God in our hearts were taken away from us, when we let evil and negative thoughts come to our minds and hearts. When we allow worldly thoughts and evil imaginations to enter our minds, we become anxious again. That’s why the apostle said, finally, brethren, think on these things;

Things that are true, things that are honest, things that are just, things that are pure, things that are lovely, things that are of good report, things with any virtue and praise.

If we really like to maintain our good mental health, having been ruled by God in our hearts and mind, and therefore being at peace and faith in Him, we must not let our minds be polluted and corrupted again by evil imagination. Just like what David said,

Psalms 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.

We must keep our thoughts pure. We must think in our minds and hearts only the things that are just, lovely, and of good report. It doesn’t mean that negative thoughts would never cross our minds sometimes, but we must not intently meditate on them and dwell on those thoughts. What we need to contemplate are thoughts that are godly, and so much more, the Word of God.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalms 1:2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

These are the things that we need to do in order to keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. As we end, let me enumerate them again:

1. Rejoice in the Lord always
2. Moderation in all things
3. Be not anxious over any thing
4. In Everything by prayer
5. Fill your mind with the right thoughts

In these times of crisis, it is important that our inner man be strengthened. With the grace of God in our lives, we can overcome, because we always have our God who is our refuge in times of need. Come to Him today, and you will find strength.

Psalms 61:2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.

All quoted Scriptures are from the King James Version.