

BE GOD'S CHILDREN

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

This short passage is one of my favorite scriptures. It is familiar to all of us and is often quoted in sermon and song. In Theatre West Virginia's production of "Hatfields and McCoys", author Billy Edd Wheeler has Preacher Hatfield use part of verse 7 in his effort to redeem the clan leader. This scripture is very comforting and very inspiring; yet for me it's a little troubling and a bit challenging.

Paul says to rejoice ***always!*** He tells us to be anxious about ***nothing!*** Who can follow these instructions? I love the words. I love the sentiment. But I know that I fall short on both counts. There are times when I don't feel like rejoicing. There are moments when I feel anxious. Now a brief reflection on my last two statements reveals my problem: I used the word "feel".

Paul is not telling us how to feel. That's an emotional thing we can't always control. He's telling us how to ***act.*** I should speak as if I know that good (God) will prevail. I should avoid worry, because worry is a substitute for action. I should pray, not to inform God about my needs, as though God relies on me as a news source, but because prayer reminds me that God cares for me.

I must be gentle, because I trust God, then the peace of God, which I will never understand (and may not always feel), will guard my heart and my mind. I will prevail by trusting God, for God is not a distant being; God is the giver and sustainer of my life, and God ***is*** near.

One of the best things about this season is the constant stream of reminders that God cares enough about us to come dwell among us as one of us. God is truly near, because God has lived as a human and the Holy Spirit (God) continues to live in us and among us.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to rejoice always and not be anxious, so that Your love will be reflected through us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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