

Bible Study - April 15, 2020

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Date: 15 April 2020

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 0 0] good evening everybody welcome to wednesday night bible study it's good to have you together again my friends from the pendleton center and the first united methodist churches and also my friends from wherever you're gathering from we're glad to have you here tonight we're going to look at the book of philippians we're looking at different passages that talk to us about what it was like to be an exile or what it was like to be well in a situation like what we're in so tonight we're going to look at philippians it's towards the end of the bible in fact if you go to hebrews or revelation you've gone too far it's between galatians and thessalonians so while you're finding your way there and by the way in every bible there's a table of contents so you can actually look it up all right so we're going to start right at chapter one and it is good to have you with us tonight and this letter is from the apostle paul and he's right writing to the church at philippi which was a strong commercial center back then and he's writing from prison we suspect paul is in prison in rome he could be facing a death sentence and he writes these words to us and in the context of being imprisoned i i suspect it was more like house arrest but still he was facing a death penalty we do know that he was eventually executed outside of rome uh under the emperor nero we think this was before then but we're not sure well of course it was before then because he's obviously already he was executed he couldn't write it after but what i mean is we think that he actually was imprisoned this time and then he was free and went to spain and then came back to rome and was imprisoned again but it may be that these are the words he wrote as his last words before he died and left this world so it's interesting as he's stuck if you will at home for a different reason than we are but what does he think and what does he write to us so it says paul and timothy servants of christ jesus timothy was paul's protege he's the next generation of leaders after paul and the other apostles and he's writing it to all of god's holy people in christ jesus at philippi together with the overseers and deacons now holy people could also be translated in some versions of the bible as saints to all the saints anyone who is a christian is considered a saint and he's writing it to the people that are gathered in the church of philippi like i'm speaking to you as the churches i serve and he's writing this he says together with the overseers and deacons overseers were sometimes translated as bishop sometimes simply as pastor an overseer or a bishop was generally a pastor who was in charge of multiple pastors now it could be a lot of pastors like our bishop has hundreds or it could have just been a handful depending on how big their particular parish was some people could call me the bishop in pendleton although i wouldn't do that if i were you because i have a bishop who might not like it but anyways the idea is is that they had people who were overseeing multiple uh clergy and multiple possibly even congregations the deacons were the people who were the lay leadership of the church so even in the beginning of the church there was a combination of leadership between those who were clergy and those who were lay people because it seems that there's always a balance between that it's never meant to be all decided by the clergy or all decided by the lay people but it's meant to be a partnership in ministry together and peace we had that last week in the book from revelation grace is what we receive from god when

he forgives our sins when he takes away the brokenness we have it's a gift of god to forgive us for anything we've ever done wrong and peace is when we receive and accept the holy spirit in our heart it gives us a peace or a sense of calmness that the bible says passes all understanding and only comes with the presence of the holy spirit sometimes we use a little um dove as a symbol of peace or world peace well the dove comes from the bible because the dove is actually the symbol of the holy spirit so the holy spirit and peace are synonymous we gain real peace with the holy spirit in our heart in verse 3 it says i thank my god every by the way before i go to that the way he greets people is something we should think about he identifies who he is and then he sends something as a blessing to them grace and peace to you all right grace and peace to you from god our father and the lord jesus christ give people a blessing especially if you don't have something pleasant to say that's i'm saying that paul does here but say something nice to people when you write a letter to them people always like to hear something nice verse 3 i thank my god every time i remember you i used to have a pastor named bill horn and he told me he prayed for me every day i've had some of you say that you pray for me every day you don't know how much i appreciate that to know that somebody is praying for us thanking god thinking about us every day that's wonderful he says he thanks god every time i remember you isn't that the way we want to be remembered that somebody thanks god for us for who we are for what we've done for what we do we thank god in all my prayers for all of you i always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now again he talks about that partnership between paul who is the the clergy or the professional leader and the lay people who are the volunteers who lead the church and he thanks god because of that partnership and and he prays with joy again it should be our goals in life that we would have people who remember us with joy when people think of us it brings a smile to their face that's what god would want that's what we should make as our goal being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of christ jesus we talked last week about the day of christ jesus or the day of judgment particularly i talked about it in my easter sermon there'll be a day that will meet god there'll be a day when this whole world will be restarted and on that day that day that that that that god will reclaim all of eternity and recreate this world these people will be completion completed in their faith and he says that whoever began a good work will carry them to that completion and the whoever of course is god it's the holy spirit the good news about god is well he wants us to cooperate with what he's doing in us he says if we let him he'll do the work we don't have to do the heavy lifting for change in our lives if we want to change to what god wants us to become all we have to do is let him work he will change us it is right in verse 7 it is right for me to feel this way about all of you since i have in my heart and

whether i'm in chains or defending and confirming the gospel all of you share in god's grace with me since i have you in my heart it's right for me to feel this way whether or not he's in chains or he's free he shares god's grace and they share it with him and paul does this god in verse 80 says can testify how i long for all of you with the affection of christ jesus i have to say this has been an interesting experience and in some ways i'm glad for the people who have expressed how they've come back to the church through this experience welcome we're glad to have you back i went through the friendship cards from from our worship and our bible studies and saw the comments of different people who said they were able to come back to church because of this ministry but i i really am longing for the day that we can be together again that's the way it's supposed to be the bible says it's not good for people to be alone and it's not good for us to be alone we can share this way for now but i look forward to the day when i will see you again and and that's what he's talking about in verse 9 he says and this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless from the day for the day of christ this is my prayer this is what i pray to god about that your love may abound more and more the more we spend time with god and we experience his love for us his forgiveness his acceptance of us even in our brokenness the more love abounds in us it's hard to stay angry it's hard to hold a grudge when god has forgiven us so much that's a knowledge and a depth of insight into god we can have the mind of christ the bible tells us that we want to have that in verse 10 he goes on to say so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of christ i'd love to get to a place where i'm pure and blameless wouldn't wouldn't you it's not easy we're only pure and blameless because of the grace of god but we can get better if we're not striving for better what are we striving for verse 11 it says filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through jesus christ to the glory and praise of god the fruit of righteousness that comes through christ jesus christ to the glory and praise of god and the fruit of righteousness could possibly be equated with the fruit of the spirit love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self-control the fruit of righteousness is what happens in our lives when we live life right it's the benefit sin breaks our lives righteousness restores the good things to life some people think that that um when we become christians we miss out on all the fun the truth is we miss out on all the

brokenness all the things that tear people apart if you ever watch somebody who who absolutely wallows and indulges in sin and brokenness it doesn't take very long before their lives start to become dark and broken and unhealthy that's just the process so instead we want the fruit of righteousness now i want to note something else paul writes long long sentences so let me read that one sentence to you all at once and this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in the knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through jesus christ to the glory and praise of god hello take a breath paul he doesn't do very good at any sentences that's why we have to break them down in verse 12 he goes on to say now i want you to know brothers and sisters that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel all things this is written elsewhere all things work for good for those who love the lord this is not a good thing i don't like being in in this situation where we're worried as a culture about a virus killing people but it has advanced the gospel we can use this for good and paul says it's the same with him in verse 13 as a result it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that i am in chains for christ and because of my chains most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear so he says because he's in change change other christians are bolder and more confident and even people who aren't christians the roman soldiers are learning about christ is that how we'd see it if we were thrown in jail how could we use this situation for god how could we use this for good everything can work for good we can look for the ways that we can make work of this somebody said and being home more i'm getting closer to my family being home more i'm spending more time in my faith being home more i have the opportunity to make those phone calls or write those notes i always wanted to we can use this opportunity for good verse 15 it is true that some preach christ out of envy and rivalry but others out of good will the latter do so out of love knowing that i am put here for the defense of the gospel the former preach christ out of selfish ambition not sincerely supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while i'm in chains there are people who are preachers who are preachers for the benefit of others and are really trying to promote the gospel and then there's some that quite honestly are just trying to promote themselves every profession whether it be clergy whether it be politicians whether it be businessmen whatever it might be every profession has people that do it for their own selfish ambition and some people that do it to serve others i'll talk more about that in my message sunday he says but what does it matter in verse 18 the important thing is that in every way whether false motives are true christ is preached and because of this i rejoice i call this the gospel of joy because he uses the word rejoice and joy a lot i love the book of philippians it's one of my favorite books of the the bible and he says it doesn't matter even if people have the wrong motives if the right results are happening that's fascinating i had a friend of mine who was a pastor and he was laying in bed in a hospital

and he had some condition i don't recall what it was and he said he he looked up and there was this this guy on tv who was pretending to be a faith healer this is his words and he said and he looked out of the tv screen and he said there's a man laying in a hospital with such and such condition he's being healed by god right now interestingly my friend had that condition and interestingly when the doctors came in to check him again it was gone he'd been healed he said i know that man was a fake i know it for certain but god used him to heal me wow god will make good things happen from any kind of brokenness even broken people and so in that he says he rejoices because god's will is done yes and i will continue to rejoice verse 19 for i know that through your prayers and god's provision of the spirit of jesus christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance he believes that he will be delivered because of their prayers and because he stays in the spirit of christ i eagerly expect and hope that i will no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now as always christ will be exalted in my body whether by life or by death so he's even willing to say if he dies in the circumstance it will work for the glory of god wow can we face life saying that even our death would be for the benefit of god i have known people that i go to comfort and console in the hospital when they're dying and they end up sharing their faith with me and and helping me to feel better verse 21 for to me to live is christ and to die is gain if i am to go on living in the body this will mean fruitful labor for me yet what shall i choose i don't know i'm torn between the two i desire to depart and be with christ which is better by far but it's more necessary for you that i remain in the body convinced of this i know that i will remain and i will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith so that through my being with you again you're boasting in christ jesus will abound on account of me now that's very important that little passage there in that section of philippians what paul is saying to us is that glory is better i've said that to you many times when people say better than the alternative the answer is no it's not no it's not i'm not afraid of the coronavirus i'm not afraid of dying not in the least i know that i go to glory which is better than this world but i also know that god has some reason for me to be here there are people in this world that depend on me there are people that need to know the gospel that i need to spend time with there there are things that i need to be doing and i know you might say well i don't know what my life's purpose is i don't seem to have much purpose to be doing that because everyone can be doing something that matters pick up the telephone get out a pen and paper and and write a note or two to people there are things that everyone can do to be good and valuable for god and god intends for us to have that value and that's why we stay that's why god has left this creation in place because he's being patient for us to have the time to share the gospel with others i got a long way to go and i'm going to try to get there tonight so we're going to keep on going whatever happens conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of christ do what would be worthy of jesus you should live as if you believe jesus is walking with you

[20 : 27] every moment because he is then whether i come and see you or only hear about you in absence i will know that you stand firm in the one spirit striving together as one for the faith of the gospel i'll know it because i'll hear about it without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you this is a sign to them that they will be destroyed but that you will be saved and that by god now he's talking about judgment day again on judgment day will be sorted out those with god will go on his right those without will go on his left 29 it says for it has been granted to you on behalf of christ jesus not only to believe in him but also to suffer for him it's been granted that you suffer for jesus nobody wants to suffer but we're suffering for god for struggling and and it's hard but it's for god it's not a bad thing he suffered for us it's not a bad thing he suffered for us since you are going through the same struggle you saw i had and now here that i still have we all have similar struggles we're going to chapter 2 and it says we're in philippians in case you're joining us late therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with christ any encouragement from being united with christ if any comfort from his love if any common sharing in the spirit if any tenderness and compassion if you are feeling any of these good things about being connected to god then make my joy complete by being like-minded having the same love being one in the spirit and one in mind do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit rather in humility in humility this is tough value others above yourselves not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interest of the others i say this when people get married watching out for one another completing one another being there for each other considering other people and their welfare more important than our own it's not an easy thing we're born in some ways very selfish and self-centered but if we remember who god is in us if we have that combination and that connection with god then we should have that same love he's saying not doing things out of vain conceit but looking after each other's interest can you imagine a world where you don't have to worry about yourself because somebody else is watching your back while you're watching theirs that's what a good marriage is that's what a good friendship is that's what it means to be a follower of christ in the church it said this way the church serves christ and christ serves the church we both do it out of love in verse 5 it says in your relationship with one another have the same mindset as christ jesus so think the way jesus did who being in very nature god did not consider equality with god something to be used to his own advantage rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness in human likeness so jesus lowered himself down to nothing which is who we are and being like a servant being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross he

was willing to die for our salvation and that death was was god's death to perfection and he was willing to do this for us therefore god exalted him to the highest place gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that jesus christ is lord to the glory of god the father that's a little song by the way every knee shall bow every tongue confess that jesus christ is lord it's a song that we know but it's a song when it was written originally that god being willing to give of himself to surrender who and what he was to humble himself so that we could live and was lifted up because of it that's the example we should have of how we should treat one another that's not easy but we have a lot of people out there doing that you know there's people that go and work in the grocery store not because they need the money but because grocery stores need them there's people going to the hospital some of them retired and they go back to the hospital because the hospital needs them to care for other people not because they need to they're retired there's people willing to sacrifice and we need to be willing to do that too therefore my dear friends in verse 12 as you have always obeyed not only in my presence but now much more in my absence continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling that's a so many famous lines from this passage this book is the book work out your salvation with fear and trembling remember the part about cooperating with god cooperating grace we need to cooperate we need to work with god one bishop said it this way pray as if it all depends on god but work as if it all depends on yourself with fear and trembling we need to remember god is the one that holds all of eternity we don't have to be afraid of them because perfect love casts out fear but but but that fear is really meant to be the respect we should have for a god who can change our destiny forever for it is god who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose so god's intention of changing and transforming us is so that god's will will be done do everything without grumbling or arguing do everything without grumbling or arguing i don't know if we do anything without grumbling or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure children of god without fault in a warped and crooked generation he's writing back then 2 000 years ago we live in a warped and crooked generation amen we have people who are struggling and everything and he says just go through life without grumbling or arguing we don't need to live that way we don't need to be like the brokenness around us then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firm to the word of life and then i will be able to boast on the day of christ that i didn't run or labor in vain because by living this way by living as people who don't grumble and don't blame and aren't arguing that means that we will stand out from the common people notice the difference and glorify god he says in verse 17 but even if i am being poured out

like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith i am glad and rejoice with all of you so you too should be glad and rejoice with me again that word rejoice he's always talking about rejoice rejoice he's in chains and he's rejoicing we're just stuck in the house and we complain and grumble he's telling us we need to hold to that faith and we need to work out our salvation in such a way that people see the difference in us in verse 19 he says i hope in the lord jesus to send timothy to you soon i also may be cheered when i received news about you people went almost like couriers between the different towns to tell the stories i have no one else like him who will show genuine concern for your welfare for everyone looks out for their own interest not those of jesus christ hmm that's a shame we don't think about ourselves or we only think about ourselves and not about what jesus wants but you know that timothy has proved himself because the son of his father he has served with me and the work of the gospel timothy is a man who's selfless that's a huge thing to say about someone i hope therefore to send him as soon as i see how things go with me as soon as i can spare him and in verse 24 and i'm confident in the lord that i myself will come soon he believes he's going to be freed but i think it is necessary to send back to you aphroditus f f up uh epaphroditus okay my why can they call him sam or joe or bill right my brother co-worker and fellow soldier who is also your messenger whom you sent to take care of my needs so the people of philippi actually paid for a guy to go take care of paul think about that they knew paul needed help so they sent somebody to take care of him and paul's now sending him back for he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill so evidently they sent this guy to help paul but he ended up getting sick so it sounds like paul's got to take care of him indeed he was ill and almost died but god had mercy on him and not only him only but also on me to spare me sorrow upon sorrow or in other words he he he got through his sickness and that's good because otherwise paul would have been blamed just saying that's what he seems to say therefore i'm all the more eager to send him so that when you see him again you may be glad and i may have less anxiety worrying about what you are going to say about me sometimes when people try to do something nice for us it turns around back on them or you try to do something nice for someone else it doesn't turn out to be nice we need to remember why people try to do that the motives of the philippian church were good they didn't send this man to be a burden on paul or to cause him anxiety they sent him to help a lot of times we have people trying to help maybe they're not as helpful as they as they could be but they're trying and we need to recognize their motives with their intent it says to welcome him in the lord in verse 29 and greet and with great joy with great cheers that joy again and honor be and honor people like him because he almost died for the

work of christ he risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me so he actually took his his life in his hands by risking his health to help paul on their behalf because they couldn't go chapter three further my brothers and sisters rejoice in the lord there it is again rejoice say rejoice say it with me rejoice see what happens when you say rejoice or joy it makes you smile it's a good word you should say it a lot you should just walk around going joy rejoice you could even use hallelujah if you want hallelujah see chapter three further my brothers and sisters rejoice in the lord it's no trouble for me to write the same things to you again and it is a safeguard for you sounds like like he wrote a letter before watch out for those dogs those evildoers those mutilators of the flesh for it is we who are the circumcision we who serve god by his spirit who boast in christ jesus and who put no confidence in the flesh though i myself have reasons for such confidence okay um skip that last line a minute so there's some people who are pushing the idea that people need to be circumcised it was a jewish ritual uh they often did it at the age of eight days old okay babies don't remember that but doing it when you're grown up that's a different story so there's a lot of people who want to follow god but they didn't want to be circumcised it in the roman world there were about 20 million about 3 million jews and about 20 million what they called god fears people that want to follow the jewish faith except being being circumcised and these people were saying you have to be circumcised you have to have um you have to have that right of circumcision to be a part of faith in god but what they're saying in here is that we don't have to have that actual ritual of circumcision for god to for it to be a part of god's kingdom just to add somebody come in so just that's why i was turning around here if someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh i have more now he's getting to the point of the the confidence in the flesh is that he himself of course was circumcised he was raised jewish and he says circumcised on the eighth day of the people of israel of the tribe of benjamin a hebrew of hebrews in regard to the law a pharisee all right so he's saying he's got good bloodlines he was a hebrew he was from the tribe of benjamin he knows his his roots he also was a pharisee okay pharisees were people that were very conservative about about keeping the rules they felt very strongly that they had to keep all the jewish rules and and they were very strict in their observance we have christians like that too almost legalistic about well they were legalistic about it as for zeal persecuting the church he actually in his early years paul as a jew persecuted the church he actually was part of a movement to wipe out the christian faith not that he felt good about that he's not bragging about it he's saying he's as jewish as jewish comes even to the point of being part of a movement to persecute the jewish people as for righteousness based on the law faultless now that's pretty strong statement that's verse six and he's saying according to the jewish laws he's done nothing wrong now he would

say how could that be no one can is that good and that's true and paul wouldn't claim that he was perfect he wouldn't claim that he didn't need grace but he was the kind of person who had spent his life trying to make sure he did as little wrong as possible martin luther the great reformer was the same way he hardly did anything wrong his his uh his confessor used to say you know brother martin when you come in for confession you come in here to to to confess that you passed gas or something go out and do something really wrong so you have something to confess but what martin luther found out and what paul found out both found out is that we are never good enough even if we are about as righteous as somebody could be in this culture we're never good enough because somewhere we're wrong jesus said if you look at a person with less than your eyes it's the same as committing adultery if you get angry with someone it's the same as committing murder none of us are good maybe paul had kept the rules and the laws but it did he keep the spirit of the law did he keep his heart perfect no he would have said so too and then you have people like me over the years you know i can't i can't tell you how many times i've failed i still fail i see the brokenness in my life now i'm not confessing to all of you some horrible thing that if you find out you're going to kick me out of the church or something i don't mean that i'm just saying that i know that i am only a sinner saved by grace i am only made good because god gave me the gift of forgiving me that's a gift all of us can have no matter who we are and paul's saying no matter how perfect he was in verse 7 he says whatever were gains to me i've considered loss for the sake of christ compared to the grace of jesus christ as good and perfect as he been is like a failure he says what is more i consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing christ christ jesus my lord for whose sake i have lost all things all things i am worthless compared to knowing god everything i've ever accomplished in life is nothing compared to the value of having god in my life knowing you jesus it is the greatest thing you're my all you're my best you're my joy my righteousness it is everything nothing you do in life will be better than this nothing greatest accomplishment greatest decision in fact he says i consider everything i've done garbage that i might gain christ in verse 9 and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which is through faith in christ the righteousness that comes from god on the basis of faith the only real righteousness is by the forgiveness that comes from god because we have faith we firmly believe that god will forgive us i have faith in god and god is always faithful and he forgives my sins my brokenness and that's the greatest thing of all verse 10 i want to know christ yes to know the power

[40 : 39] of his resurrection and participate in his sufferings became becoming like him in his death and so somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead paul says he's willing to even die like jesus dead and he won't he'll die he had his head chopped off which sounds terrible but that was the merciful way of dying in an execution by the romans it was a roman citizen peter the great apostle the same time died by being hung upside down on a cross that's why the the petron cross is an upside down cross so if you see one of those it's peter's cross that's not what most people think i want to know christ in the power of his resurrection we're in easter season the power of jesus resurrection is that all the things we used to think were important are gone and we've been resurrected to a new set of priorities a new way of seeing life being like him in death dying to the things of this world so that we can gain resurrection and that resurrection happens in the day of judgment where we live forever because of our faith in god and that's an essential resurrection but it's also resurrection of our life now and here that all of a sudden everything changes all the priorities are different if we could get the world to change their priorities and stop living for selfishness and stop worrying about what they're going to get so that we're all looking after each other's needs and concerns and and we're trying to figure out how to make everything better and people more loved the world would be a better place verse 12 he says not that i've already obtained all this or i've already arrived at my goal but i press on to take hold of that for which christ jesus took hold of me that's that's important paul doesn't feel he's reached a stage of perfection in the wesleyan faith we have something we call the doctrine of perfection we believe that for a short time or maybe a little longer we can actually be made perfect in this world i'm even asked when i was ordained if i was going on to perfection and if i expect to be made perfect i do expect it when when i say to you in the name of jesus christ your sins are forgiven and worship over the weekend and you say back to me that my sins are forgiven because we are the body of christ and i represent you and you represent christ we can forgive each other sin and we are perfect until we go out in the parking lot and we see somebody scratched our car and then we're right we don't necessarily hold that perfection maybe for a few hours maybe for a few days and paul is striving for that he he wants to take hold of what god took hold of him for i remember what i said god will do the work we don't have to do all the work god takes hold of our lives and he heads us in the right direction and paul is saying he wants to get there it's his goal to become what god wants him to be i said is that your goal or do we get confused by all the other things people say we need to spend our time our efforts our work on verse 13 he says brothers and sisters i do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it but

one thing i do forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead i press on toward the goal to win the prize for which god has called me heavenward in christ jesus he makes it sound like a an athletic competition like he's he's running the race he uses that language elsewhere he's striving to accomplish and he keeps working and working at it there was a time when i was an athlete boy you went into training you had to work hard you had to condition your body you had to learn things in your mind you had to study things you had to make it a reflective reflexive action so that you didn't think about when you did something it just became repetitive it happened naturally because the more you practiced it the more it just became natural it's like when i play the guitar i don't think about where my fingers need to go for the chords they just go there if you do something long enough it just becomes becomes a part of who you are and that's what what paul is saying we need to work that hard we need to strive like an athlete would condition their body condition their mind practice and rehearse over and over and over again so that when we're faced with the challenge we do what jesus would want us to do that's why we call them disciplines we're disciplining our bottle our bodies our lives our minds being disciples means we're working diligently and hard to achieve the goal and verse 15 it says and my goal is to finish this book so we're going to see in verse 15 of chapter 3 he says all of us then who are mature should take such a view on things he can be he can be a real jerk well if you're mature like me but he's right there are christians that are christians because they've just come to understand that they could be saved from eternal damnation or because they just experienced the holy spirit in there they're just filled with the warmth and fire of that or or they just came to feel the love of god and of other people but when we're mature we should understand that the goal is to get to what god wants us to be not what we want not what we gain but what we can give and if on some point you think differently than me listen to this that too god will make clear to you so if you disagree with me god will straighten you out i he's certainly has a full sense of who he thinks he is only let i'm sorry paul only let us live up to what we have already attained but at least don't get any worse don't fall backwards in your faith so in verse 17 he says join together in following my example brothers and sisters and just as you you have us as a model keep your eyes on those who live as we do that interesting do you feel that you could write that to people live like i do love like i do act like i do be faithful like i am do you feel that you could be that kind of example to people that's what god is calling us to do not only to be that but to be confident that we are that verse 18 for as i have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears many people live as enemies of the cross of christ there are people that really do not want god not only in their life but in our world they literally are against god verse 19 he says their destiny is destruction they will end up in the lake of fire

their god is their stomach what makes us feel good in our culture that's become our god what makes us feel good is the goal in life paul said he he's he he looks to suffer like jesus we don't look to suffer at all we just want to feel good we've turned it into our god their god is their stomach their glory is in their shame it's fascinating how people brag about things they should be ashamed of they put it on youtube they put it on the internet bragging about what they should be ashamed of a strange culture turned upside down their mind is set on earthly things i suppose if you don't have the presence of god that's what you see but our citizenship is in heaven we're members of the kingdom of god our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await a savior from there the lord jesus christ he's coming in glory and his coming will be the day that we will all be made right we all and we eagerly await a savior from there the lord jesus christ who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body so the bible tells us that when we die we receive new bodies in in one place it says they'll be like angels we aren't angels that's it's a wonderful life we talked about that last week we don't become angels but we get bodies that are new or they become like jesus glorious body we get a whole new way of living and that's what happens when when the new creation comes so the new creation will be a physical existence where we'll actually live in this world but the world will be perfect the brokenness will be taken away and we'll have new bodies we'll be able to eat anything we want no cholesterol no calorie no sugar no problems at all no health issues we won't gain weight and we can go back and eat again i don't know i'm just making that up but we won't be broken anymore no more sour or pain or mourning or crying for that order of things will passed away that's what revelation 21 tells us okay this is the fourth chapter it's the last chapter we're gonna get through this whole book tonight but our philippians this is the best chapter chapter four is the best verse four of chapter four is the best four four philippians four four but this is the best part my brothers and sisters you whom i love and long for my joy and crown stand firm in the lord in this way dear friends my joy and my crown in some ways the churches i serve are my joy and my crown i understand what paul's saying he's writing to one of the churches he served i brag about you your faith your excitement about jesus what you bring to this world in this community is outstanding the love you show each other the love you show for people around you and outside this church you take up more more gifts for offerings for to help people outside the church and to do good things and you feed the poor and other cities in many ways you're my joy and my crown i don't want to take away from my family and and and that side of things of course they're my joy as well but paul's talking about his church and i understand it

all right and he wants them to stand with what they were taught i hope that some of the things that i've taught will stay with you for the rest of your lives that's that's my goal churches the buildings the organizations they come and go but what we plant in someone's heart remains forever and they pass it along to others and it goes on and on and on through the circle of life verse 2 of chapter 4 i plead with judiah and i plead with syntek to be of the same mind in the lord to be of the same mind the lord to be of the same mind evidently these two have been fighting with each other he wants them to stop fighting christians fight christians get in arguments and when they do that they struggle and that doesn't look good for other christians i'm going to be back in just a second i got to get a drink of water excuse me i apologize i'm back you can't talk for an hour without having something to drink or something like that and i didn't bring something with me so my apologies i'm back now we were talking i'm gonna put this on right there we go we were talking about syntek and eudea and the fact that that they weren't getting along together now i find that interesting yes and i ask you my true companion help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel along with clement and the rest of my co-workers whose names are in the book of life so these are christians but they don't agree do you think christians all have to agree do you think that everybody has to belong to the same political party you think that we can never disagree about issues around our faith or our theology of course we can do you think that we can't agree with us we can't agree with us we can't agree with us we can't agree in love one of the things i love about this this ministry is that we have people that don't agree at all people that come from very different sides of arguments arguments within the church arguments outside the church but you see we find the truth by being around people that don't always agree with us because it's in being with people who don't always agree with us that we see things that change our minds if all we do is stay in the same echo chambers with the people that think exactly like us we'll never hear anything now so it's not bad that they were um that they were disagreeing that they didn't have a complete and entire entirely uh identical belief system but the problem is is that they were fighting over it and he's saying they shouldn't do this because we're all on the same team and then chapter four verse four remember i said this is the best one he says rejoice in the lord always and i'll say it again rejoice remember your mouth smiles rejoice rejoice paul is in prison he could be facing a death sentence he's not able to do what he wants he can't go out and about but he's still filled with joy you know this coronavirus thing has caused a lot of people a lot of anxiety and a lot of problems

so a lot of things we can't do we can't just go and do whatever we want and we can use this to just be miserable or we can look for places of joy paul says rejoice always but then good times are bad whether in brokenness or in healing no matter what your condition rejoice let your gentleness be evident to all the lord is near remember when they used to call um men gentlemen because a real man knows that they don't need to bluster and push and be forceful they know that they can be gentle that there's there's more strength in holding back and not pushing your agenda not forcing your agenda but being gentle and soft people will listen to that more it's not weakness in fact it's a strength that's greater than than people that that are blustering and why because god is near every he's always watching don't be anxious about anything don't be anxious about anything don't be anxious about anything it's okay god is still in control of the universe he still cares about you and about me in every situation by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your request to god it's okay to say god would you change this it's okay to say god make this virus go away it's okay to say god help these people that are struggling it's okay to say god help me when i'm struggling but we need to do it it says with thanksgiving we need to remember what god has already done for us instead of always looking for what god can do for us we need to thank him for what he's already done for us and he's done a lot if you're even alive in here he's done a lot verse 7 it says and the peace of god which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in christ jesus the peace which is the holy spirit of god guards our hearts and our minds because we're in god we're in god the holy spirit will make sure that your heart doesn't get in the wrong place and that your mind isn't thinking the wrong things if we allow god into our heart we accept the power of the holy spirit it changes everything brothers and sisters verse 8 whatever i like this whatever is true whatever is noble whatever is right whatever is pure whatever is lovely whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think of such things i don't think we need to describe what what it means to be right or noble or pure or lovely think about these things think about all the good things think about the blessings think about the the the the joys think about the wonders think about the good stuff of life the good stuff the television seems to be going 24 7 now i like to turn it off and watch something else somebody and this was interesting because it was a news person said she only watched about a half an hour day of this he was on the half hour network news okay they're trying to make money by ratings to get you to watch this stuff and the way they do it is by making you super anxious so that you watch more of this stuff got to watch coma in the morning got to watch the president at night got to watch all the stuff as they go on and on and on and on and on and on about making us anxious don't be anxious about

[60 : 57] anything get stuff that's pure and lovely and and true and noble and admirable and praiseworthy and put it in your life verse 9 whatever you you you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me put it into practice and the god of peace will be with you paul again has that um sense of himself that he feels he's a good example i probably would say something like if you've ever seen me do some good things and there's things that you think are admirable about me do more of that that stuff that you don't really admire so much about me ignore that can we be such a good example that we'd hold ourselves up to others paul does we should be able to do that as well and he says and the god of peace will be with you the god of peace not the god of destruction and terror and horror god doesn't want to be that he wants to be the god of your peace verse 10 i rejoiced greatly rejoice again rejoice i rejoice greatly in the lord that at last you renewed your concern for me indeed you were concerned but you had no opportunity to show it i'm not saying this because i'm in need for i've learned to be content whatever the circumstances you hear this i've learned to be content whatever the circumstances this is important stuff i know what it is to be in need and i know what it is to have plenty now some people have never had plenty and some people have never been in need but if you've had any you've you've been short and you've had plenty and i've been that i know what paul's talking about i've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation whether well-fed or hungry whether living in plenty or in want you want to know what the secret is i can do all this i can do all this through christ who gives me strength whether i'm having problems i need god to give me strength whether i am doing well i need god to give me the strength to do things well in a good way i can do all things things if i take my focus off of me and my only focus is on christ and all i'm trying to do is please christ i will be content regardless of what i have contentment is good complacency is when we don't want to do anymore it leads to laziness that's not good contentment means that i will be happy whatever my situation years ago pastor sherry was showing a video to the teenagers and and in the video it showed people from a country in africa that had almost nothing they they didn't even know where their meal was going to come from every day but they had jesus in their life and they were smiling and dancing and happy and singing then they showed people from the united states who didn't have the latest iphone or the latest whatever and they were miserable because of what they didn't have because it couldn't be content contentment is not about what you have it's about who you are contentment is not about what you have it's about whose you are children of god fine contentment yet it was good of you to share in my troubles it was kind of you to think of me moreover as you philippines know in the early philippians i said philippines sorry about that in verse 15 moreover as you philippians know in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel when i set out from macedonia not one church shared with me and the matter of giving and receiving except only you now the rest of the churches gave him a salary he was the only one that they were the

only church that helped for even when i was in thessalonica you sent me aid more than once when i was in need paul actually was independently wealthy but sometimes he needed help too and this church took care of him and you know you notice you notice the people that are there when you're struggling when you have a problem because they're jesus they're jesus to us when we're struggling not that i desire your guests what i desire is that more be credited to your account not that paul lived off the philippians or needed to but he wanted them to be blessed by god i received full payment and have more than enough i'm amply supplied now that i have received from a pephroditus the gifts you sent they're fragrant offering an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to god he's thanking them for helping him and my god will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in christ jesus god will take care of us we cannot give god somebody once said that and that's the truth do we have a theology of scarcity or a theology of abundance it's fascinating that god can make something out of nothing and yet we're afraid that we're going to end up with nothing when we worship a god that can make something out of nothing it's kind of like the u.s treasury they just keep printing money it just makes money out of nowhere like that to our god and father be glory forever and ever amen now that's actually the end of the letter but paul writes a little postscript he says greet all of god's people in christ jesus the brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings and god's people here send you greetings especially those who belong to caesar's household isn't that interesting so the roman soldiers he was talking about earlier are thanking the philippians for helping paul to have come to them to preach the gospel because he got sent there in chains the grace of the lord jesus christ be with your spirit amen and remember how i talked about you should begin a letter by saying something good you should end the letter with a blessing as well the grace of the lord jesus christ be with your soul tonight and always amen we could end there but i just want to share with you that god is with us god is blessing us even in the midst of our struggles and our difficulties god will be our strength and even though we know that we've had people who have died people who are um struggling people who are sick god is still our answer and he will answer us in this life or the next for our faithfulness in him so let's pray together shall we dear god in heaven we thank you for the blessings you give to us we thank you for sharing all of life with us us we thank you that you give us what we need and we pray lord that you'll help us not to struggle and worry about the things we want bless those we love help them all to find the peace of jesus christ bless our church and bless our community that people might be healed of this virus and that it might go away and that you might give us the courage and the strength to live again for you touch us and help us to rejoice always and forever and again and again be our peace and our strength be love to those who are feeling lonely for we pray this all in jesus name who said to pray our father who art in heaven

hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever amen and now may god bless you may god keep you safe go in his peace amen