



SBC Sunday 31st May 2020 – Pentecost

Philippians 4 v 4-9

Text: ‘And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus’ – (Philippians 4 v7)

Title: Let Gods’ Peace dwell in you richly

Today we start looking at the end of this letter that Paul has written to the growing church in Philippi. During this letter Paul has praised the church, warned them against going away from God’s teaching, encouraged them to keep living a good life worthy of God, and to resolve petty disputes among themselves as quickly as possible.

Now he offers them a blessing with encouragement to follow all that they have seen in him that is good. Basically, put into practice all the teaching that they have received from Paul and other leaders of the church.

Remember that Paul was a great encourager, one who with the help of God was able to spot potential in people and encourage them to use their gifts.

Look at how Paul begins this section of summing up, he begins with a section of praise, (verse 4) – ‘Rejoice the Lord is near’, this is a concept that most people accept these days, but at the time of this letter, around 20 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the early church was still trying to understand what this really meant. Rejoice because God is with you and then let your gentleness, your kindness, your love of God show through your actions and life in verse 5. Having praised God and shown how God makes a difference in your life, then turn to God in prayer. Paul also encourages them to be bold in their prayers, to not be afraid to ask for what was on their minds. Paul tells them to present all their needs to God, however big or small it doesn’t matter. Notice one very important thing, that Paul does not tell the church at Philippi that they will get an immediate answer, or even the answer that they want. Paul doesn’t say anything about how or if God will answer their prayers, they are just told to present their prayers to God.

Having taken your prayers to God with thanksgiving in your heart, you will then be graced with a sense of peace that goes beyond all human understanding. This peace will surround you and give you guidance on how you should live your lives.

Paul then goes on to encourage the church in Philippi to follow his example of all the good things he has shown them. The church is to follow this example and show God’s love to all around them through their actions and words. If there are able to do this then God’s peace will be with them.

What does this mean to us today here at Stanground? This Sunday is Pentecost, the day many people refer to as the birthday of the church. This is the day that we remember God kept his promise (as he always does) to the disciples that following the death and resurrection of Jesus, he would send them a very special helper, this is the time that the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in a very powerful way.



Read Acts Chapter 2 verses 1-11 for the full account. You will remember that the disciples are totally confused, still unable to understand what has happened and is happening to them, they are gathered in a room, when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and gives them the power to preach, teach and heal in God's name.

The disciples had learned from Jesus what was expected of them, in this letter that Paul writes to the church in Philippi, he reminds them of what he has taught them. In the section that we have looked at today, he reminds them to pray and follow good works.

Today in these still changing times, as some of the lockdown restrictions are lifted, we still have the same duty to follow the good things that God needs us to. We need to follow God's example of reaching out in his name to those around of us in need. The early church in Philippi had received the Holy Spirit as well as Paul encouraging them. This church was going through changing times and learning how to develop the new Christian Church. At Pentecost the disciples received to the Holy Spirit so that they could make changes.

We have the Holy Spirit with us today, so that we can make changes not only in our own lives but in the lives of the people around us. In order for us to make changes in our lives and other people's lives, make time to pray to God, listen to God for the answers he has for us and then follow his directions.

May the God of Peace that passes all understanding, keep us safe as we serve him in his world.

AMEN.

Doug Thompson