**BCM Bible Study: February 27/28, 2019**

**Philippians 4:1-4:23: Learning to Rest in God**

Peace and Joy: **Read Phil. 4:1-9**

* NOTE: We will not be focusing on unity (vv.2-3) since we have talked about this concept in past weeks.
* Take a closer look at verse 5. There is a word here (often translated reasonableness/gentleness) that is difficult to translate in just one word. The nuance of this word is: “not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant.”
  + How does this command relate to what you have read so far in Philippians? What is Paul asking of the reader?
* According to Paul, what is the anecdote for anxiety?
  + **Read Matthew 6:7-8, 7:7-11**. What is the fundamental attitude of prayer according to Jesus? (Trusting that God is our provider)
  + What are the things that worry you the most? In what way are these concerns tied to things that you need to live?
* Consider this paraphrase of verses 4-7: “Let joy take the place of your discontent and anxiety. Look away from yourselves to the needs of your brothers, being willing to yield your rights and privileges for their sake. And as far as your needs are concerned, bring them all before God in an attitude of thankfulness for what he has already given you. If you do this, you will learn what true and unshakable contentment really is.” (Silva)
  + What tends to move you away from joyfulness – your own needs or issues you have with others?
  + Verses 8-9 give us instructions on how to overcome a selfish mindset. What are some examples of things that are true, just, honorable, pure, etc.?
  + How does ruminating on these things move us from a place of discontent and anxiety (self-focused) to peace and joy (God and other-focused)?

Contentment:

* **Read Phil. 4:13**
  + How have you heard this verse used popularly?
* **Read Phil. 4:10-23**
  + In the context of this letter, what is God strengthening Paul to do? What is the true meaning of this verse?
* According to what we have just read in Matthew, how can Paul be content regardless of his circumstance?
  + When are you more prone to turn away from God – when things are going well or when things are going poorly? Why?
* Paul is saying at least two things here. 1. His hope is not in material possessions – he generally cares more about spiritual fruit because this is what is lasting. 2. Even though the Philippians have supported him, and he is grateful, he believes and wants to remind them that it is God who provides. (vv.19-20) As people come to know Christ, they are transformed from self-focused to other/God focused individuals (note the greatest and second greatest commandments). So even as the Philippians give gifts to Paul, it is the work of God in them that brings about their humble generosity. When we come to trust and experience the fact that God meets our needs – both spiritually and physically – we become generous and selfless people. Let’s look at both of these ideas more in depth:
  + Materialism is a significant issue in our culture. In what way can attachment to material things negatively impact your walk with God?
    - Have you/do you sense that you hold too tightly to material possessions? Is there any item in your life that you are tempted to think that you couldn’t do without?
    - Encourage people to name some things to which they are too attached. Consider challenging everyone to give something away this week that is somewhat difficult to part with.
  + In order to learn to trust God’s provision, it is important to consider how he has provided for you in the past:
    - How have you seen God at work to provide for you this week? Throughout your lifetime?
    - How have you seen God pursue you through your life events? In what way to you resonate with **Romans 5:8**?

Conclusion

* Offer some challenges to your folks this week:
  + Encourage them to give up a material possession that is somewhat difficult to part with.
  + Having considered God’s generosity towards them (spiritually and physically), encourage them to do some act of generosity this week.