

MESSAGE TITLE: Living with Peace, Part 2

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 4:5

KEY TRUTH

God's people should have a reputation for reasonableness that reflects the presence of Jesus in our lives and the joy that He brings when we trust Him.

GETTING STARTED

There's not an exact English translation for the Greek word for reasonableness. Many Bible students use biblical terms like gentleness, forbearance and patience to describe the characteristic of being reasonable. The essence of the word describes a person who refuses to insist on getting his own way, someone who sets his 'rights' aside for the benefit of those around him. Reasonable people do not, for example, feel entitled to have whatever they want, whenever they want it and however they want it.

APPLICATION

Read this excerpt from an article by Dr. Thom Rainer entitled How the Entitlement Mentality Crept into our Churches. *In 1974 Burger King made a bold move to take market share from McDonald's. At the time, McDonald's made burgers en masse. If you wanted a special order, you had to wait interminably while it was cooked separately. I remember. I'm a ketchup-only kind of guy. So Burger King announced that each order would be cooked at the time of the order the way the customer wanted. Their new slogan was "Have It Your Way." Burger King, at least at the time, understood the consumer entitlement mentality. The biblical mandate for local congregations is counter-cultural. In many passages of the New Testament, such as 1 Corinthians 12, we are clearly taught that members are to be sacrificial, giving and serving. Such a mentality goes counter to the culture in which the church ministers. Church is not about having it our way. It's about bringing glory to God by having it His way.*

Is it possible for believers to feel entitled like consumers and still be known as reasonable people at the same time? Why or why not? Perhaps you've heard people label certain individuals or even generations as entitled. What do people mean when they use the label 'entitled' like that?

What does the Gospel teach us about our entitlements? How would having a Spirit-led understanding of our entitlements in Christ Jesus actually lead us to develop a spirit of reasonableness?

What's the significance of Paul's reminder that "the Lord is at hand?" How might knowing that Jesus is near help us develop a spirit of reasonableness?

What is Jesus saying to you in this verse? In what ways do you feel the challenge to grow as a person known for being reasonable?

PRAYER

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service
Romans 12:1 (KJV).

Heavenly Father, please make me a reasonable person for Your glory and for my good. I read in Your Word that offering myself to You is the only reasonable thing to do in light of Your mercy. Therefore, I pray that You would transform me by Your mercy and grace into a person known for being reasonable with others. Please do this work by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit whom You've given to reside in me!

SHARE POINT

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

4:4 *Rejoice!* The joy that Paul calls for is not a happiness that depends on circumstances, but a deep contentment that is in the Lord based on trust in the sovereign, living God and that is, therefore, always available, even in difficult times.

4:5 *Reasonableness* is crucial for maintaining community; it is the disposition that seeks what is best for everyone and not just for oneself.

The Lord is at hand emphasizes the fact that Jesus will surely return as judge and will hold people responsible for their deeds. Paul does not specify when this will happen.

4:6-7 Paul here echoes Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:25-34) that believers are *not to be anxious*, but are to entrust themselves into the hands of their loving heavenly Father, *Whose peace will guard them in Christ Jesus*. Paul's use of *'guard'* may reflect his own imprisonment or the status of Philippi as a Roman colony with a military garrison. In either case, it is not Roman soldiers who guard believers – it is the peace of God Almighty. The kind of peace Paul has in mind surpasses human understanding or reason. God's peace brings a supernatural calm to the minds of those who trust Him during troublesome circumstances. Because God is sovereign and in control, believers can entrust all their difficulties to Him, Who rules over all creation and Who is wise and loving in all His ways. An attitude of thanksgiving contributes directly to this inward peace of the soul.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

Serendipity Group Bible for Leaders

Holman Christian Standard Study Bible