

PHILIPPIANS

Message Ten

Taking Christ as Our Virtues

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:5-9

- I. The virtues of Christ for our experience in Philip-
pians 4:5-9 are the expression of a life that lives
Christ—1:19-21a; 2:5-13; 3:8-10:**
 - A. Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.
 - B. Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers' life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites.

- II. "Let your forbearance be known to all men. The
Lord is near"—4:5:**
 - A. Forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one's legal rights; forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due:
 1. According to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for it includes all Christian virtues:
 - a. Forbearance includes love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we shall also have righteousness and holiness.
 - b. Forbearance also includes self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things.
 2. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable—cf. 2 Cor. 6:1a; 10:1; Phil. 1:19; Isa. 11:2:
 - a. If we are forbearing, we shall have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need; we shall also have the full knowledge of

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what to say to them and when to say it—50:4-5;
Col. 1:28.

- b. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say—2 Chron. 1:10.
3. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:
 - a. To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men.
 - b. Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today.
 - c. To make known our forbearance is to live a life which expresses Christ as the totality of all human virtues.
- B. Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul said that the Lord is near:
 1. With respect to space, the Lord is near us, ready to help; with regard to time, the Lord is at hand, coming soon—cf. Rom. 10:8-13.
 2. The Lord's being near refers primarily to His presence with us—Matt. 1:23.

III. **“In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus”—Phil. 4:6-7:**

- A. The words *in everything* refer to the many different things which happen to us day by day.
- B. Prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence; petition is special, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our giving thanks to the Lord.

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- C. *To God* denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship; hence, the sense of *to God* here is *in the fellowship with God*.
 - D. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God; the peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer, as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).
 - E. The God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil.
 - F. If we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to gain Christ, live Christ, and magnify Christ—Rom. 8:28-30; Matt. 10:29-30; 2 Cor. 4:15-18.
- IV. “Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things”—Phil. 4:8:**
- A. These virtues are the expressions of God’s attributes lived out from within the pursuers of Christ, who is the embodiment of God.
 - B. These virtues are six governing aspects of a life that lives Christ:
 1. A life that lives Christ is true—ethically truthful, without any pretense or falsehood.
 2. A life that lives Christ is dignified—honorable, noble, grave, solid, weighty, and worthy of reverence—1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2; cf. Rom. 9:21.
 3. A life that lives Christ is righteous—right before God and man.
 4. A life that lives Christ is pure—single in intention and action, without any mixture—Matt. 5:8.
 5. A life that lives Christ is lovely—lovable, agreeable, and endearing.
 6. A life that lives Christ is well spoken of—renowned, of good repute, attractive, winning, and gracious.

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- C. Virtue and praise are a summing up of the six foregoing items, in all of which are some virtue or excellence and something worthy of praise—v. 16.
- D. To be a proper human being is to express God through His divine attributes in our human virtues, to have a human life filled with Christ as the reality of the attributes of God—cf. Gen. 1:26.