

**“Grateful Or Regretful: Paul & Nero”**  
**Philippians 4:4-13**  
**November 13, 2016**

Screen 1  
Screen 2

1. Interesting facts about/on Thanksgiving.
2. The bulk of the material will be from **Philippians 4:4-13 - about Paul.**
3. I would like to close out the time with Paul in **2 Timothy 4:1-22**  
**[Paul’s last words.] Article on exactly how Paul died/was executed...**
4. Though he is never mentioned by name, Nero is the unspoken contrast to Paul i.e. the emperor that would decide/seal his fate.

Screens 3-6

**Similarities between Paul and Nero. [Nero’s last words]**

[biblehistory.com](http://biblehistory.com)-good article - Any material you could find for me on Nero would be much appreciated. I have some notes on him and back of this sheet.

Nero:

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- was the 5th emperor of Rome and ruled 54 - 68 A.D.
- 18 out of 27 books of the New Testament were written during his reign.
- became emperor at age 16 (b. 38 A.D.) died at age 30.
- murdered: Britannicus (never proven); his mother in 59 A.D., his wife Octavia in 62 A.D.
- dressed in Greek clothing, wrote poetry and was liberal in his politics. He painted, sculpted and acted in plays.

- Was accused of burning Rome. It is believed he sang a poem he wrote “In Sack of Troy” while Rome burned rather than fiddling. Christians were blamed for this great fire.
- committed suicide on June 9th.
- final words were, “What a showman the world is losing in me.”

18 out of 27 Books of the New Testament written during Nero’s reign:

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<b>Matthew</b> late 50’s	<b>Galatians</b> 48 A.D.	<b>Hebrews</b> 60 A.D. - 70 A.D.
<b>Mark</b> late 50’s	<b>Ephesians</b> 62 A.D.	<b>James</b> 40 A.D. - 45 A.D.
<b>Luke</b> 62 A.D. - 65 A.D.	<b>Philippians</b> 62 A.D.	<b>1/2 Peter</b> 62 A.D. - 70 A.D.
<b>John</b> 70 - A.D.	<b>Colossians</b> 62 A.D.	<b>1/2/3 John</b> 85 A.D. - 95 A.D.
<b>Acts</b> 62 A.D. - 70 A.D.	<b>1/2 Thessalonians</b> 49 A.D. - 50 A.D.	<b>Jude</b> 60’s A.D.
<b>Luke</b> 62 A.D. - 65 A.D.	<b>1/2 Timothy</b> 62 A.D. - 64 A.D.	<b>Revelation</b> 95-96 A.D.
<b>Romans</b> 57 A.D.	<b>Titus</b> 64 A.D.	
<b>1/2 Corinthians</b> 53 A.D. - 56 A.D.	<b>Philemon</b> 62 A.D.	

Paul’s letter to the Philippians is essentially **(16 verses that I quote in most messages that I preach; 13 - 3 inside these verses)** a letter of friendship (**relationship = joy**). Addressed to a church which had supported him financially and suppliers) and with which he had a deeply personal relationship. God started the church in the city in **Acts 16** with Paul and Silas in about 53 A.D. The date of the writing of Philippians is about the end of 62 A.D. - for about ten years (approximately) the church has grown and flourished from its start (with Lydia, seller of purple and the Philippian Jailor’s family).

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\*Letters play an important role in the maintenance of friendship and serve in a time of absence as effective substitutes for personal presence. (like email)

Paul opens his letter with **1:3-6** (3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.) Outstanding words of \*encouragement!

**I believe he pens here, some of the most powerful words HE EVER WROTE!!!**

Paul, who does not know whether he will get to see them soon or not. **Philippians 2:23-24** 23 I hope therefore to send him (Timothy) just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

### HOUSE ARREST - ACTS 28

Paul encourages other at their absolute worst; God is at His absolute best!

- Paul doesn't know whether he's going to make it or not to see them and what does he do? He writes a letter of encouragement!
- What do you do when you get scared?
- What do I do?
- What would you do when/if you did not know you were going to make it?

Paul encourages the church at Philippi (**I tend to turn inward (introverted) and selfish; Paul turns outward (extraverted) and selfless.** You can think any way you want. (I can think any way I want . . .)

**Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

“Rejoice” = “be continually happy” - “calmly happy” - **but this happiness - this calm happiness you can find ONLY in the Lord.** Genuine happiness is spiritual - it can only come from God.

\*Paul repeats this not only because he wants to emphasize the point, but also because it was God’s will that it be so.\*

(This does not mean that everything is a joke.)

**Vs. 5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

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“reasonableness” or “forbearing spirit” also means mildness, patience, gentleness or moderation. It means **meekness** (i.e. power under control) under provocation; readiness to forgive injuries; sweetness of disposition.

Do you/I have a “forbearing spirit?” **Philippians** - Ready to forgive? Power under control? **WE SHOULD AND WE MUST!!!** IT MUST BE “KNOWN TO ALL MEN” - people should be able to examine our lives and find this characteristic in abundance - Do they?

Why? **Acts 28:30** “welcomed all who came to him”

“the Lord is at hand” (near) - . . . the Lord is judge, and is at hand to punish.

**Vs. 6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Screen 16

“do not be anxious about anything” - (**#1 enemy of joy = anxiousness**) “anxious” or “careful” in KJV means “to have a distracting care” for something - to be worried. **Paul** should have been **worried** - he’s in jail and he says “worry about nothing!”

- Are we not a culture obsessed with worry? - distracting care.

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- We are worried about our **jobs.** We are worried about our retirement. **CLARK HOWARD EXAMPLE**
- The future? (finances) Young people today may never return, no one ever did until before 1925.
- We are worried about our **children,** **wife,** **marriage** - **future.**
- WHAT ARE WE NOT WORRIED ABOUT??? ←

Jesus said in [Matthew 6:34](#) “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

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Sometimes we feel NOBLE if we worry - have distracting care for something. JESUS SAYS THAT IT'S NOT NOBLE - IT'S SIN!

“but...” - the cure for worry - “in everything by prayer and supplication” - God **above** can help you. He is disposed to do it. But you must ask! He is under no obligation if you don't ask.

“prayer” - an oratory “supplication” - a continuance in earnest prayer.

“with thanksgiving” - FOR INNUMERABLE FAVORS ALREADY RECEIVED! If Christ has done nothing else for us except died and saved us. HE'S DONE ENOUGH!!!

“let your requests be made known to God” -continually (“request” literally means “that which has been asked for”

Here is God's promise to you and me if we will do this in verse 7.

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**Vs. 7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

“and the peace of God” - the harmonizing of all passions and appetites produced by the Holy Spirit which arises from a sense of pardon and the favor of God. (“peace” - “quietness”; “rest”; “contentment”)

**\*Christmas is the least contented time of year - get, get, get, go, go, go, \***

“which surpasses all understanding” - which is superior to the mind (a stubborn peace)

We should be worried and distracted but we’re **not**.

“will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” KJV says “shall keep your hearts” (entire mental and moral activity - your motives, etc...) they shall be kept in a strong place or castle.

“your minds” - your understanding

“in Christ Jesus” - Christ keeps that heart and mind in peace in which he dwells and rules.

This peace is of a very different nature from all that can rise from human occurrences; it is a peace which Christ has purchased and which God dispenses. **“It is felt by all the truly Godly, but can be explained by NONE. It is communion with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.”** Adam Clarke

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**Vs. 8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

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“Finally, brothers” - as he closes the letter; this letter then could be his very last to this congregation.

“whatever is true” - it means transparent (as not concealing genuine (Jesus is truth). Be transparent \*obsessed with image\*

“whatever is honorable” - honest

“whatever is just” - some versions have “right” and righteousness/innocent holy

“whatever is pure” - clean and innocent, modest and chaste. (sexual immorality dilemma today)

“whatever is lovely” - lovable and gracious

“whatever is commendable” - “good repute”; well spoken of/ reputable - a good report.

“if there is anything worthy of praise” - denotes preeminent estimation of a person or thing.

“praise” - commendable; look for the good in people and circumstances and praise it.

“think about these things” - or “ponder these things”

“dwell” - literally “take an inventory” Every day should include thanksgiving.

Vs. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things,

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“received” - to associate with one self.

“heard” - in my teaching - my word - and “seen” in my DEEDS. What an example Paul must have been. \*\*\*Can you say this?

“practice” - perform repeatedly, habitually (good habits...)

the God of peace will be with you. - the author of peace, the lover of peace, the maintainer of peace - the one who made peace between heaven and earth by sacrificing the prince of peace (His son) - shall never leave you. NEVER!

**Vs. 10** I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. Paul is **grateful** to the Philippians (believers). You were indeed concerned (not worried) for me, but you had no opportunity. They did not have proper occasion to send help.

**Vs. 11** Not that I am speaking of being in need, (want) - a lack of money; in need of". This is worth all the diamonds in South Africa mines.

for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be **content** (a thought). Paul, probably in his early to mid 60's by this time, gives us a treasure. → He has "LEARNED" - same word as **Vs. 9** - ("to learn in any way"; "to understand")

"content" - **1 Timothy 6:6** "Now there is great gain in Godliness with contentment."

THE KEY TO LIFE - RIGHT HERE -

(Young people don't be discouraged. You can learn it!)

(He's content because he's thankful - everyday - in rejoicing everyday regardless of circumstances through and only in Christ!)

**Vs. 12** I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

What is the secret? Paul tell us your secret! Worth millions!

**Vs. 13** I can do all things through (literally "in") him who strengthens me.

Paul was enabled to do everything God had for him to do. Sometimes that meant that he did without food, even (**vs. 12**) **\*by the power of an indwelling Christ !!!\***



Some of the manuscripts read - “through Him who strengtheneth me.” {IN CHRIST - IN CHRIST - IN CHRIST, I CAN BE HAPPY AND ENCOURAGING NO MATTER WHAT!}

**Philippians 2:17** His last letter was 2 Timothy. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Paul was in the worst of possible circumstances. House arrest in Rome. About the stand before Nero, one of the nastiest and one of the first royal persecutors of Christians - Emperor Nero.

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In fact - Paul is indeed about to be “poured out as a drink offering - beheaded - and he loves enough, is filled with /in Christ so much that he forgets about his circumstances; commits them to the living God (Christ and writes a letter to encourages his friends at Philippi. He says to be thankful and be happy and be content in Christ. (stands above his circumstances enough to thank God for them and encourage them.)

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No matter your circumstances - you can **learn** it!!! (but only through experience with/ in Christ.) You can become a part of something bigger than you are right now. The abundant life ?

> **Prayer and Invitation**

Recap 30  
Guests 31  
Bve 32