

THE WAY OF PEACE AND CONTENTMENT

By Henry T. Mahan

Philippians 4: 4-7

TV504b

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This morning, I want you to open your Bibles, to the book of Philippians. I have a message, I've prepared a message, that I just believe, is going to be a special blessing to the Lord's people. This is written and prepared for the Lord's people. I'll tell you the name of the message, is this: "The Way of Peace and Contentment."

Now, listen to my text, Philippians: 4. If you have your Bibles, open them to Philippians 4: verse 7. I'm going to use verses 4,5,6 and 7, but here is what verse 7, declares:

First, "*And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your heart and your minds through Christ Jesus.*" Now, I'm interested in that (peace of God), aren't you, and that contentment? I mean peace of God, and contentment of heart, your emotions, and mind. Now, before I talk about how, and I know that's immediately what most of your thinking about, (how to have peace of mind and contentment of heart). Now, before I talk to you about that way and how, I'm going to talk about what it is. What is this peace and contentment?

Well, it says here, "it's the peace of God, which was made by the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, here's the scripture: Colossians 1: verse 20: "*Having made peace, through the blood of His cross.*" That's how this peace was made, through the blood of His cross. Romans, 5: 1, says this, listen to this, "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Now, that's how this peace was made. That's what it is; it's the peace of God. Remember the verse said: "*and the peace of God.*" And Christ made that peace through the blood of His cross. And that peace is made with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at the next thing about this peace. It's the peace of God, and it passeth understanding. God's mercy and grace to sinners is beyond the understanding of angels or men. You know, this is not something men understand. You might explain it to an unregenerate heart, and He wouldn't understand it.

David said this, *“Lord, when I behold the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, the things you’ve made, what is man that thou are mindful of Him,”* (that you even regard His estate, that you even care for his contentment and his peace)? What is man, that thou are mindful of Him? Job said this, listen, to Job: *“What is man that he should be clean, he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?”* This is beyond understanding that God should condescend, to look upon us, visit with us, give us peace, accept us, reconcile us, and receive us unto Himself, in Christ. The peace of God, having made peace with God through the blood of His cross. *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Now, watch this carefully, it’s real, it’s genuine, for He said: *“and the peace of God which passeth understanding, shall keep your heart.”* This is not a claim, this is not a profession, this is an experience. This is genuine. This is an inward peace. This is inward contentment. It’s an experience; listen, of heart and mind. Are you with me? The peace of God, it’s the gift of God, through the blood of Christ which passeth understanding.

You’re not going to put this in Lady’s Home Journal or the Reader’s Digest and teach this world how to have peace and contentment, because it’s the gift of God. It’s through Christ Jesus the Lord, and it passeth the understanding of natural men. It’s beyond the understanding of a regenerate heart, and is genuine, real, inward, sincere, lasting peace and contentment of heart and mind, emotions and thought. That’s right, contentment, content with who I am. *“I am what I am, by the grace of God.”* Content with where I am, and whatsoever state I’m in, to be content. Content with what I have.

*“Who maketh thee to differ?” “What has thou that thou has not received?”
“A man can receive nothing, except it be given Him from above.”*

John Newton said this, (I love this song): *“Content with beholding His face, my all to His pleasure resigned, no changes of season or place, would make any change in my mind. While blessed with a sense of His love, my heart, a palace, a toy would appear. And prisons would palaces prove, if Jesus would dwell with me there.”*

Ah yes! Do you see what I’m talking about? The way to peace and contentment is God’s way, and God’s peace. It passeth understanding, and it’s real, it’s genuine, it’s inward, it’s in the heart and mind. Content, at peace with God, at peace with ourselves, at peace with our conscience, at peace with one another, and content with who I am, and where I am and what I have.

And listen to me, this peace and contentment grows. Now listen carefully, it grows. Man doesn’t have it all at once. It grows. Now listen to this verse of scripture. You’ve heard it all your life. In Mathew 11:28, our Lord said: *“Come unto me, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,”* (troubled, weary, bowed down, laboring in the bondage of religion, the law, works and deed, sin, heavy

laden,) I'll *give you rest.*" You come to me and I'll give you rest, peace, and contentment, (rest). "*Take my yoke upon you, (now listen), and learn of me, and you'll find rest unto your souls.*"

Yes sir, He gives us a rest, and that rest develops and grows, the more we learn of Him. The more we learn of His word, the more we learn of His providence. The more we learn of His purpose, the more we learn of His love. The more we learn of His presence, the more peace and contentment and rest, we have. Ah, He gives rest. Every believer is resting in Christ. But as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, we grow in peace, and contentment.

Now, I want you to look back at the text, Philippians 4. I read verse 7, which said this, remember? It says, "*The peace of God which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and your minds, through Christ Jesus.*" Up above there, it tells you the way of peace. Now watch this. (Five) things that will, from the scriptures, here, that will lead to more peace, more contentment, more rest.

First of all, verse 4 says this: "*Rejoice in the Lord.*" This word is used 10 times in this epistle. (Rejoice, rejoice)! And it's always rejoice in the Lord. And he says here in verse 4, again I say; "*rejoice in the Lord.*" There's always a cause to rejoice in the Lord. If we look to ourselves, we have no cause to rejoice. That's right, even in our works, or our faith, or anything. If we look to other people, we have little cause to rejoice. But, if we look to Him, there's always cause to rejoice. No matter how dark the clouds are, how rocky the road, how difficult the way, if you look to Him, you rejoice. Rejoice in His grace, my grace is sufficient. Rejoice in His blood, which cleanseth, all the time. Rejoice in His righteousness, which sanctifies. Rejoice in His love, He never fails. Rejoice in His providence. "*All things work together for good, to them who love God, who are the called according to His purpose.*" All things, we know that don't we?

Rejoice in His intercession. "*He ever liveth to make intercession for us.*" That's the way to peace, rejoice in the Lord. When you don't have anything on this earth in which to rejoice, in yourself or anybody else, and the days are so long and the nights are so weary, and the burden is so heavy, and the calling is so great, lift up your eyes and rejoice in the Lord. You'll find something always, in Him, for which you can rejoice. Look to Him, the author and finisher of our faith. And rejoice in the Lord, and the peace of God shall keep your heart and your mind, through Christ Jesus.

And I know this personally, and you do too. The more I rejoice in Him, the more peace and contentment I have, and the less dissatisfaction I have. If I could just keep my mind and heart on Christ, and set my affection on things above.

All right, are you with me? **Secondly**, that's the first one. You want peace? It comes from Christ, but you rejoice in the Lord. **Secondly**, verse 5: "*Let your moderation be known to all men.*" The key here is moderation. This word is not used in the Bible anywhere else. It's in the Bible one time, right here, Philippians

4: 5, “*Let your moderation be known unto all men.*” And the meaning of the word, as it appears, the only time in the Bible, right here. It does not refer to eating and drinking. Usually, when we use the word moderation, or moderate. We ought to be moderate in all our habits, eating, drinking and dressing and so forth. Do you know what this word means? Let your moderation be known unto all men, in and out of the church. The word means, listen, gentle, mild, patient and considerate of others. Let your patience and your gentleness and your consideration of other people be known and recognized by everybody. That’s the way to have peace, and more peace.

You see, you can’t live in peace with God, and not live in peace with men about you. God will not allow us to have peace with Him, unless we have peace with others, our families, our fellow workers, that’s right. In Ephesians 4, verse 32, it says this: “*be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.*”

An individual cannot go to church on Sunday and sing about the peace of God and talk about the peace of God and then go home and mistreat his family. And then go to work and mistreat the people who work under him, or with him. And mistreat people in the stores, and have a bad attitude, and an irritable, unkind spirit toward others. That’s (impossible) to have peace with God and not live in peace with all men. “*Follow peace with all men,*” the scripture says, “*And holiness, without which, no man will see the Lord.*” “*I will keep him in perfect peace, who’s mind has stayed on thee.*”

So, that word, (moderation), you can write in your margin of the Bible, “let your gentleness, consideration and kindness be known.” Let’s love one another, as God loved us. Let’s forgive one another as God forgave us. Let’s be merciful, as we have received mercy. Let’s give and help to others, as God has given to us. The way of peace, here it is! Now, it comes from Christ; it’s a gift of God. If a man is at peace with God, he’s going to rejoice in Christ, always rejoice. He’s going to be known for his kindness. He’s going to adorn the doctrine of God with good works. He’s going to be gentle and kind to other people.

Now I know, that through the years, in the past, in movies and other places, they picture a religious person as being cruel and mean and heartless. That’s what they are. They’re religious people, they are not God’s people. They’re religious people, they’re not Christians. They’re religious people that are not saved. Because God’s people, God’s children, Christians, saved people, are kind and generous and gentle and loving and affectionate and forgiving and merciful. That’s exactly right! They walk like their Lord. That’s true!

Thirdly, look at verse 5. Now watch this, this is the third thing, “*The way of peace, the way of contentment.*” Rejoice in the Lord; let your kindness and gentleness be known to all men. Thirdly, “*The Lord is at hand.*” The Lord is near,

that's what it says. The Lord is near. That will give you peace when you realize that. The Lord is near. He's not off somewhere; He's near. He's not very far, Paul said, "from all of us." *"In Him, we live and move and have our being."* The Lord's near!

Now watch this. First of all, He's omniscient, He's near, and He knows everything. He knows everything. We say sometime, "Well, if I know my heart." Well, I don't know how well I know it, but I know He knows it. He looks not on the outward countenance; He looks on the heart. And Peter took comfort in that. The Lord said, *"Peter, do you love me?"* He was trying him, testing him, not for information, He wanted to hear what he had to say. Peter said, *"Lord, you know everything, you know I love you."* These words don't deceive you. These words may deceive the people, but not you. You know I love you, you know everything. And Peter was comforted by that fact. He was comforted by the fact that though his flesh was weak, and though he denied his Lord out of fear, the Lord knew his heart. The Lord is near. That's the way to peace.

I'm glad God looks on the heart, aren't you? And when we fail, when we doubt, when we stumble around, He doesn't see that. He looks on the heart. He told His disciples, He said, *"your spirit's willing, and your flesh is weak."* I know that. Our Lord said that.

And then the Lord is near. He's not only omniscient; He's omnipotent. He's able to do all things. I love the sovereign God. I love the Almighty God. I don't have any use for an impotent God who wants to and can't, who wants to and wills to, and people won't let Him. I don't want anything to do with a peanut-god, do you? My God is almighty, and I'm under His care, and under His eye, and no one can touch me without His permission. He'll never leave us; He'll never forsake us. He'll supply our every need. The Lord is near. Be at peace. Be content.

I'll tell you, that little boy who was walking beside his big daddy, and that big daddy's hand gripping his hand, that little fellow is not afraid. He's not afraid of a bulldog or the neighborhood bully. He's not afraid of the wind, the rain or the storm, He's not afraid of anything, why? His daddy is big and strong and able to protect him. And my Father is Almighty. He's not trying to do anything. I hear people say, "Well, God is trying to show you something." If he wants to show it, you'll learn it. And you'll learn it quickly; He'll reveal it. If He wants Abraham, He calls him. When He wants Matthew, He calls him. When He wants Zachaeus to come down, He tells him to come down. My Lord's Almighty, He's near.

All Right, the Lord is near, He's coming again. He said, *"I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you, (I'll be back.) "I'll come again, and receive you unto Myself."*

I had a good friend that died yesterday. She was 85 years old. She was in church Sunday, talked to some friends, Monday night, and went to glory in her sleep. The Lord is near. He called her home.

Then He's near, He's coming again. I know some preachers who use the return of the Lord to scare people. Boy! "You better be careful, the Lord may come today!" Or, to excite people to repent. "You better repent, the Lord may come today!" Or Christians, to work hard. "You better serve God, because, He might come at any moment." That's no good. The return of our Lord to receive His children is like the return home of a loving father. When I was growing up, my Dad worked on a railroad. He left on Sunday night, and was gone until the next Saturday. I wasn't afraid of his coming home. I didn't have to straighten up because Daddy was coming home. I wanted him to come home. I looked for his return; I longed for his return. I ran to meet him when he came. My mother didn't scare me saying, "you straighten up, your daddy's coming home!" Oh no, it was wonderful. I'm glad He's coming. The Lord's near.

All right, here's the **fourth** thing, "*Be careful for nothing.*" You want peace? Be careful for nothing. There are many things that believers have to be careful about, I know that, and concerned about, listen. I've got to be concerned about my soul. "*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Examine yourself whether you be in the faith.*"

I've got to give some care and concern for this body. I mean to take care of it if I can. God willing, eat proper things and get rest. I've got to be careful about my family. If anybody provides (not) for his own household, he's worst than an infidel. He's denied the faith. I've got to care for the gospel. I've got to preach the gospel, and keep the unity of the church.

But here's what this word means. It doesn't say to be careful for nothing; in the extent you don't pay any attention to anything. What it's saying is this: "Don't fret and worry. Don't be overly anxious about materialistic things." You see that? Our Lord said, when Martha came in and said, "Lord don't you care if my sister sits here at your feet and leaves all the serving to me?" He said, "*Martha, you're careful about many things, (you're anxious and fretful and worrisome.) Mary has chosen the good things.*" You see what He's saying?

And then He said, "Now don't worry about what you're going to eat, what you're going to drink, what you're going to wear. Your Father knows you need these things. "*Look at the lilies of the field, they toil not, they don't work, they don't spin. Solomon was never arrayed in such glory.*" The birds in the air, He said, "*Your Father feeds them. Not a one falls to the ground without Him. Your Father knows you have a need of these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.*"

Now I said, “*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*” Provide for your family. Provide for educating your children. Provide for these things, but don’t let it come (first). “*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.*”

You know, the rich fool, worried about his barns, worried about having enough room to store his goods and he worried about it, and missed salvation. Worried about it and lost everything. And what I’m saying, is that we can’t live in peace and contentment, while the majority of our time and effort is spent on this body, in anxiety and worrying and prepping over material things. Your Father knows what you need.

He also knows what you want. Our wants are not always good for us. We have too much, I’ll tell you. This affluent society, this rich society, there’s too much abundance of material things that’s damaging to men and women’s spiritual lives. I’ll tell you that, and I know what I’m talking about. Sometimes the higher a fellow gets and the more he has and the richer he gets, the more he forgets God.

Do you know what the wise man said? He said, “*Lord, keep me from riches, lest I forget you, keep me from poverty, unless I steal. Give me that which is convenient for me.*” The way of peace, rejoice in the Lord. The way of peace, be gentle. The way of peace, remember the Lord’s near. The way of peace, quit fretting and worrying and being so anxious about everything that we can’t do anything about.

Here’s the last thing, (pray). Verse 6 says: “*Pray*” in everything, in everything. There’s nothing that we shouldn’t pray about. I don’t care how minuet, how small, how insignificant, pray. “*In everything pray, with supplication.*” Do you know what supplication is? It’s begging, it’s pleading. It’s a definite request. It’s knowing that what I need, God supplies. And He’s able to supply, and He’s my only source of supply. “*In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,*” (sincere).

Thank you Lord. Let your request be made known to God, not to the people, to God. People write in all the time, saying, “Brother Mahan, you don’t beg for money enough.” I tell Him, “*Let your request be made known to God.*” Now, if He wants to supply the need, He’ll tell somebody. “*Let your requests be made known to God,*” not the people. The way of peace, (rejoice, be gentle.) Remember the Lord is near, quit fretting and pray. “*In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God.*”

Those 5 things, you see, He gave us, “*and the peace of God which passeth understanding, will keep your minds and your hearts through Jesus Christ the Lord.*”

