

Sermon Title: The Principle of Stability in Prayer

Sermon Text: Philippians 4:1-9

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to practice the principles of prayer in order to demonstrate a life of stability.

Sermon Proposition: There are 7 stabilizing concepts for a prayer focused Christian.

Introduction: True joy is an unwavering constant in a Spirit filled life. It is not produced by a bed of roses experience, of tranquility and peace, comfort and safety.

It is produced by the presence of God and His Holy Spirit, even if you're sitting in prison waiting for possible news about your execution, as Paul was. He had joy and joy had him. His joy was the result of an eternal inseparable relationship with a living God through Jesus Christ and the ministry of the nearness of God that determines the warmth of that joy. Paul knew that inexpressible and irrepressible joy which is an abiding feeling of peace and calm tranquility and contentment, delight, satisfaction, that flows from deep within because of the presence of God, in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit, that is imprinted on the soul and the conscience that is void of any offense toward God and others.

Paul was filled with joy in spite of his situation or circumstances, and totally not depressed because the heart, mind and soul is filled with joy in our relationship to God. This intentional focus as a way of prayer provides steadfast stability in the believer's life.

There is enablement of God for living the Christian life, that has been supplied for those who are in Christ Jesus. But Christ must be at the center of our lives. Paul's love for the Philippians, which is evident throughout this letter, it is especially apparent in the opening verses of Chapter 4. One of his chief concerns was that these believers would be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, and peace were uppermost in his heart and mind for those he served. In order to experience these Christian graces, Christ must be at the center of a believer's life.

I. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right anchor. V.1

Psalm 121:2 My help *comes* from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. **3** He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. **4** Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The believer who doesn't live in the confidence of God's sovereignty will lack God's joy, peace, and stability, they will be left to the chaos of a troubled heart and mind. But the Christian who's confident, trusts in the Lord will rejoice and be thankful in the midst of darkness, uncertainty, trials, pain, and hopelessness, because we have God joy and peace ruling and on duty in our hearts.

II. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right accountability. V.2

(Phil. 2:1-4, 12-16, 17-18)

III. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right affiliations. V.3

(Phil. 1:27-30; 3:17-21)

IV. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right attitudes. V.4-5

A. The right attitude of a stable Christian is rejoicing. V.4

1. Joy is an inner quality. **(Jonah 2:1, 9)**

Psalm 147:5 Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding *is* infinite.

B. The right attitude of a stable Christian is graciousness. V.5a

1. Epieikes - suggests a forbearing, nonretaliatory spirit, this is the outward quality. Sweet reasonableness your humility to accept being disgraced. **(2 Cor. 10:1; Phil. 2:5ff)**

C. The right attitude of a stable Christian is expectancy. V.5b

Faith is a reasoned response to revealed truth. **(Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:21)**

1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. **12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Ephesians 4:23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

V. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right activities. V.6-7

A. The 1st activity of the believer is to not be anxious. V.6a

(1 Cor. 10:13; Rom 8:28; Psalm 139:3)

1 Peter 5:10 But may¹ the God of all grace, who called us² to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will¹ have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Concern vs worry? **(2 Cor. 11:28; Phil. 2:20)**

B. The 2nd activity of the believer is to pray. V.6b

C. The 1st activity of God is to provide peace that guards the heart, through Christ Jesus. V.7a

D. The 2nd activity of God is to provide peace that guards the mind, through Christ Jesus. V.7b

The peace "surpasses all comprehension" it is divine in its origin. It is a gift from God through grace.

VI. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right attachments. V.8

(Eph. 5:12; Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 4:17-18)

A. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is true. V.8a

Honorable, right, pure, the opposite of dishonest and unreliable.

John 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Psalm 119:151 You *are* near, O LORD, And all Your commandments *are* truth.

Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

B. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is noble. V.8b

Dignified, worthy of respect, worthy of awe and adoration, the sacred as opposed to the profane.

C. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is just. V.8c

Speaks of righteousness, to be in perfect harmony with the eternal, unchanging, divine standard of God as revealed in Scripture. Right thinking is consistent with God's absolute holiness.

D. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is pure. V.8d

Things that are morally clean and undefiled.

E. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is lovely. V.8e

Things that are pleasing.

F. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is of good report. V.8f

Things that are reputable in the world at large, such as courage, and respect for others.

G. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is of virtue. V.8g

Focusing on godly virtues will affect what you decide to see (such as television, books, magazines).

H. The stable Christian attaches himself to what is praiseworthy. V.8h

"Whenever you catch your mind wandering back into the forbidden territory (and you can be sure that it will – more frequently at first, until you retrain and discipline it . . .) change the direction of your thought. Do not allow yourself one conscious moment of such thought. Instead, crisply ask God to help you to refocus upon those things that fit into Paul's list recorded in Philippians 4:8-9. The attitude must grow within you that says: 'So if I have a fear experience, so what? It's unpleasant, it's disturbing, but I'll live through it – at least I always have before.' When you honestly can think this way without becoming anxious, you will know that the change has been made." – John MacArthur, *Anxious For Nothing*, David C. Cook, 1993, pp.47-48

VII. Stability that comes from prayer is a result of the right actions. V.9

- A. The stable Christian practices what he learns and is promised intimacy with the God of peace.
V.9a
- B. The stable Christian practices what he received and is promised intimacy with the God of peace.
V.9b
- C. The stable Christian practices what he knows and is promised intimacy with the God of peace.
V.9c
- D. The stable Christian practices what he sees in models, and is promised intimacy with the God of peace. V.9d