Tonight as we continue with our series of messages from the Book of Philippians, please turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians chapter four. And let's read verses 1-7.

Philippians 4:1-7 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Humorous Illustration
A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office to speak with her privately.

The doctor said, “Your husband is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don’t do exactly what I say to do your husband will surely die.” The doctor continued: “Each morning I want you to fix your husband a big, healthy breakfast. Bring him the morning newspaper and be pleasant towards him at all times. For lunch, make him a nice, nutritious meal. And for supper each evening prepare his favorite foods. Don’t burden him with any household chores. Don’t discuss any of your problems with him. And above all don’t nag him about anything. If you will do exactly as I say for the next year I believe your husband will have a full recovery.”

On the way home, the husband asked his wife, “So what did the doctor say?” His wife responded, “He said you’re going to die.”

Are you under a lot of stress? Are you carrying such a heavy burden that if one more thing goes wrong, or one more responsibility gets put on you, you are going to come completely unraveled?

Let’s face it, life can be very stressful at times. It doesn’t matter if you are YOUNG.......OLD.......or IN-BETWEEN, stress is unavoidable! There's financial stress.......and marital stress.......and parenting stress.....and job-related stress.......and health-related stress.
And while a certain amount of stress is good for us, excessive stress can be very toxic to our mind, heart, and soul.

How do you respond to stress? What do you do or where do you go when you want to find peace?

- Some climb up in a deer stand in a quiet, peaceful woods.
- Some get out in a fishing boat miles from land.
- Some turn on some soothing, relaxing music and take a hot bubble bath.
- Some crawl in bed and pull the covers up over their head and wish the world would just go away.
- Millions take anti-anxiety medications or “mood-altering drugs.”
- And sadly, millions of Americans turn to alcohol or a combination of alcohol and prescription medications to handle the stress of life. Which only digs their hole deeper.

Thankfully, there is a better way! In our scripture text we find three admonitions from the apostle Paul that will help you and me find “The Secret To True Peace” in this stress-filled world.
First of all.....

I. **We Must Stand FAST (v.1)**

1. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

1. One can't help but notice the incredible love the apostle Paul had for his brothers and sisters in the Philippian Church. Look at those endearing terms he uses to describe how he feels about them......

    “my beloved” “my longed-for brethren” “my joy”
    “my crown” and then at the end of the verse he once again calls them “beloved.”

2. Those “terms of endearment” pave the way for Paul's admonition to **STAND FAST IN THE LORD**. Remember at the end of chapter three Paul had warned the Philippians about “the enemies of the cross.” And he had reminded them that “their citizenship is in heaven” and that **one day Jesus is coming back to get them......and on that day they will resurrect with a new glorious body fashioned after the glorious body of Jesus Christ.**
3. So now when Paul admonishes the Philippians to “stand fast in the LORD” he is reminding them that this world is full of temptation......and full of stress......and full of distractions....and the only way we can have peace is to stay close to JESUS.”

4. That phrase “stand fast” is a military term describing a soldier standing firm in the heat of the battle. I have explained to you before that the soldiers in Jesus day wore “cleated shoes or sandals.” And when they were on the battlefield they would stomp those cleats into the ground so they could “stand fast” in battle and not slip or fall down.

5. We must understand that “Life is a BATTLEGROUND, not a PLAYGROUND.” Sometimes you hear people talk about “the game of life.” Believe you me, Satan doesn’t look at life as a “game,” to him IT IS ALL OUT WAR!

6. He hates us! He despises us! And he is going to hit us with everything he’s got to bring us down on the battlefield.

7. Listen! If you and I are to have PEACE, and COURAGE, and CONFIDENCE in the battle we must not waver in our faith, we must not yield to Satan’s temptations, or be distracted by his enticements. WE MUST STAND FAST IN THE LORD!
But not only must we **stand fast**……

**II. We Must Stand TOGETHER** (vs. 2-5)

2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

**ILLUSTRATION**

When I first became the minister at First Christian Church in Mt. Vernon, Indiana I soon learned of an on-going conflict between two men in the Church; Earl Bartlett and Charlie Glover.

These two men hated each other! Both were electricians by trade, and over the years they had both bid on some of the same electrical contracts, with one winning over the other. This bitterness between these two rival electricians spilled over into the Church and poisoned the spirit.

Earl, who happened to also be an elder in the Church, made a point to come by my office just a few days after I went there to give me all the “low down” on Charlie Glover. He painted Charlie out to be the lowest, dirty, rotten scoundrel I would ever meet; a man who could not be trusted.
I'll never forget the Sunday Earl wanted Charlie to meet him out behind the Church building to “settle their differences” in a fist fight. Over the course of time I came to realize that Charlie Glover wasn’t at all what Earl Bartlett had painted him out to be. The real problem was the hatred and bitterness inside Earl Bartlett’s heart.

1. In verse 2 we learn there was a serious conflict in the Church at Philippi, not between two men, but rather two women. One was named Euodia, and the other was named Syntyche.

2. Our human nature wants to know more about the conflict between these two women than Paul tells us. Now if they had FACEBOOK or TWITTER in those days, we would know every “nitty gritty” detail. We would know “who started it” and “who said what” and “who did what.” But all Paul tells us is, “I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the LORD.”

Obviously the Church at Philippi knew the details about this conflict or disagreement; so the Holy Spirit did not inspire Paul to “air the Church's dirty laundry” in his letter.

3. But just like the conflict between Earl Bartlett and Charlie Glover I mentioned earlier, this conflict between Euodia and Syntyche was having a negative effect on the Philippian Church, otherwise Paul wouldn't have mentioned it.
4. Notice Paul treats them as **equally guilty**...."I implore Euodia" and “I implore Syntyche.” This wasn’t a matter of Euodia being right and Syntyche being wrong or vice versa. It was a matter that people in the Church would side with one or the other and it would cause disunity and division with the Church.

Paul is admonishing both of these women to resolve their differences before it tears the Church apart. He is admonishing these two women to **STAND TOGETHER AS SISTERS-IN-CHRIST** and “champions of peace.”

5. As imperfect, fallen beings, we are all prone to disagreements and conflict.

* Sometimes we have **conflicts in our marriages**.
* Sometimes we have **conflicts with relatives**.
* Sometimes we have **conflicts with a neighbor**.
* Sometimes we have **conflicts with a boss or a supervisor or a co-worker**.
* Sometimes we have **conflicts with those in our Church family**.
6. And any time you are involved in a conflict with someone doesn’t it make you feel absolutely miserable? **NOTHING will rob you of peace and increase your stress more than being in conflict with someone.**

7. This is why Paul gives us that command in **verse 4**.....

   “**Rejoice in the LORD always. Again I will say, rejoice!**”

   **REJOICING in the LORD changes our mood. REJOICING in the LORD ALWAYS is like medicine for our heart and spirit.**

   If I am always rejoicing in the LORD and you are always rejoicing in the LORD we will have neither the **TIME**..... the **DESIRE**......or the **STOMACH** to engage in conflict with one another.

8. It has been said, “**Your enemy is not your enemy.**” How easily we forget the scriptural truth that our conflict is NOT with each other, our conflict is with the devil, “**for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.**” (Eph. 6:12)
9. As brothers and sisters-in-Christ and as fellow soldiers in the Lord's army we must **STAND TOGETHER IN THE BATTLE** in order to enjoy peace.

**What Is The Secret To True Peace?**

*We must STAND FAST*

*We must STAND TOGETHER*

And finally........

III. **We Must Stand STRONG** (vs. 6,7)

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**ILLUSTRATION**

**Walter Kelly writes.......**

Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat...worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles. A dense fog that covers a seven-city-block area one hundred feet deep is composed of less than one glass of water divided into sixty thousand million drops. Not much is there but it can cripple an entire city. When I don't have anything to worry about, I begin to worry about that.
The late U.S. Senate Chaplain, Edward Everett once said, “Never attempt to bear more than one kind of trouble at once. Some people bear three kinds: All the troubles they have ever had........all the troubles they now have........and all the troubles they expect to have.”

1. When Paul says “Be anxious for nothing” he literally means NOTHING! Does this mean we are to look at life through rose-colored glasses? No, it means we are to counter every worry with prayer. “Be anxious for nothing, pray about everything!”

Instead of worrying about OUR KIDS, we pray for OUR KIDS. Instead of worrying about OUR AGING PARENTS we pray for OUR AGING PARENTS. Instead of worrying about OUR JOB, we pray about OUR JOB. Instead of worrying about HEALTH or the HEALTH of a loved one, we pray about it instead.

2. When we counter every fear and every worry with prayer, God does something absolutely remarkable in us. He blesses us with His peace, which passes all understanding. And His peace will stand guard over our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

3. You see, we have a CHOICE: We can WORRY about EVERYTHING and be miserable. Or we can PRAY about EVERYTHING and be at PEACE. The choice is obvious isn’t it?
Long ago a rich man put an ad in his local newspaper announcing a contest. The rich man was offering a large monetary prize to the artist who could paint the perfect picture depicting true peace.

Soon paintings began to arrive from far and wide. Finally the day came to announce the grand prize winner. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the audience clapped and cheered.

The tension grew as only two pictures remained to be unveiled. As the judge pulled the cover from one of the two remaining paintings a hush fell over the crowd.

It was a picture of a mirror-smooth lake reflecting lush, green birch trees under the blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. **Surely this painting would win the contest.**

But then the judge removed the cover from the final painting. And the crowd gasped in surprise, because at first glance the picture looked anything but peaceful.
It was the picture of a powerful waterfall cascading down a rocky mountainside. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. But just beside the waterfalls there was a small cleft in the rock. And inside that cleft grew a small tree. And on one of the branches of the tree was a bird nest. And inside that bird nest was a little bird with her eyes closed resting on her eggs while the thundering waters of the falls pounded all around her.

The rich man who had sponsored the contest awarded the artist who painted that picture the grand prize because the sight of that little bird resting in its nest with the thundering waterfalls all around was a picture of true peace.

(Berit Kjos, A Wardrobe from the King, pp. 45-46.)

And so it is with us! Amid the thunderous roar of life's troubles, you and I can find a refuge in Jesus Christ “The Prince of Peace.”

Let us STAND FAST in our faith.
Let us STAND TOGETHER in unity with one another.
And let us STAND STRONG in prayer.

THIS IS THE SECRET TO TRUE PEACE