

Lent Devotional April 5, 2023

Scripture

Philippians 4:1-13

1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-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 everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not worry about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. 11 Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Susan Lyn Moudry '10

During a recent Holy Week, I realized I was kind of holding my breath as the time proceeded. I was waiting for the next shoe to drop. You see, our extended family had a string of unwelcome events spread over a few years that all tied to Holy Week: death, loss, injury, illness. So, familiar anxiety set in as the time approached.

While the specifics will vary, those of you serving churches can likely relate. We often collectively hold our breath, worrying about the plethora of services and sermons, if the weather will cooperate, what illness and death may intervene, and countless other things. We wait, wondering what might go wrong next.

Yet, it's into that space the Scripture speaks to us today. We are reminded to give thanks and focus on the good, staying present to all that God is doing in the world. We are told not to worry, but rather to communicate with God. By giving our anxious hearts away, we are gifted peace and presence of mind to get through whatever may come. This is God at work in us.

In the midst of a world full of fears, we can be grateful and rejoice, because no matter our very legitimate concerns, God hears and God is with us. You and I are not alone. Thanks be to God for that peace.

Prayer

God who knows all the wanderings of our worried hearts, come fill us today with a sense of your presence and peace. Guard us from the worry that creeps in again and again. Help us to rejoice. Amen.