



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Choosing Joy: Joy and Gentleness

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

As we continue reading Philippians in Chapter 4, Paul is about to end his letter. He has covered a lot of ground encouraging the church to hold on to elements of spiritual formation. Paul is very intentional about the words he uses as encouragement, connecting these words to joy. Paul begins Chapter 4 with the words “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Paul is writing from jail, no knowing if his life is going to come to an end. Even in his dire circumstances he says “rejoice.”

To rejoice in the Lord doesn't mean to rejoice in everything that is happening in the world, it is not about personality but about perspective. We don't live in a gentle world and our society is not marked by gentleness nor are we are trained to be gentle. The Kingdom of God has something to say about this. The gentleness of God, expressed through our lives, can transform and help heal the world. Those who suffer and endure the most pain are those who offer the most hope.

Gentleness is power under control. Meaning that although you have the capacity to crush or to harm, you treat something gently, with care and dignity. Think about when your words are hurtful – with your family, children or friends, on social media, at your workplace. Gentleness is an important word for all of us, because we can all grow in gentleness.

When Paul says to be gentle to all people, he specifically means those outside the church. He is trying to get them to see the world in a different way, a better way. The way demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ. When God comes on the scene he doesn't come on as aggressive or antagonistic, he comes on as a baby. Jesus Christ was incredibly gentle. On the cross he goes out with suffering and redemptive love - the gentle love of God conquering sin. Paul is telling the church to let their gentleness be known.

To be a gentle person means that you recognize the fragility of people around you, knowing that every person you encounter has some level of fragility. When dealing with difficult people, we can see them as an enemy to be defeated or a wound to be healed. So many of us walk around with unresolved pain and unresolved issues. We end up transmitting that pain onto others around us. We need the love of God to dismantle our hard exterior that we are showing to the world. To be gentle means you are safe to be around. May we be a church family that others feel safe to be around.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas continues our series through the book of Philippians. Today Pastor Rich talks about our society being marked by aggression, anger and animosity. Pastor Rich shows us that a life marked by joy is one expressed in gentleness and helps us see the way of gentleness in a fresh light.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, who was gentle and who was tough? What were your perceptions of those people? How does that form how you view others who are gentle today?
3. Who in your life do you find it most difficult to be gentle with?

4. In what ways can you note Christ's use of gentle strength in the Bible? How has God been gentle with you personally?
5. Knowing the Lord is near and make all things new, believing this truth, what does that allow you to release in your life? What anger or situation are you holding in your life today that needs to hear the Lord is near?