**"NO WORRIES"**

**Philippians 4**

# B

# orn a Jew with Roman citizenship, Saul has the finest rabbinical training, a seat on the supreme court and is Judaism’s Rambo in rounding up and punishing Jesus’ followers. En route to Damascus, driven by perverted, religious zeal, he’s blinded by the Light of the risen Christ who instantly halts his jihad. All that Saul had deemed important changed, even his name.

As Paul, he’s first to bring the Gospel of the Grace of God to the Gentiles. In A.D. 60-62 under house arrest in Rome, handcuffed to a guard, Paul remains passionate and motivated, crafting encouraging, mentoring letters to the new Mediterranean churches he’d founded.

Instead of obsessing over Rome’s evil Empire, he opts for evangelism instead of political activism. Let’s read Philippians 4:1-23 (p. 1069).

#### Team Building 101

#### Philippians 4:1-3

Paul serves a “blessings sandwich,” wrapping admonitions between slices of loving praise.Two early converts to his message of God’s forgiveness have gotten sideways with each other, jeopardizing unity in their church. Paul advises them to focus not on their beefs but on their beliefs since they are sisters “in-Christ.” Some sage said, “In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all else, love.”

**DISCUSS: What works best for you in healing relationships?**

#### “Waste Not, Want Not”

#### Philippians 4:4-9

For this radical-turned-reverend, happiness is fleeting, but knowing Jesus is cause for non-stop joy (Psalm 9:1-2). Paul’s joy has seen him through unspeakable calamities (2 Corinthians 11:16-33). Life is short, people are hurting, be unselfish; the Lord could return any moment (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Uncertainty abounds (Psalm 118:8). God is our only hope (Psalm 119:50, Psalm 112:7, p. 553).

Worry is a waste. It says, “Jesus, I *don’t* trust You.” Dump your woes (with thanks!) on your Father who’s weaving every detail of your life into something good, and He’ll guard your heart with His peace (Romans 8:28). If you feel the blues coming on:

# Know who God says He is for you (John 20:22-29, p. 977).

# Know who God says you are (Ephesians 1:3-2:10, p. 1061).

# Live each moment in these truths (Proverbs 3:5-6, p. 575).

Writ large on the dust jacket of Tim Tebow’s book, *Shaken*, is this:

“Your circumstances do not define you. Your identity does.”

Munch on these biblical bytes about worry:

1. “Don’t even think about it!” (Matthew 6:24-34, p. 857).
2. Worry chokes out God’s word (Matthew 13:18-23, p. 865).
3. “If you must worry, worry about this (Matthew 10:28, p, 861).

Paul offers this stabilizing news in Romans 8:31-39:

1. Because God is for you, nothing can thwart what God has for you.

2. Having given you His Son, why would He not also give you all you need to fulfill His plan for your life?

3. God has declared you to be as right with Him as His Son is.

4. Nothing could ever drive a wedge between you and God’s love!

**DISCUSS: What causes you to worry?**

Center your mind on wholesome stuff, says Paul, things which bring peace, and emulate what God has empowered him to say and do.

# DISCUSS: How do you keep your thought-life on track?

#### “How Much Is Enough?”

#### Philippians 4:10-20

“True contentment,” Ray Stedman says, “is wanting only what you already have.” Paul learned that secret; it’s being able to say, “Christ is enough for me!” He thanks his generous friends, assuring them that God will meet all their needs (Isaiah 46:4; Psalm 16:5-6).

Recalling Jesus feeding a crowd from a lad’s lunchbox, Jonathan Cahn writes in *The Book of Mysteries, “You don’t look at how little you have or how big your problem is or how impossible the situation is. … You take the little you have, … lift it up to the Lord and you give thanks for it. And the blessings you have will multiply if not in the world, then in your heart.”*

**DISCUSS: How have you responded to plenty and scarcity?**

#### “Worry-Free Is The Life For Me”

#### Philippians 4:21-23

Paul signs off with a shout-out to his readers from their spiritual siblings in Rome: Nero’s palace police, government VIP’s, guards, slaves – all whom Paul had given God’s Good News.

Remember: (1) No storm that you encounter will last forever. And (2) you’re safe as long as Jesus is in the boat with you (Mark 4:35-41).

We all bet our lives on something. If you haven’t transferred ownership of your life to God, here’s something you can tell him even now: “God, I can’t comprehend why You love me to the point of having Your Son give His life on the cross for *all my sin*. Here’s my life. I gladly, gratefully give myself to You, Father. Amen.”

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“NO WORRIES” VERSES FROM PHILIPPIANS

“God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.”  1:6

“Your lives will be filled with the truly good qualities which only Jesus Christ can produce, for the glory and praise of God.” 1:11

“I want you to know that the things that have happened to me have really helped the progress of the gospel.”  1:12

“My deep desire is that I shall never fail in my duty, but that at all times, especially now, I shall be full of courage so that with my whole being I bring honor to Christ whether I live or die. **For what is life? To me, it is Christ.”** 1:20-21

“Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win because it is God who gives you the victory. For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in Him but also by suffering for Him.” 1:28,29

“Your life in Christ makes you strong, and His love comforts you. You have fellowship with the Spirit and kindness and compassion for one another.” 2:1

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than you. Look out for one another's interests, not just your own. Have the attitude Christ Jesus had: He always had the nature of God but did not think that by force He should try to remain equal with God. Instead, of His own free will He gave up all He had and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to His death on the cross.” 2:3-8

“God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey Him.” 2:13

“I reckon everything as loss for what is much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it as mere refuse so that I may gain Christ and be completely united with Him. I no longer have a righteousness of my own that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ that comes from God, based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of His resurrection, to share in His sufferings and become like Him in His death, in the hope that I myself will be raised from death to life.” 3:8-11

“I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep striving to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won me to Himself. Of course, I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead. So I run straight towards the goal in order to win the prize which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above.” 3:12-14

“We are citizens of heaven and eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven. He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like His own glorious body, using that power by which He is able to bring all things under His rule.” 3:20-21

“Always be joyful in your union with the Lord. Rejoice! Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon.” 4:4-5

**“Don't worry about anything**, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart. And God's peace which is far beyond human understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.” 4:6-7

“Fill your minds with things that are good, that deserve praise, that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and honorable. Practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.” 4:8-9

“I’ve learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I’ve learned this secret so that anywhere, at any time, I’m content, whether I’m full or hungry, have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power Christ gives me.” 4:11-13

“With all His abundant wealth through Christ Jesus, my God will supply all your needs. To our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.” 4:19-20

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PAUL’S PARADOXES in PHILIPPIANS ch. 1

1:3-4 “I thank my God for all the memories I have of you. Every time I pray for all of you, I do it with joy.” ***PARADOX:*** *Despite being under house arrest, Paul abounds in gratitude and exhilaration.*

1:7 “Together we share God’s favor whether I’m in prison or defending and confirming the truth of the Good News.” ***PARADOX:*** *Paul guarded and established the Gospel even while jailed.*

1:12 “I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what happened to me has helped to spread the Good News.” ***PARADOX:*** *His woes have been assets in advancing Christ’s message.*

1:14 “Through my being in prison, the Lord has given most of our brothers and sisters confidence to speak God’s word more boldly and unafraid.” ***PARADOX:*** *Paul inspired others to preach fearlessly.*

1:18 “Nothing matters except that, in one way or another, people are told the message about Christ, whether with honest or dishonest motives, and I’m happy about that.” ***PARADOX:*** *Paul is joyful to have even his detractors preach the good news about Jesus.*

1:21-24 “For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. … I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive.“ ***PARADOX:*** *Paul is equally content to do his worthwhile work on earth, or to die and be forever with God who had dramatically salvaged his life.*

1:28 “Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory.” ***PARADOX:*** *Persevering gallantly while being persecuted will conquer your enemies.*

1:29 “For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him but also by suffering for him.” ***PARADOX:*** *Trusting in Christ and suffering for Him are equal blessings.*

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