

**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

**Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...**

**"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.  
Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.  
The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything,  
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving  
let your requests be made known to God.  
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."  
*(Philippians 4: 4-7)***

"Rejoice in the Lord..." What does THAT mean? We know it has something to do with having "joy." To "rejoice" in something is to "celebrate" something! Paul writes to the Philippians exhorting them to "rejoice in the Lord" – to "celebrate" Who God is and what He has done, and continues to do for His people.

I love the part where Paul says, "The Lord is at hand!" He is not far away. He is not unaware of your life. He is not unaware of what we are experiencing, even during this time of a global health crisis. And then Paul says, "do not be anxious about anything!" Really? Anything?? What about this Covid-19 thing? Surely this can't refer to that! This is a major thing! It has an impact on life and health, jobs and the economy. We still don't know when or how this crisis will come to an end? Will we be able to endure it? Will I be able to get through this? Will I get the virus? Will my life ever be the same?

Does "not being anxious about anything" include all of these things? Could Paul have imagined a time such as this when he wrote these words? Well, the answer is "yes" and "yes." And, by the way, these are not really Paul's words, they are God's words. Paul was just God's pen! So, it is God Who says not to be anxious about ANYTHING! Why? Because He is always in charge, and He knows our needs.

He has invited us to pray to Him rather than be anxious. When we pray, it reminds us that God will take the concern from us. We can keep our focus on God instead of on the thing that threatens our peace. God's peace will "guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." God's peace will STAND GUARD at the gate of our hearts and minds.

God's peace will stand guard against the taunts of Satan who will continue to assault us with questions and doubts and scary thoughts. He wants us to feel alone and afraid. But "the Lord is at hand!" He is close by! And He is continuing to "work out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will." Amen!