

Beautiful Life

Thomas Robinson, *Life and More Life 5*, June 2, 2019

Philippians 4:4-13 (Translation TR)

⁴ Since you're in the Lord, I want you to celebrate with joy all the time! Again I'll say it, all of you, **be joyful!** ⁵ Let your shared **reasonableness** be **evident to all people**.

The Lord is right here! ⁶ **Refuse to get anxious** about anything, but in everything by **prayer** and by **request** with **thanksgiving** let all of **your desires be made known to God**.

⁷ And **the peace of God**, a peace that's beyond the grasp of any human mind, will **guard your hearts** and **your ways of thinking** in **Anointed King Jesus**.

⁸ And so, brothers and sisters,
whatever there is that's **true**,
whatever is **honorable**,
whatever is **just and right**,
whatever is **pure**,
whatever is **beautiful**,
whatever **deserves praise**,
if there's **any excellence**, if there's anything **worthy of celebration**,
think especially about these things.

⁹ What **you have learned** and **received** and **heard** and **seen** in me – **practice these things**, and the **God who gives peace** will be with all of you.

¹⁰ Now I've been celebrating in the Lord in a big way since you've now burst into flower again in your thinking about me. Yes, I know you were concerned before, but you were stymied.

¹¹ Not that I am talking about any real lack, since for my part **I've learned** to be **self-sufficient** in whatever **situation** I am. ¹² **I know how** to be humbled, and **I know how** to abound. **I've been initiated** into any and every kind of **circumstance**, both to be well fed and to go hungry, both to enjoy abundance and to be in need. ¹³ I am **strong enough for everything** in the **one who gives me strength**.

Matthew 6:25 Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

²⁵ Because of this fact, I tell you, refuse to be anxious any more about your life (*psyché*), what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body (*soma*), what you'll wear. Isn't your life (*psyché*) something more than food, and your body than clothing?

Philippians 1:6-7

⁶ I'm sure of this, that the God who began a good work in you will be working to complete it till the day of Anointed King Jesus. ⁷ It's right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you're all my co-partners sharing in grace, both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the Good News.

Philippians 2:12-13

¹² ... I want for you – with a seriousness that makes you tremble – to work together to bring your own salvation to full realization! ¹³ You can do this because God is the one working in among you, both to desire it and to accomplish it as an expression of what he knows is beautifully pleasing.

Think Focused. Think Large!

Paul has urged us to think about what happened in Jesus: Hymn in 2:5-11. Think this one thing. Reason: What God said by raising and exalting Jesus was God defining the very nature of God in a new way. Yes, there have always been ways of feeling after God in sacrifices, vows, temples, myths, liturgies, care for ancestors, etc. But God chose to define God's self by emptying, becoming human, no ordinary power, signs of care and the depth of reality, humbling, slave, death, cross. This human is God's own self-expression! This self-giving love, service, empathy in a broken world – God, Lord!

This is your lens to bring everything into focus. (Very different from rigorous orthodoxy.)

No matter who you are: Actor, mechanic, financier, social worker, educator, CEO. But through that lens you see everything. In a world of Hubble one; we need Hubble two.

Whatever is true. What a category! God is the center of reality and everything that's true is in some way related to God, revealing the reality God built into the world. The world is open for exploration, science, history, literature, social research. Scientific method can't have God as an object, but God includes science. Physicist, biologist, poet, creator.

Often what is true is not good, especially about humans. In literature, history, psychology, art, etc., we try to understand the potent mix of bad & good in us. True, not distorted.

Whatever is beautiful... The bad tends to control the images & talk. We're drawn in. In a world of slavery, conquest, no human rights, Paul says stay true to what's deeply true.

Refusing Anxiety in a World that Needs Prayer

In vv 4-7 Paul echoes Jesus. Don't be anxious! The world's a mess! Paul's in chains. If we wait for right circumstances, for justice and love from empires or people, we'll wait!

But you together are in reality defined by resurrection, "in the Lord." Jesus didn't leave. He's right here. Don't ever be satisfied with brokenness in the world or yourself. Shape your thought & action to God's character by prayer. But don't let anything stop celebration. As you learn God's Grace let it create reasonableness, gentleness. No person is your enemy, outside God's love and desire for relationship. Don't be afraid.

As you live a life shaped by Jesus, God creates a peace that helps you deal with all the circumstances of the world. It guards your hearts, minds, in the Messiah King Jesus.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

In vv 9-13 Paul picks up the guidance of earlier passages. Finding real life is the most important thing you'll ever do. It's a gift of God but God doesn't overwhelm you. He works in you and with you to bring beautiful life to realization now and beyond.

Every follower of Jesus is a learner/disciple. Learn from/imitate those with experience. Put your values into practice. Create habits, virtues, character, defined by Jesus: God and image of God for us. Paul highlights their help. Also his own long learning process.

"Self-sufficient" is surprising. It depends on learning who our "self" is, as a beloved creature of God and "in the Lord." Resurrection means my "self" includes God/Jesus/Spirit who initiates me through experience to be strong. A call to excellence, beauty, Grace, Truth.