

Philippians (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Buss, Charles (1913-1997)

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THE 6th and 7th verses of chapter 4 the epistle of Paul to the Philippians Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus how the apostle Paul was graciously helped in knight into these various churches for the most part he was a means of the formation under God's blessing of those churches and it's so evident that the dear man had a warm heart toward these dear people fruits of his labours and how he sought to give that glory which is a loan due to God for that great mercy how he expresses his heartfelt desire for the best welfare of those to whom he writes and so it was in the matter of this epistle to the Philippians and he just expressed his heartfelt love and concern to them and how he writes with that warmth of heart and thankfulness of God to God with regard to them you'll notice the opening words of this epistle he writes in this way he says grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ and he goes on to to speak in this way he says

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you always in every prayer of mind for you all make a request with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ even as it is meet for me to think this of you all because I have you in my heart inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel ye are ye all are partakers of my grace for God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the powers of Jesus Christ and this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement that she may approve the things that are excellent that she may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ so Paul expresses in this letter his heartfelt desires and prayers for the the well-being of this church no doubt the dear man would look back as it were in his mind that time when he was graciously directed to Philippi and he was you read in the Acts of the Apostles how that he and his fellow neighbour were particularly directed in this this way forbidden to go certain ways as they intended to do but directed in this way to this end that the purpose of God with regard to certain that Philippi should be brought to pass so that

Paul would think of the time when he met with those women in prayer at the riverside and how the Lord was pleased to bless his word and open the heart of Lydia to receive his to receive the gospel the Lord opening her heart and how she was effectually brought upon in that way and brought forth fruits of repentance and faith and obedience so it must have encouraged the Apostle as he thought of these things then at that same time as you read in that same chapter with regard to the Philippian jailer that Paul and Silas although they had been so harshly treated and were thrust into the prison yet even there Paul and Silas saw the wonderful works of God in their deliverance and in the way in which the jailer was so graciously brought upon by God's grace and so you see in that chapter really two very different characters brought upon by the grace of God and brought to know the blessings of God's salvation through the Lord

Jesus Christ in the case of Lydia it would appear that the Lord was pleased to deal with her in a very gentle manner yet very effectual the Philippian jailer knew something of the terrible things in righteousness and yet both were blessed with the same saving knowledge of God's truth and this united them and it united others too together with the Apostle Paul and his fellow neighbour it was a means of binding together as it were in the bond of love and in the fellowship of the gospel as Paul speaks of as I read it to you a moment ago as we come to this word we find that he was graciously directed as it were to give this word of exhortation to these dear saints at Philippi and you see it's applicable to them indeed for they were subjects of

[7 : 28] God's saving grace and although so different in their personalities no doubt yet there was that way in which they were so taught and such will be taught by the Holy Spirit to come into some knowledge of the truth and so that these exhortations would be fitting in each case and we remember too realise too that such exhortations are necessary for you and I to lay to heart in these days in which we live so may the Lord help me for a little while then to in just a simple way to bring this word before you and we have that first sentence be careful for nothing here we do need the Lord to give us a gracious understanding of this doesn't mean to be indifferent or careless as it were or as it were fatalistic but there's a warning against being over anxious remember the

Lord Jesus Christ taught the people as he alone could do in his day with regard to over anxiety and yet how easily we can become a prey to such a spirit we may become as it were over careful like it was with dear Martha wasn't it when the Lord Jesus Christ lovingly rebuked her on one occasion Martha Martha he says they are careful and troubled about many things but one thing is needful and there are those things that may tend perhaps sometimes to so work upon our spirit that we may become as it were over careful over anxious and to such an extent that we may forget there's one who reigns supreme and controls all matters be careful for nothing and then there's the positive exhortation to be considered alongside this word be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God how beautifully comprehensive this word is

Satan's a wily foe and poor sinners who are taught to pray often have to prove this because when they try to pray he may try and stop up their path as it were he may come even in suggestions in various ways to as it were to hinder you in your approach unto God how this text this exhortation is such a comprehensive one isn't it in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving in everything you see Satan may come in various ways he may even suggest that your case is too great your sin is too much it is so big there can be no mercy for you he may come that way and then again he may come with a temptation like this that can it be that the

Lord will take notice of such trivial things that you bring before him well this exhortation is a good one to consider because it stands over against all the temptations of the enemy where it says everything yes the great things the vital things yes and the smaller things everything now we do need to lay to heart such a word as this don't we and let's remember too that this word is spoken to praying souls they before sinners have been taught to pray they did know the throne of grace therefore it's not strange language to them they knew something of the exercise of prayer and supplication they but still they needed this exhortation to tempt to lay to heart and as it were to be something to stay their minds and again still thinking of what we tried to consider this morning in waiting upon the

Lord and to wait for his salvation in a prayerful way so that to miss all the difficulties of the way and those things that may seem to be denials may seem to be denials and yet often it's not so but sometimes the Lord sees fit to so deal with his praying people that it is to as it were to give an edge to their prayer to help them to enable them as it were to more earnestly seek to more earnestly wait upon him let's try and consider this statement here prayer and supplication what a wonderful thing prayer is I fear often we do not value prayer and supplication we should and yet as one has well put it in the hymn prayer is a

[13 : 42] Christian's vital breath yes indeed it is one of those early fruit and effects of the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a poor sinner he brings them to the throne of grace he teaches them to pray brings them into the experience of this in that measure he sees fit and you can think of the apostle Paul who wrote this epistle and what is written concerning him in the book of the Acts of the Apostles and how it was made known to Ananias who was to receive him as a brother the Lord gave Ananias that information that he prayed said behold he prayeth and one of the early evidences you see of a work of grace being begun in the heart that man that Saul of Tarsus he was such an enemy such a cruel enemy to the church such a destroyer as it were and yet

God dealt with him cut him down struck him down called him by his grace he was then he began to pray sometimes thought of this because you see Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee he was a religious professor and therefore he professed to pray and yet it was when the Lord was pleased to deal with him it was then he began to pray behold he prayed he had to renounce all his former religion all his former good works yes all his devotions it all had to go as it were as worthless he had to be brought down as a humbled sinner in the dust yes needing God's mercy indeed is one of the only evidences of grace in the heart Paul refers to the work of grace

I read it in your hearing a few minutes ago that good work within and one of the fruits of that good work is prayer prayer yes fainting souls taught to look to the Lord what a provision the Lord has made with regard to prayer and there's wonderful words before us in the epistle to the Hebrews concerning that new and living way by Christ Jesus the way of prayer what a provision the Lord has made in this there is such a thing as prayer that there is a throne of grace and so we have that word also let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need the privilege and provision of prayer which God has granted it although sometimes it may be with you

I may speak to some of you this afternoon you've been perhaps already tried over your prayers perhaps sometimes you feel so as it were confused and hardly frame words together maybe perhaps like one has put it in the hymn broken thought and language lame and Satan may come with his evil insinuations with regard to this but you see what is prayer for sure it is a living sigh from the heart of a newborn soul to heaven to God and the way of access by prayer through the dear Lord Jesus Christ himself or when you think of the provision of prayer and the way to the mercy seat the throne of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ here is the one mediator between God and men the man

Christ Jesus one has well said in the hymn I can have no access to God but through the merits of Christ blood make no access to holy God by a poor sinner because God is holy and we are sinners and yet through the Lord Jesus Christ there is that way of access and poor sinners poor though they are guilty though they are unworthy though they are maybe favour to realise there is a way of access to God and a little God given faith in the heart enables a poor sinner to plead what Christ has done so then even though there may be as it were those broken petitions and broken thoughts yet deep down the heart are those desires you see which the Lord alone can satisfy and that those desires ascend to heaven you know the publican's prayer ascended to heaven didn't it the Pharisee stood in the temple he thought he could be quite a religious man as he stood before the

[19 : 12] Lord as he thought and all his profession of religion but what was it think of how the dear saviour describes his so called prayer there was not one request in it was there because he didn't realise any need all he could do was to parade his religion before men and before God but the poor publican you see although he couldn't claim anything at all he was but a poor guilty sinner and yet he was the one who knew something of the secret of prayer and his heartfelt petition ascended to heaven yes and the Lord answered it in an outstanding way notice how the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of the publican in contrast to the Pharisee the Pharisee sought to justify himself the poor publican had to confess his sin realized he approached the holy

God the malady he felt within the burden of it and yet how the dear saved described the blessing I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other you see he was given grace to humble himself and when we try to pray it is well if we help to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and while there is the wonderful provision of prayer and we are exhorted to come with boldness yet with humility yet with reverence and holy fear now we do need the Lord to exercise our hearts in that way so then there is this prayer yes the provision the Lord has made in this and so comprehensive so that whatever the circumstance may be you may be called to pass through there is always the throne of grace and there is this word of encouragement to lay your case at his feet yes to bring all your wants and wishes to him and be there those hard cases what hard cases were brought to the

Lord Jesus Christ matters altogether beyond the skill of human skill yet the Lord Jesus Christ to deal with them and in those things recorded in the gospels we have that great truth brought before us that there is nothing too hard for the Lord Jesus Christ to deal with however hard your case you may feel it to be or perhaps the difficulties you may come into in life's pathway there is nothing too hard for the Lord nothing is impossible with God this the Lord Jesus Christ reminded his disciples didn't he when they said who then could be saved with men this is impossible and it is impossible with regard as far as men are concerned but with God all things are possible and it's that dear

Lord Jesus Christ himself of whom we read in the epistle of the Hebrews able to save to the uttermost what encouragement then he has to call upon his name and how sad it is at times we have to confess this there seems to be sometimes such a backwardness to pray but when we're brought to consider matters are right and we're made to realise we do need that spirit of grace and of supplication to be poured upon us for the Lord to give us the spirit of prayer the breath of prayer well these dear saints to whom the apostle writes knew something of this yet he was graciously directed you see to give this word of exhortation written in the first place to these Philippians in part of the record of the word of God yes to be handed down as it were through the generation so that in these days it is a word you and

I do well to lay to heart so whatever the cares may be and there are the cares there may be pressing cares sometimes the Lord sees fit to lead his dear people in that way they have pressing cares and yet not to be over anxious but what a mercy if it is a means in God's hand of bringing you to the throne of grace you see sometimes it may well be that it is so we do need burdens we need trials we need those things that bring cares but then we need to know and to realise where to take those burdens where to cast these cares not to one another but to the Lord prayer and supplication is to the

[24 : 48] Lord yes it is to heaven and what a mercy it is the Lord is that one who condescends to the prayers and supplications of his dear people dear psalmist David he has had a very encouraging realisation of the Lord's mercy to him and it warmed his heart he said I love the Lord because he has heard the voice of my supplication he has not turned away his mercy from me how good it is when the Lord does condescend from time to time to hear your poor petitions and send some answer has it warmed your heart and yet over against all this all the times when there seems to be almost an aversion to prayer and sometimes prayer seems to be but a burden and task but then it brings home this truth you see we do need the Lord to teach us how to pray to deal with us to bring us to the throne of grace although it may mean sometimes to lay burdens upon us cares yes so that we are directed to cast those cares upon him there's a great word isn't there casting all your care upon him for he careth for you and what a care the

Lord has exercised over his dear people yes but the weak ones insignificant ones those are so unworthy be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God all the path of prayer the provision of prayer all for more grace to make as it were a profitable use of the provision the Lord has made not to neglect the throne of grace but again we have to realise this we need the Lord to give us that spirit to call upon his name and to revive our hearts in that way to revive that spirit of prayer in our hearts here is the word now but in everything yes perhaps those strange things and mysterious things perhaps sometimes in some cases they are unlooked for things we have instances of this in the scripture don't we with regard to the way in which the dear saints of old had to walk there were some unlooked for things coming to their experience and path and so it is at times what a mercy if it has this effect and these things to be sanctified and to bring a poor sinner yet to the mercy seat the throne of grace and you see back in the old testament with regard to the mercy seat we see how in those types and shadows of old how clearly the way of access is set forth through blood you see the mercy seat was a blood sprinkled mercy seat when the dear lord jesus christ came assumed our nature to suffer and to die upon the cross and shed his precious blood it was that that makes a way to god and as you seek to bring your cares to him and to come before him in prayer and supplication you see it is through the provision that the lord has made whereby there can be prayer to heaven acceptable before a holy god from a poor sinner through the merits of the lord jesus christ and that is that one that stands between the one mediator between god and men the man christ jesus with regard to prayer when you think of the dear lord jesus christ now as he's ascended on high there he intercedes with the father on the behalf of his dear people with all that authority that belongs alone to him as he pleads the full merit of his blood there are hindrances to prayer and we have to prove this but there are many helps many encouragements and we do need grace to lay hold upon the truth of this and such a word as this might as it were sink deep into our hearts and everything by prayer and supplication and we need to realise here how the word is so suitable as it were in the wording of it we need to take notice of the words of the scripture don't we it's not needless repetition is it prayer and supplication in one sense it is one and the same thing but on the other hand we think of prayer and as appointed by

God and how the Lord exhorts people to gather together for prayer in a public way to join in that exercise before God and how sometimes the Lord is pleased to particularly bless the prayer meeting I'm sure there have been times when you prove this yourselves yes there are set times for prayer prayer yes in your private life yes you begin the day as you come to the close of the day prayer prayer but in some in some senses of distinction in the supplication surely this tends more to set forth those burstings forth of desires and cries for help yes in perhaps particular instances and situations supplication supplication when it would not be not possible as it were to assume an attitude and right it is to assume a right attitude in prayer we need to have a humble frame before

God yes but you see we have the instances of scripture don't we we think of dear Nehemiah in the court of the king and how a question was put to him he being a cupbearer his heart his face was mournful his heart was sad and he was questioned with regard to this he stood in a very precarious position really but we read that this that's how he prayed to the God of heaven he prayed to the God of heaven that was supplication wasn't it an urgent fervent petition as it were at such a time as that when all he could do was lifted his heart to God in prayer supplication those urgent petitions sometimes thought of the case of Joshua when he was in battle and in great trouble and great danger too and really because of his folly in joining affinity with

Ahab he came into great trouble and the enemies come to him about thinking it was Ahab when we read this Joshua cried out that was supplication wasn't it yes and what is more the Lord helped him what an encouragement isn't it when perhaps you may come into some pressing need yes quite briefly it may be as it comes and yet you see the Lord regards those supplications yes those fervent cries to the Lord as it were for help the Lord helped him and the Lord does help these supplicating ones these praying ones he was appointed the path of prayer and while the Lord does not depend he doesn't depend on our prayers does he no nor the ability of our prayers nor the eloquence of our prayers nothing of that at all but it's just this so clear in the word of God the Lord has ordained this dear people to walk this path yes the path of prayer the path of supplication and one has put it well in the hymn really prayer was appointed to convey the blessings

[34 : 04] God designs to give how that works out doesn't it in the experience of God's praying people maybe those matters which have come into your own experience and you've had to come to the throne of grace with prayer with supplication and God has been pleased in mercy to appear and you have obtained an answer yes obtained an answer but it does bring you to realise this is the way the Lord will have his people to go you see it does indicate a path of dependence and one lesson we have to learn a long nice way yes and that is dependence upon God there's that dreadful spirit of independence in us by nature but there has to be subdued as it were made to realise that it's dependence upon the Lord yes to lean upon him not to lean to our understanding or think we can stand our own strength because he let him that thinketh he standeth take he let he fall but a good place to be brought to yes is to be found in prayer and supplication before the

Lord it's a safe place it's a profitable place it's a humbling place it's a place that redouces the glory of God christian people as poor needed sinners to call upon his name we have those beautiful words to encourage poor sinners call upon me in the day of trouble I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me in everything by prayer and supplication but this word is added with thanksgiving and while it becomes us may the Lord help us as we try to pray that we may come humbly before him and to come confessing our sins and we need to do this and God grant us a heart to do it real repentance contrition of heart before God to confess our sins to acknowledge that we are sinners but then there's this aspect of approaching unto God and that is with thanksgiving thanksgiving in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

Paul reminds these dear people there are blessings to be thankful for thankful to God yes and where can we begin with this well how we should be thankful that there is a throne of grace how we should be thankful that there is a way of access to God that poor sinners such as we can call upon his name how we should be thankful for the throne of grace for God's mercy yes to be thankful for his long suffering towards his forbearance with us thankful for his sparing mercies his providing mercies yes and being upheld and protected along life's journey through life's changing scenes these blessings call for thanksgiving and we do need that spirit a humble gratitude to be granted to us the line goes to that record we have in the gospels concerned those lepers who were cleansed you know ten of them there were but one

Samaritan when he saw these cleansed he returned to give glory to God and Jesus said where are the nine you're not found to give glory to God save this stranger what a lesson yes to learn how forgetful we can be of God's mercies forget to be thankful for blessings for answers to prayer by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving so many are God's mercies we're so unworthy yet so dependent yes for every breath that we draw those greater blessings of his grace you see we depend upon him for everything therefore we need to live conscious of our need and realize we can only live as humble suppliants before him and to be thankful that it is so thankful that there is a throne of grace thankful that the Lord does condescend yes to hear and answer prayers according to his sovereign will prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let your requests be made known unto God then this following verse which is so beautiful isn't it the peace of

God which pass to understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus you see if we're over careful there can be no peace in the soul can there no no quietness rather disturbance anxiety but here we see in this scripture how the Lord is pleased to lead his dear people in the in the path of prayer to commit their want to him and this blessing in so doing the peace of God and that peace which difficult to describe isn't it past the understanding or what how good it is now just a little of it perhaps for a few moments let down into your heart as you've been helped to cast your care upon him to commit your will to God and sometimes it's to be known even the exercise of prayer before God yes little this peace the Lord lets down into your heart even though perhaps as yet the prayer is not answered but as your help to commit your will to the

[40 : 20] Lord so you can as it were humbly rest in him and the Lord gives peace yes he gives peace but think of the mercy of it there should be such a thing as the peace of God yes let down into the hearts of poor sinners yes who by nature were enemies of God but now by his grace a subject of his mercy and there's this peace to be known yes and even though it might be in a time of distress or anxiety sometimes a little peace is let down into the soul as your help to lay the matter before the Lord and to realise as it were you've gained his ear and the hope and the expectation that the Lord will cause these things to work for good and that you shall enter into the meaning of that precious word in the 8th of

Romans and we know that all things work together for good to them that are called of God them that love God and are called according to his purpose work together you see and sometimes the Lord is pleased to deal with his dear people and bring them to the throne of his grace and are those things that work together not to distinguish one from the other but to work together and for God and there is this peace to be known yes arresting in him arresting his faithfulness his wondrous mercy his wondrous ability and the peace of God which past understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus here the apostle Paul reminds us the channel through which every blessing flows you see the prayer and the supplication is through

Christ Jesus no prayer if there was no mediator and the blessings that come down from heaven to poor sinners in answer to their prayers it is through Christ Jesus and to know something of this peace and that peace which is indeed an artist of that heavenly peace where there be no more sorrow no more cares no more sufferings no more temptations but to know that peace to all eternity meanwhile may you and I know something what it is to realise yes a little of this peace as you may have been able to commit your way unto the Lord trust also in him and the word says and he shall bring it to pass amen here to next

Let's close this afternoon by singing hymn number 1134 the tune is Teviot 731 hymn number 1134 come gracious spirit heavenly dove with light and comfort from above our waiting souls set free be thou our guardian thou our guide for every thought and step reside and draw us after thee hymn number 1134 and draw us through the crown of the land and be chosen to be be thou our guardian thinet that only

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[47 : 08] The End O Lord, you may be pleased to mercifully forgive anything spoken amiss, and be blessed by known precious truth to our hearts.

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest upon us and abide with us, and with the dear people of God everywhere, now and forever. Amen.