

Stripped Away: An Unexpected Path to Peace

Small Group Discussion Guide—10/14/2018

What has been one of the happiest, most joy-filled seasons of your life? Who were the prominent people in that season? What were the circumstances that made it so good for you?

Read Philippians 4:4-5

Paul calls us to rejoice in all circumstances, not just the good ones.

- Does this mean being happy about the bad things that happen to us?
- What do Paul's present circumstances indicate about the kind of rejoicing he has in mind?
- What would be the difference in insincere "happiness" at the bad things versus a deep-rooted peace, a Godly sense of joy, even through the pain? Which one is easier?
- What are the truths you hold on to that give you hope, or joy, even in the hard times?
- What does gentleness have to do with rejoicing (v. 5)?

Read Philippians 4:6-7

While it's natural to feel anxiety when something happens, Paul tells us to not stay in that anxiety, to release it to God.

- Is there anything in your life right now that you are anxious about?
- What is the relationship between rejoicing, gratitude, and presenting your requests to God?
- How do these relate to the peace of God?
- Have you been able to release the thing you're anxious about to God? If so, how? What verses help you to do so, or what experiences from your past help you to release your requests to God?
- Do you find it's a "one and done" method of releasing your concerns to God, or is it something you have to continually do?
- Can you think of a time when the peace of God was like a garrison around your heart and mind?

Read Philippians 4:8-9

While certainly this passage encourages us to dwell on God's word and Christian inspirations, it doesn't end there. Paul is encouraging us to surround ourselves with good things even if they may not be overtly Christian. The way we heard it on Sunday was, "Use gospel discernment to delight in all that is good in the world and culture."

- What are some good and admirable things from the secular world that you delight in? A movie? A song?
- Think about the things you surround yourself with – the people, the music, the TV shows or movies, the books you read, etc. In what ways do these things uplift you?
- How does the gospel act as a filter, giving us discernment about what we take in? Apply this principle to some current examples.
- Do you feel there's anything you should change, add, or remove?

Pray as a group, asking God to give us all the faith, the courage, and the trust we need to place our cares on Him this week. That He would open our eyes us to the true, noble, admirable things to think on, and that we would be a people filled with an unreasonable sense of peace, no matter what comes our way this week.