

Let's begin by re-reading our passage in Philippians 4:4-8.

Last week, our focus was on "Rejoice in the Lord Always". How did you do with that? Were you able to remain C.A.L.M.? Where did you succeed? Where did you fail?

- C. Celebrate God's Goodness**
- A. Ask God for Help**
- L. Leave Your Concerns with God**
- M. Meditate on Good Things**

When you take time to think and pray about it, (away from all the "noise" of life), what are some things that you can rejoice over?

Do you consider yourself a "gentle" person? What does it take to get you fired up?

Watch today's video (you can re-watch this online through our church website).

1. When was the last time you had a day when it seemed like not just one or two, but several things went wrong? How did you react? How do you think most people react?
2. Let's re-read Paul's account of his experiences in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28. The reality is that any one of the things Paul experienced would have been enough to cause most of us to respond in a not-so-gentle manner.
3. We don't have the same problems as Paul did, but we have our own problems. What are some of the common problems people face today?
4. Do you agree or disagree: we have a choice in how we respond to the circumstances around us. Since two people respond to the same situation in very different ways, what impacts the way we respond? What can we do (invest in) in order to improve?
5. Or, to put the above question another way, since unchecked anxiety unleashes destruction that levels everything in its way, how do we make sure we don't spit out fiery outbursts?
6. Can you think of a situation where a disaster was avoided because someone withheld their outburst?

7. Focus on Philippians 4:5-6. A gentle reaction is one of steadiness, looking at things reasonably. The opposite would be to panic. This gentleness is evident “to all”.
8. When the storms come, the others on the boat freak out, but the gentle person is sober minded; looking to God and remaining contagiously calm. They can do this because they understand that God is in control
9. Who have you known that could stand in the midst of chaos and take comfort in knowing that God is in charge?
10. How do we gain this kind of gentleness? How does the second part of that phrase, “Let your gentleness be evident to all the lord is near” help us?
11. When the stress rises, when we are over our head, why don’t we call out to God? Why don’t we realize that God is right there with us?
12. It’s one thing to face a challenge; it’s another thing to do it all alone. We have to choose instead to clutch the hands of God.
13. In the miracle of bread and fish, the disciples found themselves in a situation they couldn’t fix. Hungry crowds. A multitude of people with needs. The disciples wanted to get rid of everyone (send them home), but “he [Jesus] already had in mind what he was going to do”. It’s like Jesus wanted to give the disciples an opportunity to respond to the crisis in the right way; but even if they didn’t, Jesus knew what he would do.
14. By the time Jesus did the miracle of the bread and fish, the disciples have seen Jesus heal the sick, calm sea, drive out evil spirits, and even bring the dead to life. If Jesus did all that, he could handle this pressing need; but the disciples didn’t think of asking Jesus for help. They acted as if Jesus wasn’t present. They told Jesus nothing could be done because they didn’t have enough money. What lesson is there in this for us?
15. In the end (John 6:11-13) the disciples learned that anxiety is pointless when Jesus is near.
16. Jesus said, “in this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33) we can relate to that. But Jesus didn’t end that statement there. He added, “But take heart. I have overcome the world”.
17. Lucado closed this session’s video saying, “This much is sure, contagious calm will happen to the degree that we turn to Him.” Is there something happening in your life that you need to turn to Him?