

A PEACE WE CAN'T EXPLAIN

THE LESSON: PHILIPPIANS 4

The Prayer Book's service of ministry to the sick opens with these words:

"Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27).

In times of trouble, sickness, sorrow and suffering, how can we expect to find *peace*? The answer is that we find peace by looking beyond ourselves. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). We find peace in recalling the character of God: that he is faithful, he is compassionate, and he is in control. We find peace in the presence of the Holy Spirit with us in our circumstances. And we find peace in the promise of our future life with Christ.

Scripture says, "We know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). And believers can hold onto the revelation that one day God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more" (Revelation 21:4).

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Several of the epistles in our New Testament are referred to as the Apostle Paul's "prison letters" because they were written by him to the churches while he was imprisoned in Rome. The letter to the Philippians, sometimes called "the epistle of joy", was one of these prison letters. Today we'll look at one small but potent passage found in this letter.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER))

Continue to pray for those known to you who are sick. Pray in particular that they would know God's peace that passes understanding. Continue to ask God to show you how you might be able to minister to them.

God of all grace and power: Behold, visit, and relieve these thy servants; look upon them with the eyes of thy mercy, give them comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend them in all danger, and keep them in perpetual peace and safety; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (PRAYER FROM THE MINISTRY TO THE SICK, BCP PAGE 577)

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PHILIPPIANS 4: **REJOICE. PRAY. THINK. LIVE.**

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practise these things, and the God of peace will be with you.