

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

22 January 2023

The Secret of Facing Need

I was told, many years ago, that the secret of having what you want is knowing how to ask for it.

I would add: knowing who to ask for it.

The Bible says we have not because we (pause) ask not.

One of the first steps to recovery from alcohol or drug abuse is to admit the problem exists and that you are an addict.

Facing our needs before God is the same.

We must come to him admitting our need for him.

Acknowledging to him that we are broken and need him to heal our brokenness.

I came to a realization this week about how the loss of a loved one affects us.

It is like losing a limb.

I have dealt with that in Kathy's loss of a foot.

I will be crippled for the rest of my life.

I have lost a part of myself.

I will learn to go on.

I might even find a prosthetic that helps me go on without her.

But the loss will be with me every day of my life.

I come before God with my loss and he comforts me.

I keep my need for life without Kathy before him and he ministers to me.

He encourages me, sustains me, and points me to life as it is now.

When you are confronted by special needs for yourself, your family, your job, or your church, what do you do?

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians with some great needs himself.

As a servant of Christ, he was a prisoner in Rome.

He acknowledged that he was afflicted and that he was under pressure; he referred to his necessity and to their need.

Paul had learned the secret to facing need.

This is one key to celebrated Christian living.

Today we are going to look at some specific ways to deal with our needs.

Be enthusiastic (*Phil. 4:4*)

When we have a need, we are not to hide it, deny it, or disregard it, we are to rejoice in the Lord in the midst of it.

The word rejoice is an imperative, a command.

It is present tense, urging continual action.

It is an attitude of life, "always".

It is given double emphasis in the light of the Philippians' difficulties.

Our focus is to be on the Lord, not on our need.

A preacher was living one of those never-should-have-gotten-out-of-bed days.

He cut his face while shaving.

Then he burned his toast for breakfast.

He rushed out the door, so he wouldn't be late for an appointment, then one of his tires blew out a few miles down the road.

He finally got his car back on the road and was going a few miles over the speed limit when a police officer stopped him and gave him a ticket for speeding.

By that time, he was extremely upset, and he made a rather sorry picture as he complained bitterly

to the policeman about the kind of day he was experiencing.

"I know what you mean," said the officer.

"It used to happen to me that way-before I became a Christian!"

Be gentle (*Phil. 4:5*)

A Christians' enthusiasm is not without reason.

The word moderation means a readiness to listen to reason.

It is the attitude of yielding one's rights, thus showing consideration and gentleness to others.

The tendency of the world is to become hard and tough, to demand one's rights, but this is not the Christian response.

We are to be gentle toward all people and all situations.

Be peaceful (*Phil. 4:5*)

The natural tendency in the time of need is to worry.

Every night Americans take millions of sleeping pills.

Worry is not the answer.

We can either worry or pray.

Some of us can do both.

God's Word says we are to worry about nothing, not even one thing.

It is depressing that most of what we worry about does not even happen.

Or at least we get through it ok.

When we worry, we are sinning by showing a lack of trust in God.

Instead, we are instructed to commit our requests to God in prayer and allow him to be Lord of our lives.

Peace comes through prayer as an act of worship, through supplication for our personal needs, and through thankfulness for what is happening in our lives.

Peace beyond human understanding keeps guarding our inner lives.

Be positive (*Phil. 4:8*)

Think positively, not negatively.

Think spiritual thoughts.

Think high thoughts, honest thoughts, just thoughts, thoughts worthy of respect, living by God's standards.

Think agreeable, loving, and pure thoughts.

Carefully reflect on these thoughts and keep practicing them.

This is the way the God of peace will bless.

Be teachable (*Phil. 4:9,11*)

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice."

The Lord has a purpose for the need in your life.

The Lord uses a need to develop us.

What happens to us is not as important as how we respond to what happens.

The Lord is developing spiritual qualities in our lives.

In this chapter of Philippians, we discover several strong qualities: gratefulness, joyfulness, contentment, flexibility, and faith.

What quality is God developing in you?

The Lord uses a need to reprove us.

Having a need causes us to search our hearts and ask him, "What is wrong?"

The Lord uses a need to test us.

When we have a need and the funds for it are not available, the Lord may be testing us.

Whatever our need and whatever God's purpose, we are to thank him.

Be content (*Phil. 4:10-12*)

Contentment is an attitude that none of us possesses naturally.

It is something we have to learn.

Paul learned it; he had not always known it.

Our natural inclination is not to learn to be content.

Rather, it is to complain of our circumstances or to covet what we do not have.

Contentment is realizing that God has provided everything we need for our present happiness.

The opposite is covetousness, lusting for more and more.

Be expectant (*Phil. 4:13*)

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

There is no greater verse in the Bible.

When we have the right attitude, there is nothing we cannot do!

This verse is positive: "I can."

It is personal: "I can."

It is powerful: "do all things."

In the face of your need, you can be defeated or you can be expectant of the victory Jesus gives.

Be generous (*Phil. 4:14-18*)

The Philippian church was a generous church; consequently, Paul's needs were met.

In the time of our need, we tend to be stingy, but the key to qualifying for verse 19 is the attitude of generosity within us.

If we are in need, this means we should begin giving.

Be fulfilled (*Phil. 4:19*)

All our need is supplied and satisfied.

God's treatment of the Philippians would correspond to their treatment of Paul.

This is the diving principle of reciprocity; giving and receiving.

What about your needs?

How are you responding to them?

What are you doing with them?

We need to take our eyes off of the financial page and put them on God.

Paul wrote, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (*Phil. 4:19*)

Know it, believe it, then live it!

And life is worth the living just because he lives.

And in him you live.