

Intro: I am never surprised at the capacity of the human heart to complain and become embittered. By that I mean that it is so common to see the evils of others and to rarely see the good. This is especially true when we have been personally wounded by another, whether justly or unjustly, we seem to stew in our resentment, continually reflecting on the wounds and those who have caused them. In this process we usually twist the actual facts, unconsciously choosing to believe only the evils and none of the good. This, of course, is simply pride at its root, rearing its ugly double-head of self-pity and self-righteousness. I imagine that this is what was happening in Philippi, seething bitterness that resulted in silent despondency of joyless anxiety and prayerless resistance to yield to one another. Paul sees an answer again in the person of Jesus Christ. We must learn to see, count, and apply the virtues of Christ to our lives and to see, count, and consider as significant the virtues around us as the means to bring peace and to see God near to us.

1. Consider the Virtuous Things as Significant

a. Concluding thoughts on the Philippian condition

- i. The division that existed between these two women was largely fed by what they were considering the most important things
 1. We tend to harbor bitter thoughts and past injustices perceived against us until they swell in our hearts
 2. This continual reflection upon our hurts and the ills perpetrated against us only feeds self-righteousness and the seizing of our own righteousness
 - a. Of course, this is the opposite of Christ's own actions of self-sacrifice and the giving up of His own "rights" in order to redeem us
 - b. It leads to the joyless anxiety and the independent unyielding nature of divisiveness in our relationships
 - c. This bitter reflection feeds sin and starves the soul
 3. Therefore, Paul instructs them to reflect on the virtuous things as the means of peace between them
 - a. Not only as the means of peace between them, but also of the means of transformed lives in v9
 - b. The result of transformed lives is the nearness of God Himself, the God of peace

b. Whatever is...

i. true (*αληθης*)

1. consistent with ultimate Reality, opposed to the lie or falsehood
 - a. Everything that refuses, either philosophically or functionally, to glorify God and live dependently upon Him for everything with gratitude, has exchanged the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1:25)
 - b. Every time that we feel or behave according to the belief that something is more important to us than God, we are living according to a lie, for nothing is more worthy than God nor can bring us greater joy than Him (Isa 46)
2. "I am the Truth" – Jesus as recorded by John in John 14:6
 - a. The most noble and true thing on which we can consider, ponder, meditate, and weigh with significance is the person and work of Jesus Christ
 - b. Think on Him, imbibe on His character, draw near to Him, ponder His Word, consider Him, meditate on His cross and empty grave, reflect on His excellence, contemplate His sovereign power
3. The Church is the pillar and support of the Truth (1 Tim 3:15)
 - a. Do we consider the Church as weighty? As significant? As helping reveal to us the Truth of Christ and His Word?
 - b. Or, as I fear, are we largely independent, trusting in ourselves and our own self-determination more than the historic community of Christ?
 - c. Are we supporting the truth, as the Church of Christ? Or, have we succumbed to the lie of our culture in the cognitive dissonance of its religious equality of truth claims (saying all religions are true even though they are mutually exclusive in their claims)

ii. honorable (*σεμνος*)

1. noble, high estimable character
 - a. All that is of worthy character, noble in intent and quality is something to be weighed as good and significant, valuable and praiseworthy

- b. We should honor that which is honorable, no matter where it may be, whether secular or within the Church, but particularly within the Church
 - c. The only other time this word is used in Scripture is describing the characteristic of maturity in the church (1 Tim 3:8,11; Titus 2:2)
 - 2. Jesus is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.” (Eph 1:21)
 - a. There is nobody more noble than Christ, nobody more highly esteemed than Jesus, nobody more worthy of our honor than the dignified Savior
 - b. Take Jesus into account in His dignity and honor
- iii. just (*δικαιος*)
 - 1. righteous, quality of conformity to the character of God
 - a. This has the idea of justice, that which is line with truth and the quality of being morally right
 - b. We are to consider and take into account as worthy that which is morally just, right in the eyes of God
 - i. This includes social justice: the caring for the poor, the ministries of mercy, the provision for the oppressed and outcasts of society
 - ii. “to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8)
 - c. Christians are never to glory or applaud in injustice or unrighteousness by or toward anyone
 - d. We are to “take into account as significant” all that is just, whether performed by believers or unbelievers
 - 2. Jesus is the Righteous One (1 John 2:1)
 - a. As the righteous One, He has given us His righteousness by His grace, imputed and imparted through His sacrifice (1 John 2:2)
 - b. As the righteous One, He is trustworthy to always do what is fair and good and right, perfectly in-line with God’s righteousness
 - c. Take Jesus into account as significant in His righteousness, as our provision for all our sins, as our sufficiency for all our righteousness, as our King who reigns with justice, as our example of how to live justly
- iv. pure (*αγνος*)
 - 1. innocent, chaste
 - a. separate from that which would make one impure, or unclean
 - b. has the idea of separation, holiness, set apart from sin and unrighteousness
 - 2. Jesus is pure (1 John 3:3)
 - a. Jesus is completely separated from that which displeases His Father, having no sin in any fashion (Heb 4:15-16) who draws us into His purity and presents us before His Father wrapped in His cloak of purity
 - b. Being perfectly pure He laid down the rights and privilege that goes with such purity in order to dwell with sinners and to bear our shame and consequence
 - c. As pure, He is a fit and sufficient sacrifice in our place, an offering pleasing to the Father (Eph 5:2)
- v. lovely (*προσφιλης*)
 - 1. characteristic of something lovable, winsome character
 - a. Things that are pleasing in their goodness so that they draw people in
 - b. Winsome things: kindness, compassion, other-centeredness, gracious, well-mannered, etc.
 - 2. Jesus is winsome to His Father and to sinners destitute of themselves who close to Him in trust (1 Pet 2:4,7; 2 Cor 2:16; 1 Pet 1:8)
- vi. praiseworthy (*ευφημος*) -
 - 1. good report, or report of good
 - a. That which deserves praise, is good, needs to be applauded
 - b. This is simply another way of emphasizing the consideration that needs to be given to that which is good
 - 2. We have a tendency, especially in our individualistic honor-starved culture, to emphasize the actions and values that are not worthy of praise
 - a. The proliferation of gossip magazines and tabloids

- b. Political ads and satire
 - c. There is surely a need to be discerning and somewhat objectively critical, but we all know when it's not objective or for the purpose of discernment
 - 3. We are to consider all reports of goodness as significant, laudable, and worthy of our respect
- c. If any...
 - i. virtue (moral excellence) (*αρετη*)
 - 1. value listed in the secular philosophies of the day (Plato, etc.)
 - 2. Paul is using a pagan list of virtues while at the same time contextualizing their meanings according to Christ (see v9)
 - a. This shows us that even non-Christian things can be laudable and praiseworthy as good and beneficial
 - b. We should use them to tell the story of Jesus, the Virtue of God
 - ii. praise (*επαινος*)
 - 1. to speak well of something, to honor it, to esteem it of great value

2. Apply These Virtues as the Lovely and Worthy Way to Live

- a. *λογιζομαι* (*logizomai*)- reckon, count something as applicable,
 - i. see 3:13 - "not *considering* [perfection/resurrection] as my own"
- b. The idea here is to give weight to these things in our consideration, thoughts, and ultimately *applying* them to our lives as significant
 - i. It's more than merely pondering them, meditating on them, or thinking about them
 - ii. It is also applying them, applauding them, considering them as the sustenance of life
 - iii. *Logizomai* is an accounting word, used not of merely knowledge, but of application of the balance sheet: to count something as applicable and "worthy"
 - 1. so, to "think on such things" is to not only think about them, but to apply them to life as worthy, significant, and good
 - 2. Put them into action, weigh them as worthy in our lives and in the lives of others
- c. Walk the Virtuous Way in Your Living
 - i. In me...
 - 1. What you have learned
 - 2. What you have received
 - 3. What you have heard
 - 4. What you have seen
 - ii. Do these things
 - 1. Emphasis is on behavior, the lifestyle that imitates the apostle and is founded upon the righteousness of Christ
 - 2. There can be no obedience of heart without obedience of the walk
 - iii. Paul is emphasizing in v9 the application of the virtues listed above as distinctly Christ-centered virtues, rather than "whatever"
 - 1. He is showing the "how" we are to apply these virtues to our lives.
- d. Promise: **"And the God of peace will be with you"**
 - i. Changed from "peace of God" to "God of peace", emphasizing His presence

Conclusion:

We must guard our hearts from harboring bitterness and anger due to emphasizing the wrong things, self-centered things, rather than the things of Christ. How do we create peace between us? We must all weigh the things of Christ as the most significant things in our relationships with one another. We must learn to see the goodness of Christ and His effective penmanship on hearts and in the lives of our fellow believers. We must applaud all that is good, both in the world and especially in the Church (Galatians 6:10), decrying all injustice while constantly praising the good.

Above all, the power to "do these things" comes from the power of the Spirit working within us "to will and to work according to His good pleasure" (Phil 2:12-13). Therefore, let us spend our thoughts on the greatest of good, the highest of praiseworthy, the most laudable of all that is excellent: Jesus, the Christ. Let us imbibe on His person, this just and Almighty God who came down to redeem sinners by dying for them. Let us consider

His grace, that although we deserved only destruction for our impudent insolence, He poured Himself out so that those who will close to Him through depending on Him will be saved from His wrath and receive His inheritance instead. What kind of God is this that dies for His enemies, that mercifully provides for His ungrateful image-bearers? This is the One True God. Let us fill our minds with Him and the God of peace will be with us, among us to secure unity in the knowledge of Him, into the fullness of the maturity of Christ.