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Bridgeway Community Church
Series: Guest Speaker Series
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GUEST SPEAKER SERIES:
“How We Fight Our Battles” (Dr. Timothy Clinton)

I. INTRODUCTION

“You don’t have to win all your fights... but you **MUST** fight all your fights.” (Damon West)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:4-9 (NASB95)

We serve a just-in-time God! A God who understands we are in a battle, that people are struggling, and need divine intervention. The Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians in one of the most difficult times of his life, when he was imprisoned and facing execution. Yet, the words that he wrote during that time still have the power to encourage and influence us today.

The last few years have been incredibly hard.

When COVID-19 hit, we all experienced the fear and loneliness that came with the lockdown and the loss of loved ones. As a country, we reckoned with racial trauma. We experienced the rush to find a workable vaccine. And in the midst of all this, it's only intuitive that we would develop a mental health disaster.

We’ve become anxious people. So let’s look together at what Paul has to say to us...

II. THE FOUR KEYS TO FIGHTING OUR BATTLES

Even in the midst of such challenging circumstances, how could the Apostle Paul find the confidence to say, “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me*”? (**Philippians 4:13 NASB95**) Look at verse 5...

1. Believe

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand... (Philippians 4:5 ESV)

That is the key. Paul *believed* that the Lord was near. The antidote to trauma is relationship. As I've often said, "Kids are not afraid of the dark; they are afraid of being ALONE in the dark."

God wants His children to come near to Him when they are struggling.

Main Point:

If you're going to fight the good fight, learn how to practice the presence & power of God.

2. Pray/Focus

Research shows that gratitude can completely rewrite your brain. Paul tells us...

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6 ESV)

Like professional athletes who enter the arena leaving everything else in their life off of the field so that they can give themselves totally to the game, we should devote ourselves wholly to prayer – focusing our entire heart and mind on the presence of God, with THANKSGIVING. Paul goes on to say that after we focus ourselves on God with all prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, we can stop there. Because Paul said that if we do that, THEN, "*the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:7 ESV)

3. Think

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, 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. (Philippians 4:8 ESV)

As a therapist, when I work with clients, one of the first things we try to unpack is: *What are you giving your mind to?* Pay attention to what you're PAYING ATTENTION to! Many struggle with "rumination," which is where you can't turn off your thought-life. Your thoughts aren't really the issue – the issue is which thoughts you are attaching to. You aren't your thoughts; but the thoughts you are attached to are the ones that begin to define you!

Paul is saying, “Cut out the stinking thinking.” Toxic thinking is shown to lead to stress, which affects the body's natural healing capacity. Nearly 70% of diseases can be related to your mind. That is why Paul calls us to center our minds on TRUTH – the truth of who God is, what He is like, and what HE says about us through His Word.

Finally, Paul tells us to...

4. Do

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9 ESV)

Practice the above, and then act with the confidence that God can and has given you the strength to face your battles and fight the good fight. But I also noticed something else in this passage recently that I want to share with you as a bonus point.

5. BONUS! Relationships

Paul said...

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9 ESV)

Relationships are so key to positive growth. We can't fight our battles alone. We need the presence of God, but we also need RELATIONSHIPS that strengthen and encourage us in the Lord. We need each other! There's something about the presence of others, especially when the bombs go off, that changes everything.

III. CONCLUSION

Heaven and earth are standing on tip-toes awaiting the emergence of a Spirit-filled, Spirit-intoxicated people who know the Spirit of Immanuel – “God with us!” People for whom – as Richard Foster said – the presence of God is as real as the Pillar of Cloud by day and Fire by night was for the Israelite people.

There's nothing more that the Evil One wants than to see you isolated and defeated; because when you're isolated and defeated you're easy prey. But the good news is that you're not alone! You don't have to win all of your fights, but *you do* have to FIGHT all of your battles!

Hear the Lord saying to you: It's time! It's time to get some fight back in you. It's time to fight for your family, fight for marriage, for your sons and daughters. Stand up for what matters! In the midst of the fight you can know that God is restoring the majesty of His goodness and grace. If we will do what?

Let's Review!

- 1. Believe**
- 2. Pray/Focus**
- 3. Think**
- 4. Do**
- 5. ... In Relationship**

Then God's work will manifest in your life – and set you free!