

COME THIRSTY
#3: Pining for Peace
September 30-October 2, 2006

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.
Philippians 4:4-8 TNIV

Introduction: As we continue our churchwide study together of Max Lucado's "Come Thirsty," let's get rid of a third common myth that could prevent us from cultivating a thirst for righteousness. Many people seem to believe that the secret to a good life is "balance." They spend their energies trying to ensure that they and their families are "well rounded," not wanting to miss out on any life experience. God's Word teaches us that the secret to a joyful life is not balance, but Christ-centeredness.

- I. The Myth of a Balanced Life
 - A. The "balanced life" is rooted in self-effort, the product of a works philosophy of life.
 - B. The pursuit of balance generally results in the addition of experiences and the subtraction of margin.
 - C. Those who aim at too many targets simultaneously seldom hit any of them.
 - D. That which is in balance is, by definition, standing still.
 - E. Excellence in anything requires a period of focused imbalance, or concerted effort.
 - F. "Life-balance" is impossible to achieve and has as its center the self, so pursuing it results in constant struggle and endless selfishness.
 - G. A simple experiment will demonstrate the amount of effort required to attempt balance: Try standing on one leg—without leaning on anything for support—for five minutes.

- II. God's Word Counsels Imbalance
 - A. Paul teaches us to focus the entirety of our attention on "rejoicing in the Lord."
 - B. Paul's call to "gentleness" precludes a life of self-effort and constant struggle, a "mildness of manner or disposition." (Webster's)
 - C. Paul counsels an absolute freedom from anxiety resulting from:
 1. prayer and petition to God,
 2. thankfulness, and
 3. total dependence on God's provision.
 - D. Paul counsels passionate imbalance, a total focus on excellent and praiseworthy things (truth, nobility, rightness, purity).
 - E. A profound irony: Those who seek balance seldom find it, but those who center their lives on Jesus Christ discover peace.
- III. Pining for Peace
 - A. What the human heart actually desires is peace, not balance, and peace results from the conviction that one's life is meaningful.
 - B. The peace of God is not the result of any self-effort, but a gift of God that transcends human understanding.
 - C. The peace of God is a guard over the mind that maintains Christ-centeredness.
 - D. Christ's peace is our life-guide, by which we measure all human effort.
 - E. The key is to find your mission in life, the place where you will focus your effort in the service of Christ.

Conclusion: The human pursuit of balance results in worry. True believers sell out completely to Jesus Christ and receive immeasurable peace as their reward. They do not seek balance, but Christ-centeredness, and their imbalance results in excellence. The peace of God, which transcends their understanding, guards their lives in Jesus Christ.