

The Tuesday of JESUS' PASSION WEEK, April 7, 2020

Turn off the outside "noise" for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God's Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9 (TNIV)

<sup>8</sup> Finally, 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.**

<sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned  
or received  
or heard from me,  
or seen in me—  
put it into practice.

And **the God of peace** will be with you.

— PART 4 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

We get to **CHOOSE** what we allow our minds to **FOCUS** on. And Paul encourages us to **concentrate our attention** on some very specific things. Like...

*"whatever is **TRUE** . . . **think about these things**" —*

*"whatever is **NOBLE** . . . **think about these things**" —*

*"whatever is **RIGHT** . . . **think about these things**" —*

*"whatever is **PURE** . . . **think about these things**" —*

Tom Wright get us oriented to what Paul is trying to do here. **"The command in verse 8, to think about all the wonderful and lovely things listed here, runs directly opposite to the habits of mind instilled by the modern media. Read the newspapers: their stock-in-trade is anything that is untrue, unholy, unjust, impure, ugly, of ill repute, vicious and blameworthy. Is that a true representation of God's good and beautiful world? How are you going to celebrate the goodness of the creator if you feed your mind only on the places in the world which humans have made ugly? How are you going to take steps to fill your mind instead with all the things that God has given us to be legitimately pleased with, and to enjoy and celebrate?"**

TOM WRIGHT, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon.*

And today our focus is on "whatever is pure." How can we know what "pure"

looks like? I have a couple of suggestions. First, sometimes I try to understand words by reflecting on their antonyms — their **opposites**. *Don't eat **rotten** meat. Don't eat **rancid** food. Don't drink **contaminated** water from a **filthy** bottle in the gutter. Enjoy books and movies that elevate; don't waste your time with ones that **degrade**. Drink **real Pepsi™**; not **Diet Coke**.* (Okay, maybe not the best example?)

Second, JOHN says we can get a picture of what is pure by looking at Jesus:

1 JOHN 3:2-3 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> Dear friends, we are already God's children,  
but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears.  
But we do know that we will be like him,  
for **we will see him as he really is**.

<sup>3</sup> And all who have this eager expectation will keep **themselves** pure,  
just as **he** is pure.

*I love how Eugene Peterson phrases this in THE MESSAGE:*

**"All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready,  
with the glistening purity of Jesus' life  
as a model for our own."**

**Like Son, like Father.** ISAIAH'S life-changing vision of the Lord's **holiness** awakened him to his own **impurity**:

ISAIAH 6 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord.  
He was sitting on a lofty throne,  
and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ...

<sup>3</sup> [Mighty seraphim] were calling out to each other,

**"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the Lord of Heaven's Armies!  
The whole earth is filled with his glory!" . . .**

<sup>5</sup> Then I said, **"It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a *sinful* man.  
I have *filthy lips*, and I live among a people with *filthy lips*.  
Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies."**

*Another version uses our word "pure" to render this familiar passage:*

NCV: "Oh, no! I will be destroyed.

**I am not pure, and I live among people who are not pure,  
but I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful."**

DAVID tried to live such a life (although he was not entirely successful):

PSALM 101 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> [Lord], **I will be careful to live a blameless life** —  
when will you come to help me?

**I will lead a life of integrity  
in my own home.**

<sup>3</sup> **I will refuse to look at  
anything vile and vulgar.**

Let's pray.

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Loving Father, we acknowledge that  
**"We are all infected and impure with sin.  
All the right things we have done are like filthy pieces of cloth.  
Like dead leaves, we wither and fall,  
and our sins sweep us away like the wind."**  
ISAIAH 64:6 (NLT & NCV)

*And yet.*

"Once we were alienated from God  
and were enemies in our minds  
because of **our evil thoughts and actions.**  
**BUT NOW he has reconciled us** [*"made us his friends again"*]  
**through Christ's death in the body**  
**so that he might bring us into God's presence as people who are holy,**  
**without blemish and free from accusation..."**  
COLOSSIANS 1:21-22 (NIV & NCV)

**Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!**  
2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 (NIV)

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May God's grace, forgiveness, cleansing and purity be lavished on you today,  
thanks to Jesus' selfless love for us on the Cross,

Pastor Doug

P.S. Please be praying for God to pour out His kindness and grace on our guests  
and visitors this Sunday — our first "distance learning" **EASTER CELEBRATION *online!***

We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would  
love to pray for you! Email us at [info@bethanyonline.net](mailto:info@bethanyonline.net)

P.P.S. Keep checking our "ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY" webpage — we will try to  
post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at  
10:30 a.m. for more encouragement.