

1. (My second prequel to my summer series on Navigating Culture. Last week we considered Paul's advice to the Thessalonians. Today we look at his shared wisdom to the Philippians—speaking into their church culture, which was challenged by unhealthy teachers with their “mind on earthly things”—3:19—as well as personal disagreements between co-workers—4:2-3. The advice he offers still resonates into our context—this teaching helping us to build the kind of strong foundation needed for navigating the challenge of culture right now—and for sure—we will be calling back to this text as we discuss more specifically those challenges. But Paul's answer on how to handle the difficulties in Philippi? Create a) Culture of Peace—Philippians 4:4-9 (And think about that—just on the most surface of levels—everything that culture throws at us—all the hostilities; temptations; outrage; you name it—talk about an heavenly way to counter it—Blessed are the peacemakers! This is speaking a core part of the nature of God right into the storm. Jesus once spoke it as—“Put your swords away.” And that might just be the best possible advice of all as we seek to navigate culture God's way)
2. (So what did) Peace Look Like (in the Philippian setting—let's go to text)
 - a. Rejoice always (sound familiar)
 - b. Be gentle (wise response to a culture of anger and hate)
 - c. Don't worry (an oft stated goal in Scripture and one that prevents the culture of fear to have power over us)
 - d. Pray with thanksgiving (again—sound familiar? Look at each here individually and collectively—they really do provide a solid foundation from which to lean into and navigate the harsh realities of culture in a way that would give God glory—and in a way that would be peaceable and peace-making—a fresh and welcome alternative to the shouting heads most seen—but there is more from Paul)
3. “Think about such things” (More foundational building blocks in developing the spirit of Christ and both enjoying his peace and spreading it)
 - a. Noble (what is virtuous, true and good)
 - b. Right (think righteousness or right living)
 - c. Pure (blessed are the authentic—the honest and redeemed)
 - d. Lovely (the compelling beauty of God and his creation)
 - e. Admirable (full of grace and graciousness)
 - f. Excellent (seeing the absolute best, not the worst)
 - g. Praiseworthy (putting everything in perspective that gives God the glory—now again take time to check out each one and then consider them together. Just imagine if we were able to process everything through these filters—first of all as guardians of what we allow to influence and shape us—and then as what shapes our reaction, response and relationships. Think things would change? Think we may be able to handle the challenges of culture differently. Think that we would be able to demonstrate the peace that passes understanding to perhaps a surprised, bewildered culture who may just be wondering where this comes from?)
4. (I love this verse—especially as it speaks to navigating culture—and interestingly enough it was originally spoken to a group of Christians struggling to navigate their own challenging culture which is detailed in sort of a culture-clash context of two kinds of wisdom) “Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”—James 3:18 (What better can we do than to raise a harvest of righteousness in our culture? Think on this things!)