



TASTE Reflection Questions
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Rejoice in the Lord Always:
An Exhortation from the Letter to the Philippians

Fr. Jude Winkler

Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry ~ Padre Pio



1. What did you find most interesting about this talk? Was there a particular story or joke that resonated with you?

2. Regarding Philippians 4:4, Paul exhorts his readers, “**Rejoice** in the Lord **always**. I shall say it again, Rejoice!”
 - What did you think about the difference between happiness (temporary gratification) and joy (true peace)?
 - How easy is it for you to rejoice when you are experiencing trials? Have you ever experienced peace in suffering?

3. Regarding Philippians 1:12-14, Paul speaks of his time in prison as an **opportunity** for Grace. When we embrace these opportunities, we embrace a spirit of **service**. Father Jude explained that not only did God create us to love and **serve Him**, but He created us to **serve us** as demonstrated by His washing the feet of His disciples.
 - How did it make you feel when you heard God wants to serve YOU?
 - What would it look like if you allowed God to serve you? (e.g., accepting your trials?)
 - What are some ways you try to serve God and others? Have you considered new ways based on this talk?

4. Regarding Philippians 4:2-3, Paul encourages: **get along and make peace**. Forgiveness is essential to live in peace.
 - How did you feel about the thought that we forgive others NOT because they asked us for it, nor because they deserve it, nor because they'll stop hurting us, ... BUT because they need it?
 - Understanding the bad things they do are symptoms of their brokenness, how does this affect your future response? Does that give you more compassion?
 - Do you think it is possible to heal our broken world one heart at a time? Why or why not?

Themes and Fr. Jude's Reflections from Philippians

Joy — “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: Rejoice!” – [Phil 4:4](#)

- Happiness is momentary gratification.
- Joy is a sense of true peace — being where we should be and feeling it is where God wants us to be (even if it is not where we would prefer to be).
- Suffering is not something that negates our joy; sometimes it's where we find the greatest joy. In our suffering, we surrender to God and try to find meaning in the suffering. We are comforted with joy as we accept the suffering.

Paul says that he is in jail now, but it has worked for the better – [Phil 1:12-14](#)

- God is the ultimate opportunist. Regardless of what happens, God can use those circumstances for good.
- Anything that happens can be a moment of grace – an opportunity.
- Our suffering can be a moment of surrender and a moment to reach out to God.
- When we suffer, we can offer it up, not just generically, but for a particular person.
- When we embrace anything that happens, we embrace a spirit of service.
- God created us to know, love, and serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in the next. However, He also created us so He could serve us.
- We are most fully in God's image and likeness when we serve. It can be our way of driving, offering a smile or a bottle of water, and treating others with dignity — everyday service in love.
- When Jesus was a servant, He was not denying His divinity, he was revealing it. On the cross, He was not denying who He is, He revealed His love.

Get along & make peace — Euodia & Syntyche were two feuding women – [Phil 4:2-3](#)

- Paul highlights the importance of being at peace with others and building peace by not taking sides, not spreading gossip, but by helping others to get along.
- Forgiveness is essential to live in peace. We forgive others not because they asked us for it, nor because they deserve it, nor because they'll stop hurting us, but because they need it.
- The bad things they have done to us are symptoms of their brokenness and we feel sorry for them that they're so broken.
- Regarding holding grudges, anger, and resentment — It's like drinking poison and thinking it'll hurt them.
- Conversely, when we forgive them, it heals us. It does not mean we necessarily like them, but we wish the best for them and want them to be healed. Note: Some people are toxic and we have to love them at a distance.
- Change your expectations. When you expect nothing, you will not be disappointed.
- If we don't seem to have success, it does not mean our prayers & good actions were a waste. Seeds take time to grow.
- We have been given the privilege of healing this broken world one heart at a time. Take the opportunity!
- God sometimes says "I will heal you" and other times "I'll meet you on the cross." Either way, it is the most loving God can do.

Paul says that which I once considered important, I now consider as refuse – [Phil 3:7-8](#)

- When we have serious health issues, we realize how fragile life is and what's important and what's not.
- Fr. Jude always says a bad diagnosis is much better than a good retreat. On a good retreat, we tell God what we think He should be doing. As a result of a bad diagnosis, we become open and even surrender our inability to surrender to God.
- Be clever about how to remember and stay awake for morning and evening prayers (e.g., early bird special for night prayers)
- Instead of offering things up for discipline, do it for love. It becomes a double incentive to keep a commitment.
- All day long we have the opportunity to offer up our prayers, sacrifices, and acts of love.
- If Jesus were to sit next to you, what would you want Him to whisper in your ear?
Perhaps: I love you. I forgive you. I made you the way you are. Don't sweat it. I can't think of living eternity without you.

In prison, Paul says if I live or if I die, it's pretty much the same – both are good ([Phil 1:20-26](#))

- Because of illness or because of age, we start saying, “Why is God keeping me here?”
- Some of us even reach an age where we say, “God, please take me.” It's not a sin. It's a surrender.
- Very often, we want to continue because of our family. We want to be there for them.
- But there comes the day that we have to surrender and trust that God will hold them in His arms.
- For ourselves, we pray, “God, I don't know how much longer I have. Let me use it well, but when it's time, let me be ready to embrace You.” There comes a point where we should be ready to trust God. (Remember: Franciscans jump into the void)
- Jesus is waiting expectantly for each of us. He wants to embrace us. He wants to love us.
- When you see the light, go.