

**Discussion Questions for Nov. 12, 2017 Sermon**  
**“The Lord is Near,” on Philippians 4:4-8**

Starter Questions on Suffering and Joy

1. Is there anything you are dealing with right now that you wish God would just fix, or make go away? (please share that, if it is appropriate)
2. What kinds of things bring you the most joy?
3. Where have you experienced joy or peace from God recently?

Questions about Philippians

4. What is the letter to the Philippians known for? If you don't know, and you have a Bible (or app) that gives a quick overview or introduction, what is the theme of this short letter?
5. What is the context/history/purpose/situation of this letter? Read the following verses to find out:
  - a. Paul's history with Philippi: Acts 16:16-25
  - b. Paul's circumstances while writing it: Phil. 1:12-14
  - c. The situation of the Philippian church: Phil. 1:27-30
6. Does the context seem to fit the theme?

Read Philippians 4:4-8

7. Considering the context of these words, what do you think they meant to those who first received them? (ie. The Philippians)
8. Can you think of other scriptures where we are commanded to be joyful, gentle, thankful, peaceful (etc.) in the midst of challenge, suffering, persecution, and frustration?
9. How do you think that is possible?
  - a. If you heard the sermon – how did Rob say it is possible?
  - b. How can we encourage the Holy Spirit to grow God's character in our lives?
  - c. What difference does it make to believe and trust that “God is near” and to trust Him more than we trust our own abilities to deal with challenges?
  - d. What difference does it make when we don't believe or trust that God is near when we face challenges and suffering?
10. Going back to the very first question, what might you rejoice in even in that situation, even if God doesn't fix it or take it away?
11. What is God encouraging or challenging you with from this passage, sermon, or study?