[Music]

good morning grace bible church family

and friends it's so exciting this

morning to use something live-streaming

that we have thought about using some

have been asking us about using for some

time and when I think about alive

this morning a couple things come to

mind it's the fact that the Church of

Jesus Christ grace bible church is alive

and well this morning we are so thankful

that God has given us this opportunity

to minister the Word of God to get the

gospel out and at the same time to be

used of him in the midst of very

difficult circumstances in our changing

world and I want you to know this

morning that as we begin nothing has

changed from God's perspective nothing

in the least God's program for the

church is on track he's moving things

forward and by God's grace we're going

to get through this and he's going to

continue to use us let's have a word of

Prayer as we open and then we'll look

into the scriptures here this morning

our Heavenly Father how we should be

thankful for the times in which we live

these are not times that we would order

of our own choosing to take the nature

in which they now present themselves but

father you are wise you are good and we

know our Father that you are moving all

things towards the goal of you being

glorified and magnified in a wonderful

way which is also for our good so we

pray today for grace to understand what

you have given to us in your word we

pray for grace to make it relevant and

practical to our lives and we pray that

we might be strengthened and that we

might even be better testimonies

brighter lights in this world for the

cause of Jesus Christ and we will thank

you for that in our saviors precious

name Amen I'm certain that not one of us

this morning could have imagined that

three weeks ago we would be dealing with

the degree of uncertainty that we're

facing this morning I know many people

are facing uncertainty when it comes to

physical health and well-being and

certainly as many people as that are

dealing with the uncertainty when it

comes to their jobs and their careers a

lot of us are facing uncertainty about

the impact that it's going to have upon

our nation's economic future when we see

stimulus checks being made out and

distributed here within just a matter of

weeks and I know many of you are facing

the uncertainty of your children's

schooling and education at what's going

to happen with that most every day I

speak with my near 95 year old dad on

the telephone who's on lockdown in an

assisted living center and in the course

of the conversation he'll ask me at

least two times Pete when do you think

this is going to end and every single

time my answer is the same dad I have

absolutely no idea you know in fact our

leaders don't know when it's going to

end the health care professionals have

no idea when this is going to end and if

this unnerve a little bit well welcome

to the club we are in uncharted waters

and this is not the first time that the

church has found itself in this

situation nor is it going to be the last

and if you look at the book of

Philippians you'll find exactly what I

mean let's turn to Philippians chapter 4

this morning now for many of you while

you're turning there I do want to say

that the book of Philippians is perhaps

one of your favorite books if not your

favorite and I would have to say it's

right up there in the top three of my

favorites as well but what sometimes

goes unnoticed or kind of slides

underneath the radar is this truth that

Paul was writing to a church in Philippi

that was struggling and what they were

struggling with was the uncertainty of

the times in which they lived questions

were being asked how was the Apostle

Paul doing how was a password itis one

of our own how was he doing we'd heard

that he'd been sick how was the cause of

Jesus Christ doing and while Paul seeks

you answer them and to relieve some of

this tension he also mentions at the end

of chapter 1 that these people in

Philippi these believers were engaged in

the same conflict that he found himself

in and so what I love about this book is

that the Apostle Paul writes to these

believers and to us today and provides

them with instructions of how to face

the uncertainties of the time in which

they lived let me read for you beginning

in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 4

here's what Paul says rejoice in the

Lord always again I will say rejoice let

your reasonableness be made known to

everyone the Lord is at hand do not be

anxious about anything but in everything

by prayer and supplication with

Thanksgiving let your requests be made

known to God and the peace of God which

surpasses all understanding will guard

your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus I would say that we need to be

careful right upfront here that we don't

look at these measures that the Apostle

Paul gives us in verses 4 through 7 as

coping mechanisms to deal with

uncertainty they're actually not as a

matter of fact I would hope that by the

end of this message that you will set

aside the coping mechanisms that you may

have employed and embrace what Paul is

telling us here because what Paul shares

with us are actually countermeasures to

the uncertainties of life let's think of

them also as steps of faith not to cope

but to conquer in moments of dealing

with uncertainty

which we should be doing all the time

folks

uncertainties are nothing new they've

been here all along life has always been

uncertain I think the fact is is that

when something that we don't expect

comes along it just alerts us to the

fact that live our lives are living in

uncertain times and it's the realization

of this uncertainty that makes it all

the

more important that we need to follow

these countermeasures that the Apostle

Paul gives to us so what are these

countermeasures when are these steps of

faith provided for us well if you look

at verse four here's one we're all

familiar with none of this is new here

this morning but perhaps we're looking

at it in a new and fresh way what's the

first countermeasure step of faith given

to us it's this make sure you always

rejoice in the Lord often times people

will say to me how do you define joy and

I like definitions so let me throw this

out here that joy is that elation of

heart produced by the Spirit of God in

which he leads us to contemplate and

comprehend the glory of Jesus Christ so

what that means is as you and I consider

the goodness of God the grace of God his

provision for our lives his might and as

we reflect upon the wonderful

relationship that we have with him

through Jesus Christ the enjoyment of

eternal life and as we meditate and pour

over the exceeding great and precious

promises that are given unto us in

Scripture here's what happened something

begins to well up in our hearts and what

that is is joy and the Apostle Paul is

telling us to let this joy burst forth

because I want you to see that there can

be joy in the heart but to rejoice is to

have things taken to an entirely new

level

we don't suppress that joy but rather we

express that joy and then the question

is well how do you do that it may be

something as simple as a smile if you

notice what a difference a smile can

make in your relationship to other

people that is an expression of joy from

the heart it may be showing itself in

song in praise and in Thanksgiving to

God it's the expression of the heart's

delight in God it may be in a spirit of

kindness and sweetness that's shown to

one another in the

it may even show itself in testifying to

other people to your neighbors to your

friends to your wife and to your kids

talking about scripture testifying to

all that God has given to us that we

have in Christ

it may even express itself in a shout

many times I have been driving down the

road and I've got a song going in my car

and I'm by myself and I guess there's a

little bit more liberty in that but all

of a sudden God uses a phrase God uses a

thought touches my heart and all of a

sudden thank you lord praise God we will

shout yeah the guy next to you may be

looking at you in the light but that's

fine just wave to him with a smile of

course show that joy but that is an

expression of what the Apostle Paul is

talking about here it is choosing to act

into response and respond to what God is

doing in your heart have you ever

thought about this fact God made us not

only for himself but he made us for joy

he made us to take delight in him God

did not make us for sorrow now that

doesn't mean that sorrow doesn't touch

our lives it does and it touches it in a

very real way but God's goal for our

life is that one day those sorrows those

struggles are all going to be gone and

we're going to enjoy him in a completely

unhindered way and why is that it's

because Jesus became a man of sorries

Jesus took all of the sorrows that were

acquainted with our sin in our misery

upon himself so that through faith and

trust in Him we can have joy and even

the sorrow that Jesus experienced you've

ever thought about this the sorrow that

he experienced was always shot through

with joy the joy that was set before him

the joy of being once again at the

Father's right and one day we're going

to be at the right hand of Christ you

find the Apostle Paul following the Lord

Jesus example for

instance you remember that when he and

Silas were wrongly accused and thrown

into that cave like prison in Philippi

into the dark it's dingy Astacio splay

sui can imagine their feet are up in the

stocks they're beaten backs are laying

in the straw with all the Davern men and

what are paul and silas choosing to do

they're choosing to rejoice in the lord

they were singing praise and hymns to

God at midnight when the Apostle Paul

wrote the book of Philippians he didn't

write it from some mountain chalet in

the Alps he didn't write it from some

mountain place of safety in Colorado no

not at all he didn't write it from the

deck of a cruise line in the Caribbean

he wrote it while he was under house

arrest he wrote it in lockdown folks he

was being guarded by a Roman soldier day

in and day out and he rejoices in the

Lord William Barclay the famous

commentator has made this statement the

Christian is a person of joy a gloomy

Christian is a contradiction of terms

and nothing in all religious history has

done Christianity more harm than its

connection with black clothes and long

faces so I have asked myself this week

how can we make this so practical that

it becomes in our lives something that

we find usable in every situation and

I'm going to share with you five things

and I want you to see how they relate to

one another here's the first thing you

can do before getting out of bed

tomorrow morning before your feet hit

the floor lay in bed and remember this

is the day that the Lord has made I will

rejoice and be glad in it I'm gonna make

that choice before any other choice that

I make today secondly rejoice at

midmorning that God is at work to supply

all of your needs according to his

riches in glory by Christ Jesus

number three rejoice at noon

that God is working all things together

for good in the lives of those that love

him all things everything he's working

together for good

number four rejoice in the afternoon

that Jesus is upholding all things even

bacteria even viruses everything he

upholds by the word of his power

number five rejoice when getting into

bed that the Lord is your keeper

and the psalmist tells us he never

slumbers nor sleeps now if you want to

make that so practical how about you

switch out some of those from day to day

but you go through your day choosing to

rejoice in the Lord

that's the countermeasure the step of

faith that Paul is calling us to let me

share with you a second step of faith

Paul tells us about it here in verse 5

he says let your reasonableness be made

known to everyone what is that well I'm

going to state it this way for point

number two let your gentle forbearance

be made known to all do you know what it

is to forbear with someone it is this

it's to go into your relationship with

them ahead of time purposing that you're

going to bear with them in a gentle way

it is a mark of the Lord Jesus Christ

and and that's where this gentle

forbearance is better seen by way of

example than by way of definition there

was no one that was more gentle and more

forbearing than Jesus Christ and I doubt

anyone would ever doubt that the Apostle

Paul says in 2nd Corinthians chapter 10

and verse 1 I entreat you by the

meekness and the gentleness of Christ

Isaiah chapter 42 tells us a bruised

Reed he will not break and a faintly

burning wick he will not quench in the

world of Jesus's day was populated with

bruised Reed's that he ministered to and

it's the same with us today and yet he

was gentle with them he was gentle to

those who were under the sentence of

condemnation and death because of their

sin like all people today he

was gentle with those who lies were

broken by sin and the mess that they'd

made of their lives he was gentle with

those who had chosen to go their own way

independent turning their backs upon

their Creator he was gentle even with

those who did not know what they were

doing when they nailed his hands and his

feet to the cross and when it comes to

his disciples he ever thought about he

gently forbearing them even though they

stumbled and fell time after time after

time again in the course of following

him do you know how important this

aspect of gentle forbearance and our

decision to take this step of faith and

showing it is in the time in which we

live when people are staring uncertainty

in the face as they are now there's

likely to be a whole lot more stress and

a whole lot more tension in the home and

what's so needed is for us to counter

that pressure by showing God brought

gentle forbearance to one another some

of you may have heard the distressing

news that across our land with all this

going on the cases of domestic violence

are spiking at an alarming level

families are huddled together together

dads are trying to work from home and to

carve out some space for themselves moms

are trying to help their children with

their homework people find that they are

shut off from their neighbors shut off

from the normal enjoyments of life and

all the while the kids run through the

home when on days they cannot get

outside and what happens will get edgy

and our tempers start to flare in

regrettable ways guys I'm gonna speak to

you first we just can't let that happen

that's something that we can not allow

to happen in our homes we've got to

choose right up front that we're not

going to go down that path but we're

gonna take the step of faith that the

Apostle Paul admonishes us to do right

here that we are going to show Christ

like gentle forbearance to our wives to

our children

and to one another if you failed in some

way in this respect

confess it forsaken God will forgive you

God will restore you confess it to your

wife confess it to your children as they

help you to go on and wives ladies let

me say to you I would encourage you to

follow your husband's example in this

purpose that you two together are going

to show to your family

this form of gentle forbearance with one

another and let me tell you something's

going to happen you're gonna find that

the circumstances of life uncertain

circumstances are not going to rise up

and stop all over you you're not going

to be at their mercy by God's grace

you're going to triumph for Christ and

have a testimony for him in your homes

and I think another layer of help is

given to us in verse five I want you to

look at it here notice what it says the

Lord is at hand now this is a tough

phrase because it goes first with that

which comes before it but also as well

with that which comes after so let's

first of all look at it in relationship

with what we just looked at here in

verse five the Lord is at hand what to

help us to support us with this to give

us the example we need in showing gentle

forbearance with one another and to

fortify us in our inner man that we

might be strengthened to demonstrate

this for the good of others that's

encouraging that's helpful number three

there's a last step of faith a

countermeasure that the Apostle Paul

shares with us and that's found here in

verse six don't be anxious about

anything but in everything by prayer let

me stop there for just a moment what is

number three it's this be prayerful not

anxious you know it's not just the

levels of domestic violence that are

rising across our country it's not just

those levels it is the levels of anxiety

we find that anti-anxiety meds are being

prescribed at a higher

level than ever before and I would say

this that if we're all honest were

experiencing that level anxiety in some

way in our own lives and if you're one

of those that says you're not feeling it

well Yogi Berra the famous catcher for

the New York Yankees who has shared with

us over the course of time a lot of yogi

isms witty statements he has something

to say to you he says if you're feeling

good don't worry you'll get over it part

of our problem here in America is this

our society demands that we share

anxiety in our hearts and with one

another on a level that's more broad

than ever before and I think a lot of

that is due to our technology it brings

the scenes of the world right into our

homes scenes like planes flying into

buildings scenes like bodies being

pulled from the rubble of earthquakes

scenes like people dying from disease

and the sad fact is the world has no

effective way of dealing with it

none at all there's no antidote that

they have but God has and that's what we

find here here's what Paul says don't be

anxious

stop giving in stop caving to that

anxiety that rises up in your life don't

let it run roughshod over you now

remember what we found back in verse

five the Lord is at hand he is there to

help you he is there to pull you back he

is there to give you the grace that you

need so as to not cave to it and then he

prescribes this in verse 6 don't be

anxious but in everything by prayer and

supplication with Thanksgiving let your

requests be made known to God now some

of you may be saying Pete you don't

understand it can't be done and I want

to honestly be kind and disagree with

you oh yes it can you know what the

problem is you're not choosing to take

that step of faith you're not choosing

to trust God that is you follow this

directive that God's grace will enable

you to do that abundantly above all that

you could ever ask or think and it comes

with a tremendous blessing listen to

what it says that when we bring prayer

our prayers to God the burden of our

hearts when we lay them before him look

at this wonderful promise in verse 7 and

the peace of God which surpasses all

understanding will guard your hearts and

your minds in Christ Jesus I love the

word for guard the word there means to

garrison isn't it interesting that we're

going to every effort social distancing

washing our hands avoiding crowds all

these different things to protect

ourselves and yet God says wait a minute

how about I garrison you how about I

protect you how about I protect

something more important than your body

and your physical well-being how about I

protect your heart I will hear us in it

during this difficult time and how does

he do that by bringing in the peace of

God and and folks I cannot honestly

explain that peace it would be difficult

to describe it except that it's

wonderful except that it's something I

don't ever want to be without it is

something that is so richly enjoyable

and it comes from God and when it comes

from God you know it comes from God it

couldn't come from anywhere else I have

had so much of a blessing in talking to

different men even this past week one of

which said to me he says these times

have driven me to prayer and he says I

believe that God has furthered a

deepening of holiness in my own life

through all of these things that are

going on and praise God for that

we get on our knees we lay our burdens

before the Lord and I think there's a

calmness and just knowing that God hears

us that God's in control that he's got

it and his peace comes in and helps us

to rise from our knees and to go on our

way how wonderful is that

long ago and in a land very very far

away a man found himself facing a dire

set of uncertainties the man's homeland

was in a bad way the people had given

themselves over to wholesale selfishness

and sinful desire wickedness greed

corruption and crime were rampant

everywhere sort of like in America today

but one day God spoke to this man and

God shared with this man some grim and

some sobering news God said an invader

is coming not a virus but an invader in

the form of a large and a very cruel

foreign enemy army an army that would

march over the land and bring wholesale

destruction to not only to lives but

even to livestock and creatures in the

end God would deal with the invader but

not before God would accomplish his

purposes and in the end destroy the

invader himself well the man simply

couldn't understand how a just and holy

God could do something like that

and for the longest time it just tore

him up but then that man made a decision

very much in line with what we're

talking about here this morning he

decided to step out in faith and trust

God and the moment he did that his whole

perspective changed his entire

perspective as a matter of fact his

perspective changed with respect to the

uncertainties of life that he decided to

journal it he decided to write it down

you see the man's name was Habakkuk and

the land was Judah I want you to listen

to what he said I'll quietly wait for

the day of trouble to come upon the

people who invade us though the fig tree

should not blossom nor fruit beyond the

vine the produce of the olive fail and

the fields yield no food the flock be

cut off from the fold and there be no

herd in the stalls

yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will

take joy in the God of my salvation God

the Lord is my strength he makes my feet

like the deers he makes me tread on my

high places so what's the thing we learn

from that Journal

and from Philippians chapter 4 this

morning I believe it's this every step

of faith keeps life's uncertainties

underfoot and folks our families need to

see that our church needs to see that

our neighbors need to see our world

needs to see them by God's grace he will

give us the strength to take these steps

let's pray father in heaven we praise

you this morning for the word for the

directives of scripture that encourage

us in these uncertain times to take

steps that are not just pleasing to you

first and foremost but father they're so

helpful to us as members of your body we

thank you our Father that because of the

spirit of God's indwelling sent by the

one who laid down his life for us and

lives today that these steps of faith

are possible that we can rise above the

uncertainties of life they're not cures

for those uncertainties but father our

lives can triumph in times of these

uncertainties so that they are underfoot

that we move forward in our service of

your work and your calling in our lives

for your great glory we ask this in

Jesus name Amen I would conclude by

sharing with you the Lord bless you and

keep you the Lord make his face to shine

upon you and be great

to you the Lord lift up his countenance

upon you and give you peace peace that

passes all understanding thank you