

Jim's Notes
November 22, 2006
The Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians 4:4-7

Philippians 4:4

Marius Victorinus (died after A.D.361)

This means that the consequence of having unity in understanding and faith is that they rejoice in the Lord and are always dear to one another. "Rejoice," he says, "in the Lord—this is too little: again I say rejoice." For when you are joined in heart you rejoice in the Lord, and when you rejoice in the Lord you are joined in heart and stand together in the Lord. (Epistle to the Philippians 4.4-5)

St. John Chrysostom (died A.D. 407)

This rejoicing is not separable from grief (see Matthew 5:4), for indeed it is rather deeply connected with grief. The one who grieves for his own wrongdoing and confesses it is joyful. Alternatively it is possible to grieve for one's own sins but rejoice in Christ . . . On this account he says, "Rejoice in the Lord." For this is nothing if you have received a life worthy of rejoicing . . . He is right to repeat himself. For since the events are naturally grievous, it is through the repetition that he shows that in all cases one should rejoice. (Homily on Philippians 15.4.4-7)

Philippians 4:5a

Marius Victorinus (died after A.D.361)

Forbearance is individual patience that observes due measure without straining beyond its station. When we live among strangers and live in a way commensurate with our lowliness, God will lift us up. So it is here; we do well to recognize our lowliness. "Therefore let your moderation," he says, "be known to all." Why does he tell us this? So that we may make a pleasing show here? No, but so that when Christ comes he may raise up our lowliness and exalt our moderation. (Epistle to the Philippians 4.4-5)

Ambrosiaster [pseudo-Ambrose] (about A.D. 370)

Paul wants all to profit by good examples. When their forbearance becomes apparent as their regular way of life, their works will shine forth. There will be nothing lacking in those who imitate their virtue. They will be blessed not only from doing good deeds but also by inspiring good deeds in others. (Epistle to the Philippians 4.7.1)

Philippians 4:5b

Ambrosiaster [pseudo-Ambrose] (about A.D. 370)

"The Lord," he says, "is at hand." They must be prepared and wakeful in prayer, giving thanks to God and putting away every worldly care, so as to hope and have before their

eyes what the Lord promises. What he promises is, as he teaches, the reason for giving him thanks. (Epistle to the Philippians 4.7.2)

Philippians 4:6a

Marius Victorinus (died after A.D.361)

“Do not be anxious about anything.” This means: Do not be concerned for yourselves. Do not give unnecessary thought to or be anxious about the world or worldly things. For all that is needful for you in this life God provides. And it will be even better in that life which is eternal. (Epistle to the Philippians 4.6)

Philippians 4:6b

St. John Chrysostom (died A.D. 407)

It is comforting to know that the Lord is at hand. . . . Here is a medicine to relieve grief and every bad circumstance and every pain. What is it? To pray and to give thanks in everything. He does not wish that a prayer be merely a petition but a thanksgiving for what we have received. . . . How can one make petitions for the future without a thankful acknowledgment of past things? . . . So one ought to give thanks for everything, even what seems grievous. That is the mark of one who is truly thankful. Grief comes out of the circumstances with their demands. Thanksgiving comes from a soul that has true insight and a strong affection for God. (Homily on Philippians 15.4.4-7)

Philippians 4:7

Marius Victorinus (died after A.D.361)

When the peace of God has come upon us we shall understand God. There will be no discord, no disagreement, no quarrelsome arguments, nothing subject to question. This is hardly the case in worldly life. But it shall be so when we have the peace of God, wherein all understanding shall be ours. For peace is the state of being already at rest, already secure. (Epistle to the Philippians 4.7)

St. John Chrysostom (died A.D. 407)

“The peace of God,” which he imparted to us, “passes all understanding.” For who could have expected and who could have hoped for such benefits? It transcends every human intellect and all speech. For his enemies, for those who hated him, for the apostates-for all these he did not refuse to give his only begotten Son, so as to make peace with them. . . . The peace which will preserve us is the one of which Christ says, “My peace I leave with you; my peace I give you” (John 14:27). For this peace passes all human understanding. How? When he sees that we should be at peace with enemies, with the unrighteous, with those who display contentiousness and hostility toward us, how does this not pass human understanding? (Homily on Philippians 15.4.4-7)