

Reading

Philippians 4: 4–9

The God of peace will be with you.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

- 4 I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord;
I repeat, what I want is your happiness.
- 5 Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near.
- 6 There is no need to worry;
but if there is anything you need, pray for it,
asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving,
7 and that peace of God,
which is so much greater than we can understand,
will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.
- 8 Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true,
everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure,
everything that we love and honour,
and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise.
- 9 Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me
and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do.
Then the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Looking at the Text

+ N-8 Philippians 4:4-9
The God of peace will be with you.

St Paul's letter to the Philippians

St Paul writes full of great joy alongside practical advice for everyday living and relationships. He says that our strength will come from living with joy, looking on the bright side, even when things happen that try to steal our joy. It's more than an emotional high. Rather, the joy Paul speaks of is very deep, all mixed in with any sorrow or difficulty that comes our way, helping us to live in hope. And this 'joy' is rooted in God's love and joy.

In this passage

We have the word 'happy' and 'happiness' describing a wonderful state of mind, knowing that God is very close, and we have nothing to fear or be anxious about. If we do have particular needs or concerns, St Paul says simply, 'pray for it', and then wait for the peace that God gives — a peace beyond words and understanding that will help us get through whatever it is we are facing. He urges us to fill our minds with good things! The challenge is how to sift through the vast array of communication demanding our attention, and consciously put aside anything that is draining of energy and stops us living our life together to the full. Concentrate on what is life-giving and rings true. This will mean listening carefully to one another.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.

Further Reflection

Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- What makes you really happy? What have been some of the happiest events or times for you?
- What makes you anxious? Can you share your thoughts and feelings?
- Think of a good marriage you know. What do you admire about it? What would you say are the really good things in a married life together?
- Perhaps talk together or write down anything you want to pray for — any particular needs for yourselves, your relationship, your families. And spend a short time in prayer together asking God for these things in a very simple, open way. You might like to finish praying the words:

May the peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. Amen.

- What do you like about this reading? Why might it be a good reading for your wedding?

Note about the Reading

+ = This reading selection is new to the *Order of Christian Marriage* and so is not found in the Lectionary (1983). It is included in the Scripture Readings on the Liturgy Office website.

These notes have been prepared by Caroline Dollard, Marriage & Family Life Project, CBCEW www.catholicfamily.org.uk This is one of a series of Liturgy Office resources to support the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Marriage © 2016 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales