**Relaxed Mental Attitude, No. 1 – BD11-02**

**Temperament**

We would like this morning to give you a little briefing as to what goes on here at Berean Memorial Church. All of you here have three factors that you deal with within your being. You have first of all a temperament. A temperament consists of certain qualities you are born with. You inherit these genetically from your parents. They’re determined by various factors on that level, of race, physical structure, and other backgrounds. You have these qualities of strengths and of weaknesses. These remain with you all the years of your life. Everybody here has a certain basic temperament. There are about four basic temperaments, and usually you’re a combination of some of these.

**Character**

Out of the temperament comes a character. Your character is the result of how your temperament factors have been influenced by your education, by your family background, by the influence of the society in which you live, and the factors to which you respond or to which you refuse to respond in that society. Now this is the real you. The character is the “you.” This consists of your mind, your will, and your emotions. So it is the area of your soul. It is the expression of your total being.

**Personality**

Your character is the real you, but your character is always expressed in a personality. And the personality is what other people see. Basically, in most people, the personality is an image which is not the same as your character. Now when you’re a Christian, the ideal is to come to a point where your personality is the same as your character.

**Bible Doctrine**

It is the Word of God that influences these areas of your soul, and this is what we’re interested in dealing with here in our services. We are trying to give you some information so that we can give you guidance to think the way God thinks, to choose the way God chooses, and to feel the way that God feels about things and people. And that comes from Bible doctrine. So your personality comes to the point where you’re not an image, a front, a pretender, but that you are a genuine open personality in reference to the character that is within you.

In this ministry it is our goal to help strip away the personality and to enable you to stand before yourself in psychological nudity so that you can look at yourself, not in this image that you have created for yourself, that you project to other people, but that you see yourself in respect to this character that you really are.

Now it is possible for you to sit in church where the Word of God is taught, and there are scores and scores and hundreds of Bible churches where you can sit and listen to the Word of God taught, but you are never stripped of your personality so that you stand in psychological nudity so you see yourself as you are. The Word of God is not projected so that you see yourself in the true light of your character. Instead it is presented in such a way that you can walk in and feel really sweet and comfortable about yourself with the personality that you’re projecting, and walk right out feeling just as sweet and comfortable about that.

Now a church that is doing its job for the people of God and is feeding the flock is working always on this personality. And it is presenting the Word of God in such a way that this (personality) is stripped away. This is why Paul says that they who will live godly, who will pursue a life of godliness, will receive the most intense kind of opposition.

Now we have many people (who previously attended our services) who are sitting in other churches in this town this morning because they were really happy and taken up with us while they were able to project their personality image that they wanted to project, which was a cover-up for the real character. But when in the course of the services, the Word was presented in such a way that all of this personality business was stripped away from them, and they saw the characters that they really were, and they knew that other people around them now understood them as the characters as they really were, they had two alternatives:

Find yourself a church where you can slip in with your personality and they’ll accept that sweetness and light front and that fake presentation; or else change your character by Bible doctrine, and get your character where it’s in line with your personality, and your personality in line with your character, and get both in line with the image of Christ within us which God the Holy Spirit is there to create, through the expression of the fruit of the spirit.

So, if you’re here this morning, this is what we’re doing. We’re going to have to face the fact that you have a temperament that you got from your parents and you’re stuck with it. We’re faced with the fact that you have a certain character and that it expresses itself in a certain personality. And we want to bypass your personality to present something to you so that you will deal with your character on these major levels.

It is the plan of God that each believer construct in his soul, with Bible doctrine, his own pentagon—a five sided defense structure, a spiritual maturity structure. The Bible speaks of this under the word “edification” in various phases: a building, an act of constructing, and a builder. This pentagon of the soul is designed to spearhead the Christian’s defense against satanic attack. We will probably be following the spiritual maturity structure study in the weeks immediately before us with an in-depth study of the workings of Satan. There is upon the people of God a strange depression concerning their attitude toward Satan, and it is amazing, if you just keep your eyes open, how much you see this.

Now there is a tremendous amount of satanic activity in our day. And it is coming in subtle ways. The devil never comes out to present himself in open conflict in an open way. He has to work as an undercover agent, or he’s doomed. No Christian in his right mind is going to deal with the devil on an open basis. And yet, Satan is directing the minds of Christians. He is directing the totality of the areas of their character—even Christians who don’t think the devil can get to them.

And the devil is made to be kind of a cute character. There’s a TV personality who has popularized a phrase that says, “The devil made me do it.” All of which makes a very light-hearted attitude toward the devil. “The devil made me do it.” Right away you don’t take him very seriously. You study Christology and you take God seriously. You take the person of Jesus Christ seriously. And within this congregation here in this auditorium there’s a lot of knowledge of Satan. We could put up a good Satanology this morning just by popping things that you could say right now and start listing them here on the scope. But I’m not so sure that you are deeply conscious of the reality of the presence of Satan in your life.

You’re conscious of the reality of the Lord’s presence, but you’re not too conscious of Satan. You pretty well forget him. You almost went all day yesterday without thinking about the devil once, didn’t you? You didn’t even blame him for anything. At least you could have gone around saying, “The devil made me do it.” That would have been something.

So we’re going to get into this because this is a big area. Because he is the commander-in-chief of the attack upon your soul. And we are in such a depressed ignorance of the activities of this character and of his wiles that Paul says we are not to be in ignorance of. We’re to know his techniques so that you know what God expects you to do. He expects you to put Satan to flight, that he would flee from you.

Now here’s the first step of that. If you don’t have a pentagon of defense in your soul in the form of a spiritual structure, you cannot meet the spiritual battles that you will meet in the Lord’s service. So this structure is to spearhead your defense and to spearhead your attack in the Lord’s service. This structure is the reflected glory of God in the believer.

There are several facets, five of them that we are looking at, in this pentagon structure, and that’s why we call it a pentagon. We have already looked at grace orientation which means that we move from the motivation that all that we are, all that we do, and all that we have is by the kindness of God. We take the position as believers that we live and we let live. We have also studied a mastery of the details of life. The details of life are the things of lesser importance in life. Master means a control over the things of lesser importance, and it is a position of putting doctrine first.

Now the third facet that we’re going to look at this morning is the facet of a relaxed mental attitude. And we’re sandwiching it in between these two segments of the pentagon structure because a relaxed mental attitude is hinged upon being grace oriented and upon having a mastery of the details of life. If you are not a grace oriented Christian, I can tell you right now that you’re not going to have a relaxed mental attitude. And if you are not a master of the details of your life, you’re not going to have a relaxed mental attitude. So these two are on each side as a structure supporting this particular facet.

Any believer who is out of phase with God will break down in his temper, in his nerves, and in his health. And we have an awful lot of nervous Christians floating around the people of God. The unbeliever has to sublimate. He has to substitute, so he goes to dope, to booze, and to sex, or to something else in order to meet the problems of a mind that’s all up-tight. Tense people are a drag so we tend to avoid them.

And you know what a tense person is. It’s the kind of a guy who sits at a baseball game, and if the catcher goes out to talk to the pitcher, he knows that they’re talking about him. Now that’s the kind of thing that we’re talking about in terms of a mental attitude, that you are in a situation where you cannot simply relax and flow with the movements of life about you, to take everything in stride. When you have an absence of a relaxed mental attitude, it’s evidenced in a physical and an emotional strain. No Christian should be an up-tight person. The Lord has made provision for us to be relaxed, and that provision, of course is Bible doctrine, which is the foundation here of the pentagon structure. Doctrine in the human spirit, full knowledge of the Word of God—truth which you have learned and you have gone positive toward.

1 Peter 5:7 says, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” God has made provision for you to be relaxed. The faith rest technique has been provided. The faith rest technique teaches us that God has done the hardest thing in saving us. The hardest thing was providing salvation. He has given us that. Now there is nothing He cannot take care of beyond that point, and it is His intention to do it.

So what do we mean by a relaxed mental attitude? A mind which is dominated by divine viewpoint. A mind which applies pertinent doctrine, promises and principles, to a situation of life. It is complete freedom, and here’s the core of this: A relaxed mental attitude is complete freedom from mental attitude sins. Complete freedom from mental attitude sins: anger, pride, hatred, jealousy, envy, lust for things, lust for power, or lust for praise. These are all mental attitude sins. If these form part of your thinking, you’re not going to have a relaxed mind.

In Romans 14:23, the apostle Paul refers to things which he calls “not of faith.” These too are a type of mental attitude sin. Romans 14:23 says, “And he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatever is not of faith is sin.” These are: worry—worry is not of faith; self-pity is not of faith; doubts; guilt feelings; unbelief; discontent; competition; jockeying for position, and maneuvering around. All of these are not of faith.

Our God knows what we face in life. He makes victory possible, and that’s His intention. It is not His intention that we should fall in battle, but that we should stand. In Hebrews 2:18, the Holy Spirit says, “For in that He Himself (the Lord Jesus) has suffered, being tempted, He is able to help them that are tempted.” Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” The Lord understands our problems with temptation, with sins, with disappointments, and with heartaches. And God’s plan is for us to experience victory. Matthew 11:28-29 expresses that spirit when he says, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest in your souls.”

So we’re trying to talk about this particular phase of our character—our mind, and having a relaxed quality in that mind. The apostle Paul is an excellent example of what we’re talking about. In the book of Acts, near the end of the book in chapter 20, in verse 24, Paul describes some of the things that he has experienced in his ministry, and his attitude toward them. In Acts 20:24 Paul says, “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy; and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

Now that’s a great thing to say after this list of things that he lists here that he has suffered and gone through, and say, “None of these things move me.” He’s talking about the attitude of his mind. For three years after Paul’s conversion, he lived in the Arabian Desert. He was functioning under the grace system that God has provided for perception of spiritual truth through the learning of doctrine, and this by direct revelation to him. He was not receiving this out of the written Scriptures yet, but by direct revelation. For three years he was taught directly, and on the basis of the doctrine he received, he built the pentagon of a spiritual maturity structure in his soul.

Then he went to Jerusalem. In Galatians 1:18-19, after this period of developing maturity, for three years after his conversion, he goes to Jerusalem. Galatians 1:18 says, “And after three years I went up to Jerusalem and bode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none except James and the Lord’s brother.” Now the response, you remember, was something less than enthusiast on the part of the Jerusalem Christians. When Paul showed up, the Christians were guilty of a breakdown in their relaxed mental attitude because they were guilty of the sins of fear and of doubt. Acts 9:26 says, “And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he tried to join himself to the disciples (to the Christians in the local congregation), but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

So here’s Paul who has gone through some very dramatic experiences; realized how completely wrong he was; and that he who was so zealously religious was opposing God himself. Now he has come to a knowledge of the truth. He goes out into the desert and he gets intense Bible doctrine training. He comes back with a mature spiritual structure in his soul, and he contacts the leaders of the local assembly in Jerusalem, the headquarters of the church ministry. He tries to associate himself with the local believers and they reject him.

Now he knows an awful lot of the Word of God. You want to remember that it was to the apostle that the basic truth concerning the church was revealed, as well as the basic truth concerning. Now the others knew about grace and the others knew about church, but they didn’t know the full blossomed truth concerning the grace of God in this age, nor did they have the full picture on the role of the church in this age of grace. This revelation was given to Paul.

Now he came with something that none of the rest of them had, and instead they’re cruel toward him. They’re reserved toward him. Now how should he react? Well he didn’t respond with indignation or a spirit of getting even. Instead he left the cool saints in the Lord’s hands. Now the Lord sent him a grace person named Barnabas. We read that Barnabas took Paul and he introduced him to the saints, and to the apostles—to the leaders. And the relaxed mental attitude of Barnabas and of Paul together, we read, caused people to glorify God.

Galatians 1:23-24 says, “But they had heard only he who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed, and they glorified God in me.” Even though they knew his reputation, as a result of Barnabas’s introduction and commendation, because Barnabas had a relaxed mental attitude toward this former persecutor, he was brought into the place where, because of Paul, God was glorified.

Now (there is an) alternative to a relaxed mental attitude when people reject you. You have been rejected, you have been rebuffed, and you have come with something that you really had to offer. You have come with insights and understandings to people who were actually dunderheads when it came to spiritual things. You move all the time with people who are big church activity members someplace. They don’t know what’s up from down.

Like one lady said to me the other day. She had gone through a sad experience in her life. “I had no idea how Bible doctrine would stand me in good stead, but it carried me through this thing that I had experienced.”

So you know what you’re dealing with. Yet when you come to people and say, “I want to show you something. I want to open doors to you,” you’re rebuffed. Well if you don’t have a relaxed mental attitude, you sit down and cry. Anybody here ever cry about being rebuffed? You really did something great. You had something to offer, and they turned their nose up you, and you cried. Any crybabies here this morning? Anybody pout? Anybody get a poochy lower lip because somebody rejected you? Anybody pitying himself? Any of you ever plan to get even with these dunderheads? Any of you ever tell them, “OK, if you don’t want to hear the gospel, you go to hell. It serves you right.” And now you’re kind of glad they’re going too.

Well without a relaxed mental attitude, that’s what you’re going to come up with, and you’ll probably say it to them just about like that. Without a relaxed mental attitude you will respond with hostility. Hostility expresses itself in two ways. With violence, such that you’re punching somebody in the nose. Or it expresses itself by withdrawal. You cool him. You isolate him. You freeze him. But it’s hostile in both senses. It has open expression or withdrawal. Anybody who’s cooling, freezing, or isolating has got a fracture in his relaxed mental attitude or he wouldn’t be doing it. The facet of a relaxed mental attitude causes others to look upon God and glorify Him when they see that in us.

Well Barnabas and Pau, because of their attitudes, very naturally struck up a working team. And we know from the Word of God that they spent a year teaching doctrine in Antioch. And the church, we’re told, grew numerically because God was getting ready now to expand Christianity, so He was expanding that particular local church in great numerical strength.

These men were brought down to Jerusalem to clarify a big issue. Some people had slipped into the Jerusalem church, and they were telling the Gentile Christians, “If you people want to go to heaven, you not only have to believe the gospel, but you have to start living under the Jewish law system. So the sent Paul and Barnabas down to say, “Now listen, we’re going to tell you how this is,” and to teach some doctrine of grace, because Paul was the repository for the full concept of grace. The result was that they clarified this issue in Acts 15—their clarification on the place of salvation by grace without living by any Jewish law system way of life.

Then in Acts 13, we’re told that the two men teamed up in order to go out on the first missionary tour. They took an associate with them, a nephew of Barnabas, named John Mark. Acts 13, beginning at verse 2: “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them.’ And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed unto Cilicia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.” Verse 5 says, “And when they were at Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had also John (that is, John Mark) as their helper.

When they got to Pamphylia, in Acts 13:13: “Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos and they came to Perga and Pamphylia, and John, departed from them, returned to Jerusalem.” When they got to Pamphylia, John Mark had had enough of this missionary touring, and he cut out and went back home to Jerusalem. Now when that happened, the apostle Paul lost his relaxed mental attitude, and he should not have. But he did. He lost his attitude of mind that he could not leave with the Lord, and in the Lord’s hands, this traitorous act on the part of John Mark.

He was a deserter. There was no doubt about it. He should not have left them. He should have stayed with the company. He had committed himself. He should have been a man of honor and kept his word, and have continued through the hardship, whatever it took in completing this tour of duty, but he didn’t. And Paul, on the other hand, should have left him in the Lord’s hands. But in Acts 15:38, we read that when it came time to revisit these churches on the second missionary journey, Barnabas again wanted to take Mark, and Mark was willing to go. But verse 38 says, “But Paul thought it not good to take him with them who departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work.”

Now (there is something that) is not uncommon for Christians, for reasons of personal weakness of temperament (that they were born with), which has then been influenced by a variety of backgrounds that, in their own experience in their own lives, had created a character—that these Christians have certain flaws of character which have not been corrected by a positive response to the truth of the Word of God. So that they have personality problems that are the reflex of character problems. Therefore it is not uncommon for Christians who are in the Lord’s service to come to a point where they phase out. And it is very difficult to see somebody who is an old workhorse to phase out, and for people to accept the fact that now they have come to circumstances in their life, or certain weaknesses in their temperament, are taking over.

They’re disappearing from the operation, and they’re popping up, like John Mark did, someplace else. They’re leaving one church and they’re going to another church. And instead of taking a relaxed mental attitude, and recognizing that they’re dealing with the weaknesses of their own temperament, and that they must be left in the Lord’s hands, we tend to get very uptight about it, and we have a temptation to write them off. That’s what Paul did with Mark. Not realizing that God may lead them through some hard times and they may come back to their senses. Or that they may come into a different structure of service where God again can use them.

But a relaxed mental attitude will keep the doors of service (opportunities for service) open to Christians who are disoriented in their thinking. It is not uncommon for Christians who have been active to get way off in left field and get disoriented in their thinking and to cut out to go someplace else. And you must let them go with a relaxed attitude of God’s blessing upon them, hopeful that, like Mark, they may yet prove to be useful to the Lord in some capacity.

Now the team was to revisit the churches that they had established on the first missionary tour. The contention became very great between Barnabas and Paul over incorporating Mark. It seemed that Paul had forgotten the relaxed mental attitude that Barnabas had exercised toward him when the Jerusalem Christians were rejecting a man in whom alone resided the knowledge of the grace of God and of the full truth about the church.

So in Acts 15:39-40 we read about the team splitting up. The contention was so sharp between them that “they departed asunder one from the other. So Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, and Saul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren unto the grace of God.” So you have the picture of the team being split up.

Why was the team split up? Here was a winning team that had gone on the first missionary journey and had established Christianity all over the area of the Roman Empire that they had traveled through. It was the lack of a relaxed mental attitude on the part of the apostle Paul that broke up the team. In many groups, many teams, effective teams of Christian workers are broken up because somebody on the team breaks down in this facet of his maturity. His spiritual maturity facet of a relaxed mental attitude breaks down and he flakes off. Here’s a going, winning, functioning team, and Satan says, “I’m at you.”

I want to tell you something just in preview here about the devil. He can affect this area of your soul—your will, and he can affect your emotions very dramatically, but he cannot get at your mind unless us say, “Let’s go.” Your mentality is the freewill decision of your own being. He cannot enter the mind—he cannot take hold of the mind until you are receptive to him through your old sin nature. Therefore, this is what Satan is shooting at. He is forever after your mind. That’s why mental attitude sins are the worst kind of sins, because that’s where he’s functioning, and this is what destroys everything else about you. It is Satan who is after the relaxed mental attitude of Christians who will permit him to strike at their mind because the Christian who loses his relaxed mental attitude is going to fragment off from the Lord’s people. He is going to find himself some place where the weaknesses of his temperament are tolerated and the weaknesses of his character find expression. There are many Christians who have sat in Berean Memorial Church and they have been held in check for many years in certain areas of their weaknesses because they had vested interests like their children coming along, or something else. But once that was removed, they could fragment off and move off in the direction that they never conquered within the weaknesses of their own being, and found themselves a place where they could be comfortable with that weakness and with that temperament flaw.

But in the case of the apostle Paul, I’m happy to say that he returned to a relaxed mental attitude. 1 Corinthians 9:5 tells us that he served effectively in an unmarried state. He accepted this as God’s plan for him though it was his right to get married. It was not in the providence of God for him. He had the relaxed mental attitude to view God’s work as his wife, and his converts as his family.

He faced dangers and hardships and persecutions, but he held no grudges for all of this. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 gives you the list of the things that he suffered at the hands of his friends and at the hands of his enemies. But through it all there was no bitterness. His relaxed attitude of mind carried him through.

**2 Timothy 2:9 – 4:18**

He was imprisoned and he was chained unjustly. It was a sad thing for this man, who was so energetic and active, to be chained and to be imprisoned unjustly. And yet, again, his relaxed mental attitude came through. In 2 Timothy 2:9 he says, “For which I suffered trouble as an evildoer even unto bonds, but the Word of God is not bound.” He recognized that while he was in chains, the Word was not in chains. Some of the greatest books we have in the Bible came out of the times of imprisonment for the apostle Paul

There was no self-pity. There were no outcries of injustice because he saw all of this as temporary. In Romans 8:18, Paul says, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Paul knew doctrine and he knew that the world does not like a person that pursues godliness. In 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul says, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Another way of saying that is that all who will strip the personality front that people put on themselves and get down to the real structure of their souls, whether there is a maturity or not, these will despise you. These will react against you. These are the people who sit in church and gnash their teeth in negative volition toward what they have heard from the Word of God. Because they cannot contend with the Word, they start attacking the preacher. Even if he is the crummiest character in the world, that has nothing to do with the objectivity of the Word of truth. If it is God’s Word, and if it is confirmed as God’s Word, then it stands, no matter where it came from.

So Paul knew doctrine, and he knew that the world didn’t like it and that carnal Christians don’t like it. He had a relaxed mental attitude in the midst of suffering for Godliness but he looked forward to the eternity in heaven. His attitude was that he belonged to the Lord, so any suffering he experienced was the Lord’s problem, as for Romans 8:28 of all things working together for divine good.

He faced execution under the imprisonment by Nero. In 2 Timothy 4:6-7, Paul says, “For I am now ready to be offered. The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.” Those are not the words of a man who is screaming, “Injustice!” or who is screaming complaints of how he is being mistreated. That’s the expression of a man with a relaxed mental attitude right in the face of death itself. He took the attitude that when and how he was to die was the Lord’s business. 2 Timothy 4:8 says, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me that day, not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing.”

Paul’s relaxed mental attitude enabled him to accept the fact that his friends were deserting him, and it also enabled him to restore John Mark to service with him. In 2 Timothy 4:10-11 says, “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”

When your friends desert you and your former deserters come back on the team, it takes a relaxed mental attitude to deal with both. When people dealt him ill like the dirty dealings of Alexander the coppersmith, the apostle Paul, because of his relaxed mental attitude, took the dirty dealings of Alexander and committed him to the Lord, which was the worst thing he could have done as far as Alexander was concerned because God could get at him where Paul could not.

1 Timothy 1:20 says, “Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.” Then, 2 Timothy 4:14, concerning this Alexander, says, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works.” So in 2 Timothy, he warned the believers, “Keep an eye out for Alexander the coppersmith. He’ll do you in as a Christian.” He warned the believers while maintaining a relaxed mental attitude toward leaving God deal with him.

He prayed for the people who deserted him during his trial. In 2 Timothy 4:16 Paul says, “At my first defense, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me, and I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.” That takes an attitude of a relaxed mind to say, “I’ll pray for those who should have stood by me but they deserted me in the face of the imperial government of Nero when I needed them on that court day.

It took a relaxed mental attitude for him to rely on the Lord for strength during the trial. In 2 Timothy 4:17-18 he says, “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me (when the others had deserted) him, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” His last letter never to leave the imprisonment or to see freedom again. Paul’s life was carried by his relaxed mental attitude.

So what Paul was saying in effect, dear Christian, is, “Why should you as a Christian have an attitude of mind that’s uptight instead of one that’s relaxed with perfect peace?” Philippians 4:6-7 says it for him: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

We’re talking about having a quality of peace in your being so that all of life is taken in stride. All of life is a victorious situation for you. All of life fits together because you leave it in the Lord’s hands to put it together. So are you out meeting the issues of your daily living by sweating it out? How much are you sweating out, and that’s the way you meet life—by sweating it out? Where’s that youthful exuberance and joy of living that you once knew? Do you sadly look back and say, “Boy, there was a time when there was a youthful exuberant joy of living that was my experience and I don’t have it anymore?” When did God ever tell you that the time was to come in your life when you were no longer to have exuberant joyful living as in the days of your youth?

I would commend that you move rapidly toward creating what is going to be an eternal equality in you someday, and that is a relaxed mental attitude. And that you complete this pentagon of defense in your soul as quickly as possible because this is the only way that life is worth living—with a relaxed mental attitude. If you have an orientation to grace, and you have mastered the details of your life, and doctrine takes the proper place where there is a foundation to build on, you can go to a relaxed mental attitude.

Now there is much more to say about this than we have said. This is a very fascinating phase of the pentagon. But I have to leave it with you to go from there. Think through how Paul demonstrated again and again how he failed at one point because of his mind being uptight, and how he conquered most of the time because of his relaxed outlook. God has done the hardest thing for you. He will now do the best for you in His plan. Now you can rest by faith in that. That’s your basis of a relaxed mental attitude.

If you’re not a Christian here this morning, you’re living in a world that’s surrounded by tension, by pent up emotions, by rebellion, by frustrations, by crime, and by dope addition. You’re living in short in a world that has gone mad. And people choose to be ignorant of the plan that God has for them. You enter the plan of God at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him, and His death is spiritual death on the cross for us, shall not perish but have everlasting life. In John 3:36 we read, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.

Now the question is, “Have you believed the Son or do you say, ‘He’s a liar?’” If you believe what Christ has done on that cross for you, you have entered eternal life, and you have the basis for a relaxed mental attitude. If you reject it, your life is going to be guilt. It’s going to be frustration. It’s going to be sublimation. It’s going to be competition. It’s going to be all the tensions and all the conflicts that the world experiences. But if you believe the gospel this morning, you will remove defeatism as an attitude from your living as well as from your dying. Please remember that God’s grace covers not only our living but He gives us grace to die by. And a relaxed mental attitude is the first step to get ready to die. But it is the foundation of exuberant youthful living in the meantime—grace orientation and mastery of the details of life expressed through a relaxed mental attitude.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971