

WEEKLY SERMON

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The P48 Test

When I'm leading worship and reach the end of a service I like to finish with these words of encouragement and a challenge which I call the P48 test. It's a short reading from Philippians chapter 4: 4-9. I think Paul's teaching is as relevant now as it's ever been and is a great way of summarising the Christian lifestyle we should be trying to achieve. We leave worship on a positive note rejoicing in God's love and care.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Then we come to the nub of the P48 test, Philippians chapter 4 verse 8. This challenge came from a visiting Bible translator from Whitcliffe Bible college that we supported in my last parish. And the challenge is, having read the verse, to write in large letters P48 on a card which you then place on the top of your TV set and Computer and then try to follow the teaching.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.

As I have said, this really is a challenge and chances are, if you follow it, your viewing will be very restricted and your TV and internet off more than on. Paul lived in a very different age but nevertheless faced the same challenges as us and he encouraged his followers to emulate him.

9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

So what about me, have I got the P48 card? The answer is no but I do have the remote control close to hand, Do I slip up occasionally, sadly yes, am I trying to do better, yes and one day hope to thank Paul for his great piece of teaching.

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