



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion  
19 – The Lord Is At Hand

11/12 @6:30  
Grace Group at  
3513 Northpointe  
Dr

11/14 @6:00  
Grace Group at  
2070 Corley Dr

11/14 @6:30  
Grace Group at  
1710 Mariposa Dr

**ICE BREAKER:** Are you more of a “big softie” or someone who shows “tough love”?

**REVIEW:** Was there anything covered or said on Sunday that you had any questions or comments about?

**READ:** Philippians 4:4-7

The longer I am a pastor, the more I find myself saying the same 5 or so things over and over again. One of the things I often talk about is what I like to call “hinge passages”. In case you have not heard me talk about these here’s the definition: A hinge passage goes both with what came before, and also what comes after. Just like a hinge is part of both the door and the wall, so too some passages go with the thoughts proceeding *and* following. In our text for today we see a great example when Paul says: “The Lord is at hand”. Understanding both sides of this helps us understand the passage.

The first thought comes by seeing this as the natural follow up to what has come before. In the NIV (don’t tell Lawrence!) all of verse 5 reads like this: “let your *gentleness* be evident to all. The Lord is near”. So part of what Paul is saying is that the Lord being near is somehow connected to our gentleness being on display for all to see. In fact, the closeness of Jesus is what moves and motivates us to live the lives that Paul is calling us to here. By way of example: In High School I had a history teacher who was a good, but strict, teacher. And one day he had to run to the office for something. And when leaving he warned us: just because I am leaving does not mean behaviors should change. And as soon as he left, behaviors DEFINITELY changed, but just for a moment. Because when he came back (aka, being “near”) everyone quieted down (everyone except for David... but that is a story for another day). As parents we see this all the time, kids behave better when under close supervision. Paul’s point here is then that we should have this motivation to live gentle lives knowing that Jesus is *always* close!

**DISCUSS:** In what ways does knowing Jesus is “at hand” motivate our holy living? How can we ensure that we are living like he is at hand all the time?

But there is more going on in this passage, because we can also see how this connects with the *next* thought too. Here we should read it like this: “The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything...” (ESV, you can tell Lawrence about this one!) Here the presence of the Lord is not a correcting thought, but a comforting one. Why is it that we can live without anxious thoughts, or trouble in our heart? Well, we have a friend who sticks closer than a brother (The Lord is at hand); We have a great high priest who intercedes for us all the time (the Lord is at hand); Because he himself suffered when he was tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted (the Lord is at hand); We have hope for the future because Jesus said he would return (the Lord is at hand)! Our constant source of hope and comfort and peace is knowing that we serve the resurrected and living and close Lord. He will help us, care for us, love us and more, and not in a distant and remote way, but in a close and intimate and personal way. I know it sounds hard, because there is a lot to be anxious over (bills, kids, health, etc). But do not be anxious, for the Lord is at hand!

**DISCUSS:** In what ways does knowing Jesus is “at hand” give you great comfort? What does it look like for us to share this comfort with the anxious world around us?