



2016  
2017

Summer 2017

## **Philippians 4:8**

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.

### **Reflection**

Welcome to our Summer Series for a A

Year With Jesus. I hope you enjoyed our time in Matthew's gospel and that it was as much a blessing for you as it was for me. Over Summer, for the next six weeks or so, our daily devotions will be a little shorter, and we'll be doing just five a week to keep in step with the busy holiday season. The passages we've chosen are some of our favourite verses from the Bible, great verses that many people have committed to memory. Today's verse comes from Philippians 4:8 which says,

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.

I'll read it again, perhaps you'd like to try and memorise it. Philippians 4:8

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.

I love this verse and I often return to it when life gets hard, or busy or overwhelming. You know, many people make the mistake, even as Christians, of thinking that the church is all light and the world is all darkness, but this simply isn't true. The world belongs to God and everything in it (1 Cor 10:26), he created it and famously in

Genesis 1:31 pronounced that everything he created was ‘very good.’ This means that even despite sin having marred God’s perfect creation there is still much in our culture, in our human nature and in the physical world that surrounds us that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. And instead of getting frustrated, overwhelmed and depressed at all that has gone wrong in our world or in our personal lives, this passage of Scripture strongly encourages us to think deeply about such things as these.

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things.

Christianity isn't a world-denying religion, it's a world transforming religion. There is so much to celebrate and enjoy in the world around us. Even despite our sin and fallenness, in God's common grace he has surrounded us with much that is noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. There's so much joy to be had in stopping for moment to breathe in the fresh morning air or simply taking time enough to notice God's artistry in a sunrise, or in the way the clouds in the sky are never arranged in quite the same way. There is so much happiness available to us in simply conversing with a four year child. And then there's art, music, architecture, animals great and small, a good novel, giving of your time in the aid of others, doing something kind, or sim-

ply walking hand in hand down the street with your wife.

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Give praise to God in these moments. Meditate over them and promote them in our world. Our faith isn't world-denying, it's world redeeming; we're to embrace the good and promote it, and crowd out the bad with it, as we seek to transform the world through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Think & Pray**

I'm not sure where this passage of Scripture finds you today. Sometimes circumstances combine to make thinking positive thoughts like these very hard. But did you know that Paul wrote these words from a prison cell? Sometimes it takes a verse of Scripture like ours today to lift us up out of dark places. If you're doing it tough right now, like Paul was, instead of dwelling on what is making your life so hard, why not try today to seek out and celebrate,

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.

Think about such things right now. Enjoy

them. Cherish them. Praise God for them.  
Fill your life with them. And thank our Father in heaven for them in prayer.