

The Peace of God

by Anton Bosch

The Lord is near, and we should not be anxious because He is in control of everything, but rather we should pray in everything and trust in His sovereignty.

Duration: 44:40

Scripture: Philippians 4:3, Philippians 4:5-6

Topics: "Anxiety And Peace", "Trust In God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not being anxious but instead praying with thanksgiving, trusting in God's nearness and His ability to provide peace that surpasses understanding. It highlights the need to focus on gratitude, prayer, and trust in God's control over our circumstances, even in times of uncertainty and fear.

Transcript

...whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to all men, the Lord is at hand.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, my brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.

The things which you have learnt and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. So, verse 5, we closed on that verse last week, and you'll remember that he says that the Lord is at hand. And in saying that the Lord is at hand, he's really saying two things.

He has two very specific things in mind. This is not a confusing situation, it's not, but he's specifically using a double meaning. The first is that the Lord is near.

The word, the Lord at hand, in this translation is not a good translation. The best translations would say the Lord is near. That's literally what the Greek says.

So he is near in two senses. He is near to us. He is not far away.

He is not distant to us. He is close by. And then he is near in his return.

So he is coming soon. And so those are the two aspects. And so he says then that the Lord is close and his coming is close.

Now he connects that with the previous statement that he has just made in verse 5. Let your gentleness be known to all men. And also before that he spoke about rejoicing. So why do we rejoice and why should our gentleness be known to all men? Because the Lord is near.

But that word also couples to the next verses that we're going to deal with this morning. The Lord is near and you can almost insert, therefore be anxious for nothing. So the basis on which we should not be anxious is because the Lord is near.

Now I think that this is a very appropriate word for us this morning. I think that there is a lot of anxiety going on in the world today and particularly in America when we consider the political situation and the threat of terrorism and the uncertainty in terms of financial things. We really don't know what's happening to the world.

Everything seems to be turned upside down. And so people are anxious. People are fearful for their jobs.

They're fearful about their investments. They're fearful about the political future. Fearful about what America is going to look like in ten years and twenty years' time.

All sorts of things that concern people these days. And so Paul's word here to us is very appropriate. And so be anxious for nothing.

Be anxious for nothing. And remember that very important and very deep theological word, nothing. So not the big things or the small things.

Don't be anxious about those things. Why should we not be anxious about those things? Because the Lord is near. The Lord is not distant from us.

The Lord is with us. He is in us. He knows our hearts.

He knows our situation. Now you'll see that this is a command. Remember we spoke about that last week, that we have in the New Testament more commands, three times more commands than we have in the Old Testament.

And that these commands are equal to those in the Old Testament. They are not just good suggestions. They are not just good ideas.

These are things that we must do. And you'll see that this is a straight-out command. Don't be anxious.

Be anxious for nothing. Now we say, well, that's easier said than done. It's very hard not to worry when things are not going well in my life.

It's very hard not to worry about our children and our grandchildren. It's very hard not to worry when our health is failing, how finances aren't what they should be, when our relationships are not working out. It's hard not to worry about these things.

But he begins by saying, the Lord is close. In other words, we are not on our own. Now I think that when Paul uses these words, he clearly has the words of the Lord Jesus in mind in Matthew chapter 6. And so let's go to Matthew chapter 6 and see, because you may have noticed that the writers of the New Testament, when they teach in the New Testament, they use this kind of a shorthand.

And I was noticing that this morning as Henry was speaking about the book of Acts, how that Paul quotes from the Old Testament. And I can't remember in the passage that we were looking at, I think there were four or five or six different quotes from the Old Testament. And when he quotes them, he is simply just putting in a part of a verse.

And sometimes there's like three verses from the Old Testament put into one verse in the New Testament, from three different places in the Old Testament. So he just combines them. And really what he is doing is he is assuming that we're able to fill in the blanks.

And so we understand the context in which the quotation comes from, what the rest of the quotation says. And so he just gives us a few parts of the verse, and he expects us to be able to remember the rest of it. And I think that Paul is doing the same thing here.

When he says, be anxious for nothing, he clearly now has in mind the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 6. And so let me read this, and it's a long reading, but I think it's important that we just get the words of the Lord Jesus. And of course, this is part of the Sermon on the Mount, verse 25, Matthew 6, 25. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor your body, what you will put on.

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, how they neither toil nor spin. And yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For after all these things the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. And so Jesus is making a point here, and he's saying that God cares for the grass which has no value, that is there and it looks good today and tomorrow it's thrown into the fire. He cares for the birds.

He cares about the lilies of the field. If he cares about those things, does he not care for us? And we say, well, of course he does. But really, does he care for the birds? Or do these things just continue? Do they just live and die and, you know, sort of a natural cycle, and God is really not involved in all of that? He set everything in motion, and so everything is now running down, as it were, as the species are dying out, and all of these things are happening.

Well, if we go to Matthew chapter 10, you find that Jesus gets a little bit more specific on this. And in Matthew 10, it's in the context of persecution. So in Matthew 10 he is saying, don't be concerned about being persecuted, and don't be concerned if they kill your body.

Now, he is literally addressing that fear of persecution, and it's a very real fear for many people in the world today, and the time may come in this country, even, that it becomes a very real cause of fear for those who are true believers. But he is saying that's really the most extreme. What is the worst that anyone can do to you? What's the worst thing that can happen to you? Well, they can kill you.

Everything else is less than that. Nothing, that's the ultimate. Now, he's saying, then, don't worry about that extreme, and if you don't have to worry about that, then don't worry about any of the other little things, about what I'm going to wear tomorrow, or what about this and that, and the other little thing.

Now, in Matthew chapter 10, he goes into more specifics. In verse 28, do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin, and not one of them falls to the ground apart from your father's will, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered? Do not fear, therefore.

You are of more value than many sparrows. Now, the problem with these verses is that they are so common. We know them off by heart, probably.

We've heard them so many times, and we take it with a pinch of salt. We tend to say, well, this is hyperbole. This is just overstating something.

But I don't believe that he is overstating something to make a point. I believe that he is being very specific and very practical and very real in what he is saying. And so, first of all, he says, are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? A copper coin is a sixteenth of a penny.

So it's very little. It's a sixteenth then of a day's wage. And I don't know how to translate that.

Probably seven dollars, maybe. So two are sold for that. But if you go to the Gospel of Luke, he says five sparrows are sold for two coins.

So you get two for one, you get five for two. In other words, they are so cheap that if you buy two coins worth, you get one free. That's literally the economics here.

So these things are really disposable. They are of no value whatsoever. And obviously, people bought them because they would eat them.

And so he's saying, two sparrows are sold for a coin. They are of very little value. Over 13 million birds, they tell me, die in North America every day.

Now that's a staggering number. 13 million birds die every day. That's just the course of nature.

And yet he makes a very specific statement about this. And he says that not one of them dies outside of his will. Notice he's not saying outside of his knowledge.

You see, we can handle that. We say, well, yeah, he knows everything. He knows about every bird that ever dies.

But Jesus is saying more than that. He's saying not one of them dies without God's will. So God knows exactly, and he is in control of what is going on.

Now, we're not by that saying that God causes evil to happen. There's a teaching that we don't agree with that goes that way. We don't believe God causes evil.

But we believe that God is in control of the world, that nothing happens outside of his will. So if the dying of birds are in his will, is what is happening in Washington today in his will? And I'm not making a statement of a political nature. I'm not saying that whoever's in power is necessarily his will.

But it is his permitted will. He's allowing it because God is doing something. And he is doing something not necessarily with America, hear me.

But he's doing something with his church. He's dealing with you and I. And one of the things that he is teaching us is not to rely on the arm of flesh, but to put our trust in the Lord. Not to seek an earthly kingdom, but to seek a heavenly kingdom.

And I believe that that is something that he is doing very close to his return. So he's getting us ready and he's getting us to begin to look up instead of looking to Washington or to London or to Pretoria or wherever else. That our confidence is in him.

So nothing is outside of his will. If birds die are in his will, and folk we need to understand this, then whatever crisis you're facing in your life, whatever difficulty you're facing, is that not in his will? We know Romans 8, 28 so well, and yet we just know it. We don't really know it.

All things, there's that very deep theological word again, all things work together for the good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose. So God is working everything in your life together for your good. And remember, I don't want to get too sidetracked on Romans 8, 29, but remember that that is not the way that most Christians quote that verse.

So in the sense that, well, you know, I had this misfortune, something went wrong in my life, but God has something better for me. You know, I lost my job, so God's got a better job for me. I, you know, I totaled my car, God's got a better car for me.

I don't believe that that's what he has in mind, because the next verse tells us what his purpose is. The next verse says that he has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his son. So he has called us in verse 28.

Verse 29 says he's predestined us. In other words, what has he called us for? For what purpose did he call us? That we become like Jesus. So everything that's happening in your life right now today is for one purpose, and that is that you and I become more like Jesus.

And so he is allowing things to happen, and he's allowing them that we may become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. And so all things work together. If the sparrow's dying are in his will, then whatever crisis and whatever problem, whatever threat you're facing is within his will.

Now let's go back to Matthew chapter 10. I just want to finish on verse 30. Again, a verse that most preachers say is hyperbole.

You remember what hyperbole is? It's overstating something to try and make a point. It's not like fisherman stories, but it's really trying to make a statement. I don't believe that this is hyperbole.

I don't believe that he is overstating a point. I believe he's making a statement of fact. The very hairs of your head are numbered.

It means exactly that. Then he said, well, you know, that's useless information. I don't think any of us keep track of--well, I hope you don't-- of how many hairs you have on your head.

And so every time you have a shower, you go to the drain and try and pick out how many did I lose today? Okay, now I have so many. In fact, I have a note in my margin here that the average has between 90,000 and 150,000 individual hairs. Now I know there's some of us who have less than that, and some have more.

But between 90,000 and 150,000 individual hairs on our head. And we say, well, nobody keeps track of that. And in fact, just the fact that somebody knows that number, we say, well, you know, who's got the time to go and do a survey and count how many hairs are on people's heads? But God knows it.

Not because God fills His mind, and I'm speaking in a human way, that God fills His mind with useless knowledge. But again, God knows everything, including stuff that's useless. Stuff that is unimportant to us, like how much hair we have.

So if He knows that, the point that Jesus makes is, does He not know our fears? Does He not know our anxieties? Does He not know our needs? Does He not know what goes on in the deepest recesses of our hearts? So He knows everything. And He doesn't just know in a dispassionate way. We can have knowledge about stuff, but it doesn't affect us.

We know about the fact that more Christians are being persecuted for the faith today in the world than are not persecuted. We know that there are Christians who are suffering tremendously, physically and emotionally. Others are dying right now, today, for the faith.

We know those things, but they don't affect us. Somehow they're outside of us. They're far away from us until it comes near.

But for God, our issues are not far away from Him. Remember, if we go back to Philipians, He is near. He is not just near to us geographically or spiritually, but He is near to us emotionally.

He knows where we're at. He understands our situation. He understands our need.

And not only does He understand, but He feels. Because that's the whole point of Hebrews, that we have a faithful high priest who in all points was tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And so He understands our frustrations.

He understands our weaknesses. He understands our temptation. He understands our heartache.

He understands our anxieties, because He was in our situation. Remember, Ezekiel speaks about the fact that the prophet says that He sat where they sat. He went where the people of Israel were in captivity, and He sat where they sat.

Jesus came and He sat where we sit. He was in your shoes and in mine. And so God doesn't just know the stuff about your life and mine in an academic way, that He's just far off and He just knows these things.

No, He is intimately touched with the feelings of our weaknesses. He feels with us. He is near.

And so on that basis then, Paul says, let us not be or don't be anxious. So we're not anxious because He is near, because He knows, because He understands, and because He cares. Now the next thing that he says then is, rather than being anxious, this is what you need to do.

Now we know what we do. We worry. We worry.

And I worry more than anyone else. I worry about my own issues and my own situations. I worry about my kids, about my grandkids.

I worry about every one of you. I literally lie awake at night worrying about those things. And I have to remind myself, and even last night again, I had to remind myself in the middle of the night of the very message I'm preaching to you this morning.

And what are we supposed to do? Be anxious for nothing, but in everything. Notice again that very big word, everything. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything.

So he's contrasting these two things on purpose. Don't worry about anything, but in everything make your... By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Don't worry.

What was that song? Don't worry, be happy. Now that's not Paul's message. Paul's message is, don't worry, pray.

Don't worry, pray. There's a difference between worrying and praying. And so he is saying, pray.

And he uses three words here. And I'm not going to analyze those three words. They're really there to amplify the point.

He is simply saying, pray. And he uses three different words. Rather than say, pray, pray, and pray, he just uses those three different words.

But the point is that he's saying, pray. And he's emphasizing that. So he says, be anxious for nothing.

He uses that word once, but he uses the word pray three times. Three different forms of that word. Now here's the thing.

When we have issues, when we have problems, our immediate response is to worry. And that's the point of Matthew chapter 6. Don't worry. And we say, well, that's easier said than done.

Well, why do we worry? Well, we worry because we feel we have to do something. I mean, that's the only reason why we worry. Because if we don't worry, it says, well, I can't do nothing about this.

I can't do something about fixing the problem, because it's outside of my sphere. It's outside of my ability. So what am I left to do? So I'll worry.

And I feel good because I'm doing something. I'm worrying. But the point that Jesus made in Matthew 6 is, what good does the worry do? Can you add 22 inches to your height? In fact, can you add half an inch to your height by worrying? No, the worrying achieves nothing.

It's a useless waste of time and energy and sleep. Don't worry, but pray. Because prayer is able to achieve something.

Now, the amazing thing is that worry is what we do so easily and so naturally. Prayer is the last resort. When we've tried everything else, so we've worried and worried and worried, and then we've spoken to everybody that we can speak to, and we've gone on the Internet and we've Googled our problem and we've tried whatever we can.

When we've come to the end of it, we say, well, maybe now I should pray. Maybe that's my option. No, Paul says, don't even go there.

If you've got a problem, pray. Now, it doesn't mean that our prayer is going to remove every problem. We're not going to deal with that in any detail.

We understand that God chooses to leave problems in our lives for exactly what we said earlier, that He might shape us and mold us into the image of Christ, that He might teach us patience, that He might teach us endurance, that He might teach us all of the thousand things that He's trying to teach us. But at the same time, as I pray, I'm able to find in my prayer, I'm able to find His answer. I remember Paul had a huge problem with the thorn in the flesh, whatever that was, and he says, I prayed.

And I prayed three times. And I believe that when he says he prayed three times, it doesn't mean that he wasn't constantly in his thoughts to the Lord, and praying silently and saying, well, Lord, you know, I really need to be rid of this thing. But when he says, I prayed three times, I believe that there were specific times that he had set aside from his normal devotions, from his normal just crying out to God during the rest of his day, times that he had set aside, maybe days or weeks of prayer and of fasting, praying that God would resolve his problem.

And he got the answer. I'm not going to remove your thorn. I'm not going to remove the problem, but I'll give you grace.

And my grace is all you need. My grace will be sufficient. But if he hadn't spent that time in prayer, he wouldn't have received the answer.

Now, the answer may not have been what he wanted, but the answer was the right answer. And so prayer brings the answers, not necessarily in the miracles that we want, but in a settling of our hearts and an understanding that God is in control. And so he says, don't worry, pray.

But he says pray in a particular way, with thanksgiving, with thanksgiving. Now, I just need to correct a little bit of an error here, because there's a very popular teaching that's been going out for, I don't know, 30 years now, that what we need to do is, when we pray, we need to thank God in anticipation for the answer, because that means I'm praying with faith. Well, I don't believe that that's what he is speaking about here.

I don't believe that there's necessarily going to be an answer in the way that we want the answer. But he's talking about an attitude, a spirit of thanksgiving. Not necessarily for the answer to the prayer, but thanksgiving because the Lord is near, because the Lord is good.

You see, when we pray, we can pray with one or two attitudes. Mostly when we pray, we pray with a complaining attitude. Remember the people of Israel? Yeah, they prayed, but it was all complaining.

And so we come to God in prayer, and we mutter, and we moan, and we complain, and we murmur, and we have all of the issues of, Lord, why, why, why, and why is they blessed, and why am I not blessed, and why this, and why that? And it's really just a complaining session. You know, I thought about that, and I thought, well, you know, I'm glad I'm not the Lord. And you can be glad I'm not the Lord, because I don't do well with people who complain.

I don't have much patience for it. And yet somehow God puts up with it. But if I don't have, and none of us, none of us enjoy a complainer.

Many of us like to complain, but none of us like to listen to somebody else complaining. And yet, how much of our prayer life is a complaining session? No, Paul says, come to the Lord with a thanksgiving, a thankful heart, being grateful for the fact that I'm saved, being grateful for everything He's given to me in my salvation, the cross, and the Lord Jesus, the resurrection, for His word, for His faithfulness, for His Spirit, for His nearness. The list goes on and on and on.

And you see, when we begin to understand what we really have, our needs become insignificant. They become unimportant. But when we focus on our needs, when that's really everything it is, you know, it becomes bigger and bigger and bigger.

The more we worry about it, and the more we complain about it, the bigger the problem becomes. And so, pray, but pray with thanksgiving. You see, because when we don't pray with thanksgiving, what we're doing is exactly what Israel did, and that was they were murmuring against the Lord.

Lord, why don't you bring us here? Lord, why can't we have this? Why can't we have the leeks and the garlicks and the onions? Why can't we have meat? Lord, why Moses? Could you not choose a better leader? Lord, what about this? And what about that? Why, why, why, why? The problem is with the Lord. And folks, it's the most disrespectful thing that we can do, because He's done so much for us. Just think about the people of Israel.

He delivered them from the Egyptians, from slavery, set them free, taking them to their own land, where they would be self-determinant, and that they'll have their own country, and a land of milk and honey. And if they're complaining, complaining, complaining. No wonder we have the admonitions, of course, in the New Testament.

Romans chapter 1, neither were they thankful. One of the most terrible sins, unthankfulness. We're going to see this very soon in 2 Timothy.

As we go to 2 Timothy chapter 3, you'll find that in the last days perilous times will come. And one of the things that people will be in the last days is they will be unthankful, unthankful. No, let's be thankful.

Let's come to Him with thanksgiving, appreciating what He has done and what He does for us, and that He is a great and a wonderful and a precious God who cares and who understands and who undertakes. And so make your prayers known with thanksgiving. So that's what I need to do.

So stop worrying, start praying. But start praying with the right attitude. Start praying with a grateful heart rather than a complaining heart.

Now, the wonderful thing about these two verses is that they are two sides of a coin. And you'll remember that we have this right through the New Testament, in fact right through the Old Testament as well, is that we always have this, the part that I have to do and the part that God does. And here we have these two things again.

And it's interesting how often we divorce these two verses from one another. And I've heard many, many sermons preached and many people love to quote verse 7, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. So we just quote that on its own.

But you can't quote it on its own. Why not? Because the verse begins with a word, and. And.

So there's no way you can quote verse 7 without verse 6, because there's the little word and which connects those two things. So he's saying what you need to do is don't be anxious, pray with thanksgiving. And the peace of God will guard your minds and hearts.

You see, it's not going to happen if I don't do my bit. My part. I say, well, you know, I'm just claiming that verse, that the peace of God will guard my heart and mind.

No, the peace of God will not guard your heart and mind if you're not doing what you should be doing. So I'm anxious, I worry, I stress, I fret, I fear, I don't pray. And I say, but God, your peace must guard my heart.

God says, I can't do anything. I can't help you because I've told you what you need to do. And once you do what you need to do, I'll do what I need to do.

Do you remember exactly the same principle in that passage in Matthew chapter 6 that we read? Don't worry about tomorrow. But what must we do? Seek first the kingdom and His righteousness. And then what will happen? God will take care of the rest.

Same principle. But we say, no, Lord, I'm not the king. Then to worry about tomorrow.

And God says, no, I can't help you because I've told you what to do. You need to seek the kingdom and then I'll take care of the rest. And so here we have exactly the same principle, the same pattern.

And so don't be anxious. Pray with thanksgiving. And then the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds.

Now that's a wonderful promise. And I pray that this promise would be real for each one of us. But that obviously we need to fulfill the condition which is in verse 6. So the peace of God that passes understanding.

That's a wonderful idea and a wonderful truth. What does it mean? Well, it's superhuman. It's supernatural.

It makes no logical sense. How can you not be worried when you're in this situation? Whatever situation you're in. And is this not our testimony to the world? Was that the testimony of the Lord Jesus? That He was asleep in the boat while the storm was raging.

And the disciples said, this is not right. This is not natural. There's something wrong here.

We're perishing. The ship's taking on water. The storm's up.

The wind's blowing. Everything's wrong. And He's asleep.

It doesn't make sense. But it does make sense when you understand what He understood. When He understood that the Lord is near.

That He is in control. That there is nothing that is out of His realm and that is outside of His control. And so, it's all good and well if we have some kind of natural psychology going for us.

Sort of some kind of positive thinking and some kind of mantra. Sing this song. Don't worry.

Be happy. The world understands that. But it doesn't work too well.

But when we're able to be asleep in the storm, the world doesn't understand that. That passes understanding. That passes human reasoning.

And that's a testimony to God's supernatural intervention in our lives. That we are not natural human beings like the world is. But that we are spiritual beings in that sense.

We're born again. We're part of a spiritual realm. And that there are other things that work in our lives that are unnatural, that are not natural, that are supernatural, that are divine.

And so, when we're able to show to the world, calm in the midst of the most turbulent times in our lives, that is the testimony to the world that we have something they do not have. And so, the peace of God. The peace of God is not just the peace He gives.

It's the peace in which He dwells. God doesn't get perturbed. God doesn't have to take tranquilizers or a shot of something to calm His nerves.

God is at peace within Himself. God is not flustered. God doesn't get anxious.

And He's saying He wants that peace that is God's peace. To become our peace. And so, the peace of God is the peace that God has, but also the peace that God gives to us.

So, God is able to give us peace. He is able to give us rest in the midst of our enemies. And as we read through the book of Psalms in our readings in the mornings, you'll see, and I think it's the fourth time we've gone through the book of Psalms, and every time I read it, it just encourages me.

As David confesses his absolute peace in the midst of his trials, and his enemies are being persecuted, and all the problems around him. Because God is on the throne. God is in control.

And so, that peace that God is able to give us, and that peace will guard our hearts and our minds. And I just love the scriptures for its completeness. Not just our hearts, and obviously our hearts is really where our emotions are.

And it's our emotions that so often get upset. Our feelings. But He's not just dealing with our feelings, He's dealing with our minds also.

And so, we say, well, you know, it's all good and well to say I mustn't worry, but I've got good reason to worry. I have all the facts, and all the facts point to a bad situation. And He says, no, the peace of God will

guard your heart and your mind.

But you do what you need to do. Now, that word, God, there is a very special word. And if you go to 2 Corinthians chapter 11, and Paul is giving some of his testimony here.

And he's speaking about the time when in Damascus, you remember after he got saved, they came to capture him, and some of the Christians let him out over the wall in a basket. But in that context, in verse 32, it says, In Damascus, this is 2 Corinthians 11, 32, In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of Damascenes with a garrison desiring to arrest me. Now, that word guarding with a garrison, and many of these Roman cities had garrisons, which would be a unit probably similar to a battalion today, maybe smaller than a battalion, a camp company in modern military terms, would have a company attached to that city.

And the purpose of that company or that garrison was to guard the city, to protect the city. And so in the case of Paul, instead of the garrison protecting the city from outside attacks, it actually turned inward and protected the periphery so that Paul couldn't escape. But the point was that the word guard here in Philippians is the same word used in Corinthians, garrison.

Put a military, and it's a military term. So God will put a military guard on our hearts and our minds so that nothing can get in that will cause us to be disturbed. Now, that's a wonderful assurance and a wonderful promise.

But here's the problem. There's the part that I need to do. You see, God can protect me from the stuff that comes from outside.

But if I'm fomenting anxiety within, He can't help me with that because I'm protecting the enemy within my own heart, within my own mind. And He says, don't protect the enemy of anxiety and of fear and of stress and of tension. Give it to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving, and God will garrison around you, protect your heart and your mind so that the peace of God that passes understanding will become that thing that protects you.

Now, here's the interesting thing that I'm going to close on. He begins by saying, don't be anxious. God will give you peace.

The same thing, but from a different angle. So I need to stop worrying and God will give me peace. I say, no, Lord, you give me peace and then I'll stop worrying.

No, no. You stop worrying, God will give you peace. Thank you for your word.

And Lord, that these aren't just words of psychology, but Lord, that these are your purposes in our lives. And so, Lord, we pray that you'd forgive us for the many times that we complain and the many times we are stressed and anxious about things that we have no control over. Help us, Lord, to make all of our requests known to you with thanksgiving, knowing that you are the one who is in control and, Lord, that you're the one who's able to change situations.

And when you don't, you're able to change our own attitudes to those situations. And so, Lord, I pray that you would help us to understand. But Lord, above all, help us to be doers of your word, Lord, that we would be those who do not stress and who are not fearful, but who are anxious in nothing.

But, Lord, who make our requests known to you in thanksgiving. Thank you, Lord, for the promise of those things that you will do, that you will take care of tomorrow, that you will take care of the needs and the problems and the issues and things that we worry about. But, Lord, that we need to put our trust in you and that we need to trust you first.

And so, Lord, help us to get these things right. Help us, Lord, to get the order right. Above all, it's easy for us to talk about these things in the context of the service this morning.

But, Lord, as we face our anxieties and fears in the darkness of the night or in tomorrow, as we face the world again, Lord, we forget these things. So we pray that you'd help us to remember and help us, Lord, not just to remember, but to live the reality of these things. In Jesus' name, I pray.

I pray that you'd go with us, Lord, keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely in the week. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen.

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