

# God's Peace Guarding You From Anxious Thoughts by James Jennings

by James Malachi Jennings

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*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and is available to those who trust in God's sovereignty and goodness.*

**Duration:** 55:48

**Scripture:** Psalm 55:22, Psalm 62:8, Psalm 139:2, Philippians 4:6-7, Philippians 4:19, Colossians 3:15

**Topics:** "Anxiety Relief", "Prayer Life"

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## Description

This sermon delves into Philippians chapter 4, emphasizing the importance of not being anxious but instead bringing all requests to God in prayer with thanksgiving. The passage highlights the promise of God's peace that surpasses understanding to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The speaker encourages a life of constant prayer, a heart of thankfulness, and a focus on Christlike living to experience this supernatural peace. The nearness of the Lord is emphasized, both in His presence to help and in the reminder of His imminent return for judgment. The message urges believers to trust in God's provision, practice thanksgiving, and maintain a mind stayed on Him to receive and abide in His perfect peace.

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## Transcript

Well, Philippians chapter 4. Last time we looked at v. 5. Let your reasonableness or gentleness be made known to everyone. Let's read on. Paul says the Lord is at hand.

Then he goes in v. 6. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything. Amen. My prayer, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus. Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen. Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is a well-known passage. Bobby dealt with it. Mentioned it some in the Sunday School Hour.

The first message. Probably if you go to a Christian bookstore and you find signs that have been made that are being sold, I bet Philippians 4.6 is on some of those signs. It's a well-known passage.

Paul in prison telling those at Philippi to be anxious about nothing. No situation, Paul says, justifies anxiety. Paul saying, in everything to pray, meaning every situation justifies prayer.

Going to the Lord. And Paul says, as one truly prays, the peace of God, a peace of God from Him guards our hearts and minds from producing anxious thoughts. Now, last August, John Dees stood in this pulpit and preached on this exact same text, a sermon called, Having Peace Like a River.

Now, it's a year later. I'm sure all of us have not been anxious in this whole last year because of this sermon, right? And so maybe it's good for me to bring up a reminder. A year goes by.

Maybe we need a reminder this morning. The honest truth is what? Probably the very night after John preached his sermon a year ago on this text, some of us were tested in this specific area. That's often how it is.

We hear the truth. The Lord right away gives us an opportunity to apply it. Just like Bobby's sermon this morning.

If you heard that, the Lord's going to give you an opportunity to probably apply that today. So that we might grow in being what? Doers of the Word. Not hearers only.

If we hear the Word and there's no opportunity to be tested, we're not really going to grow. We're not really going to live out what we've heard. You think of this even with the disciples.

They saw Jesus multiply the bread to feed thousands. But when faced with a similar situation, they had no faith to trust in Him in the present based on what God had done in the past. Jesus rebuked them and said, do you not perceive? Do you not remember? The five loaves were the 5,000 and how many baskets He gathered.

Don't you remember that? Christ is saying, my utter faithfulness in that impossible situation. So it is with us sometimes. The Lord gives us great peace in the midst of a trial where we could have been anxious and there was no anxiety.

Yet, when faced with a future trial that is similar, we go on being anxious, forgetting the Lord's faithfulness in the past. And as Peter said, he says these things as a reminder. We need reminders.

We need tests as Christians that these things will be real in our lives. Now this text is well known. And I want to look at it a little different way, yet being faithful to the text.

Because if I look at it a different way and I'm not faithful to the text, and it's my own creative idea, then I'm not preaching faithful to the Word of God. This text is not just an exhortation and a command to not be anxious. Is it that? It is.

You see that in v. 6. Do not be anxious about anything. It is also not just an exhortation to let every request be made known to God in prayer. Is it that? It is.

You see that. In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. It is those things.

But there's something more. And this is where I want to start as I try to dissect this passage. I want to start with this point.

My first point is this. In order for you and I to not be anxious, something has to be guarded. Something has to be guarded and protected.

We need a garrison of something surrounding that something and protecting us. What am I referring to? What does the text say needs to be guarded? Your hearts and your minds. Look at v. 7. Guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

My heart and my mind have the need to be guarded, protected. In order that, anxiety is not produced within my mind, within my heart. You see the word guard in v. 7. It's a military term.

It means to protect someone by giving them a military guard. This protection, obviously, what does it do? It prevents a hostile invasion. If something is well guarded, you don't invade it.

Or, if something is well guarded, guess what? When enemies come, you who are inside the city, you don't flee in fear. What's everyone doing in Syria right now? They're fleeing. The years past, people in Syria have fled because they're not well guarded.

If there are no guards, you flee. We do that in the spiritual realm. If our heart and mind are not guarded, we could flee.

Flee from faith. Fall into unbelief. To illustrate this, think about King Solomon.

King Solomon had a lot. He was rich. He had wisdom.

It talks about his carriage. In Solomon 3, don't turn there. Behold, it's the carriage of Solomon.

Around it are 60 mighty men. Some of the mighty men of Israel. All of them wearing swords and expert in war.

Each with his sword at his thigh against the terror by night. Solomon had protection. You picture him on his carriage driving through the land, and he has 60 men surrounding him.

Mighty men surrounding him with swords on their hilts. He had protection in the physical realm. If he has protection in the physical realm, what happens? Do you get anxious when the enemies come forward? You don't.

If you know your protection is of such strength, when enemies come forward, you're not anxious. You're trusting that you are guarded. You are protected.

No reason to flee. Now why, in this illustration Paul's giving when he says guard your hearts and your minds, why do we not run in a fight? Why will we not surrender our thoughts to anxiety? Why will we not let our heart be weighed down, as it says, with anxiety? What is the great thing that's going to guard us? Well, look what the text says. What's going to guard us? It's something that surpasses all understanding.

You like that, right? When you're hearing about something that's going to guard you, and someone says it surpasses understanding, there's some comfort there. Whatever this is, people can't even fully understand it and comprehend it. Go further back.

He says it's the peace of God. The peace of God. Or the peace from God that surpasses all understanding will surround your heart and your mind, and no matter the invasion on the outside, the heart and mind which could produce anxiety, they're guarded and therefore, no anxiety.

Perfect peace. Even in the midst of one of the greatest storms you could be in, all of the circumstances are not going your way, and yet you say, I have a peace right now. It surpasses my own understanding.

I can't even get my mind around it. This peace that I have. The God of peace, as he says in verse 9, who will be with you, He gives us His peace to guard our hearts and our minds.

Not 60 valiant men. Who cares about that? Solomon's 60 men are pretty pathetic in view of God. If you have no guards, you fear an attack.

You have a panic attack. Fear brought on by impending doom. Think of that in the spiritual realm.

Our culture uses that word. People say, I had a panic attack. That means they had fear overwhelm them in view of something that possibly could be coming their way.

The world looks at that and they're going to say, well, do this, do that. The Word of God says there is such a peace. You can't explain it, but you can definitely feel it.

And He says that peace, it can be yours. Right there, God will guard your heart in Christ in the midst of that. We don't have to fear impending doom, impending circumstances.

So, the place Paul says we need guarded is our heart and our mind. The word for mind here refers to your thoughts. In other places, it literally is the word thoughts.

Think of the anxious thoughts we have. The heart and the mind are producing them. Most people don't believe Paul is making a big distinction between the heart and the mind.

And that's my take. When he says heart and mind, he's really just referring about the inner person of the Christian. And if we tried to make a whole lot of distinctions there, I don't think that's going to be the most helpful thing.

There are things we feel in our hearts, and there are thoughts we have in our mind. So, the fact that we need our heart and mind guarded, what does that show us? It shows us the heart and the mind is the place where anxious thoughts are produced. And this is important.

Anxiety is not produced by circumstances. That may tempt you, but the heart that is not guarded by the peace of God in circumstances, unguarded, will give in to anxiety. We'll look at this more in a minute.

But Jesus even said in John 14, let not your hearts be troubled. Let not what be troubled? Your heart. So I need a guard around my heart because if my heart gets troubled, I will be anxious.

Our hearts and minds must be guarded by the peace of God. Let me ask you this. Is your heart and mind guarded by this peace of God this morning? I do not know where all of you all are at, your circumstances, trials.

I know there are two dear members in our church who both of them in their situations have a lost spouse who is divorcing them. That's a hard circumstance. Yet this verse promises a peace from God that

surpasses all understanding.

And we're going to see, how am I going to call upon this peace? How can I have this? We'll see it's called upon through believing prayer from a thankful heart. But let's think for a moment. Paul commands us here to not be anxious about anything.

There's no situation by which God's peace cannot give us peace in. There's no situation by which God is not in control. So why be anxious? Why brood over something in fear? Anxiety is often dismissed in our world as what? It's not sinful.

They'll say, it's not sinful. And this is because people don't rightly see the root of it. Anxiety is not brought on by our circumstances as we just saw.

It's brought on by an unguarded heart and a mind. A heart that lacks trust in our Lord at the moment of that trial. And therefore, there is fear.

Because the carriage is not guarded. The carriage of our heart and mind is not guarded by the supernatural peace of God. This lack of trust in the Lord shows itself in how we respond in our circumstances.

You don't get anxious because of your circumstances. Rather, you get anxious because you're not trusting the Lord in the midst of the circumstances. It's very important.

You don't look and say, the circumstances made me anxious. No, an unguarded heart at that moment, not believing that the All-Sovereign God yet reigneth and ruleth and is seated on His throne is in control. Not trusting that.

That's our problem. Trying circumstances. Boy, they test our faith.

Am I believing God? Right now, in the midst of this storm. Am I trusting Him? Anxiety is produced by a heart not guarded by God's peace. Which to think deeper means anxiety is produced in a person who is not truly prayerful.

Because as we will see, it is being prayerful that God's peace guards us. So when you look at the people who fall into anxiety the most, right away, Paul's already pointed out, there's a lacking in their prayer life. Now, we'll get to that in a minute, because that may confuse some people here.

So I pray all the time. But we'll look at the specific type of prayer that Paul points out. Anxiety is a distrust in the Lord.

It's unbelief. As we see in Matthew 6, Jesus has told us, I clothed the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven. Will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Our Heavenly Father knows our needs.

Are we trusting Him in the midst of our trying circumstances? Now, is there a non-sinful care? The word anxiety in the King James and Matthew 6, it says, have no care. Well, see, even in Philippians, look back at chapter 2, verse 28 in the ESV. Look at the end there.

Paul says, I'm eager to send Epaphroditus, that you might rejoice at seeing him and that I may be less anxious. Well, does that mean Paul was sinfully anxious? No, that word there, it's that he'd be less

concerned. There is a righteous concern that we should have in the midst of our trials.

Sometimes people do not care enough in the midst of hard circumstances. Paul just said in chapter 2, he talked about having the mind of Christ. And it means let each of us look not only to the interest of ourselves, but to the interest of others.

And I was even talking to one of the women in our body who they're facing a lost spouse divorcing them. And you know what she was telling me? She does have this peace in the midst of this. And yet, there is a concern too for children.

There's a concern for the soul of her husband. There's all these valid concerns that are not sinful. They're righteous to have.

Paul even says in 2 Corinthians 11, there's daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. 1 Corinthians 7, the unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. Wait, the unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord? Isn't all anxiety sin? It's just not the best word there.

The unmarried man is concerned about things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. That's the thrust. So, there is a non-sinful care.

Now, I want to think for a moment. If Paul says that the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ, and mind is referring to thought life, it's pointing to your thoughts, let's just think about this for a moment. Let's think for a moment on anxiety in the thought life.

In your mind. If we need our minds guarded because it's a source where anxiety can come, let's think about this. Missionary Norris Groves.

He was in Baghdad, Iraq, over a hundred years ago. He said this, Satan's power consists that he casts into my mind the most strange, unimaginable possibilities. And I am so foolish that while I feel there's not a shadow of truth in that imagination, they trouble and perplex my mind and destroy its peace.

You see, Groves felt it. Here he had strange, unimaginable possibilities being hurled at his mind. And it messed him up.

It took his peace. Martin Lloyd-Jones said this, in this state of anxiety, we spend the whole of our time reasoning and arguing and chasing imaginations. And in that state, we're useless.

We don't want to speak to other people. Our mind is chasing these possibilities. And so, alas, our testimony is useless.

We are of no value to others and above all, we have no joy in the Lord. What about you? Have you chased random imaginations and allowed that to get you anxious? In fear? In pending doom? If this happens? If that happens? What's going to be gained by fearing and fuming? Nothing. And think about it.

Anxiety is often based upon what? Circumstances that we don't even know if they exist. You don't even know if it exists. Okay, that's one place.

Another is what? We get anxious over circumstances that do exist. You know they exist. You got the diagnosis.

You do have cancer. And you get anxious about it. Or, you get anxious about possibly maybe getting cancer years from now.

Both places. We can get anxious. And Paul says, in either case, do not be anxious about anything.

Don't be anxious about what might come. Don't be anxious about what is presently happening. But trust the Lord.

Don't be anxious. Proverbs 12 says, Anxiety in a man's heart, it weighs him down. But a good word makes him glad.

I mean, there are some Christians, they're so joyful and so non-weighed down, you would assume all the circumstances in their lives are going just how they want. And then you start talking to them and you find out, oh, they're dying right now of cancer. And you find out they just lost a child.

And you're sitting there thinking, wait a minute, that's not the correct response in the midst of the trials. But it is. To have peace that surpasses all understanding.

But for the lost, they don't know this. The lost person does not know true peace, true rest. They have no true peace.

As our text says, this peace of God that guards the heart and thoughts, it's for those who are what? Will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. My take on that is Paul is simply saying this peace, this guarding of the heart and the mind, it's for those who are in Christ. This is one of the many blessings for the Christian who is in Christ Jesus.

It's that there is a peace that surpasses all understanding that you and I can not only have momentarily, but live with throughout our entire lives. Totally not worrying about what circumstances may come. It's inaccessible unless one's in Christ.

Does Christ legally represent me before God's courtroom? Have I been born into the Kingdom? If so, this is for me. Jesus said in John 14, saying, peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

It's not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled. Neither let them be afraid.

So see, the world offers a type of peace. And most people in the world feel peace when their circumstances meet all of their selfish needs. But that's a false peace.

It doesn't last. Our circumstances are always changing. But the Lord faithful will remain.

He is unchanging. You think about the Lost. I've been reading George Whitefield's biography and in it, it records John Wesley before he was a Christian.

Listen to what happened to John Wesley. He didn't have this peace. But he saw others that did.

Here he is as a missionary in America. And Wesley says this in the 1730's. He said, I went to America with a supreme purpose and a chief motive.

The hope of saving my own soul. He's doing a work salvation. It wasn't in Christ.

What have I learned? Why, what I least of all expected, that I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God. On the voyage back, he was influenced by how the Moravians responded in a raging storm. During this storm, a raging sea broke over the ship.

And while, as he reports, a terrible screaming began among the English, these Moravian men and women and children calmly sang a hymn of trust and praise. I mean, picture that. You're on the boat.

Say you're down low. In those rooms, you hear people screaming ferociously in fear. And then on the other side, you hear people singing with peace and joy.

I don't know about you, what room would you want to go in? What people would you want to be around? Wesley was both delighted and startled by their behavior. Delighted to know there's a relationship with God which could provide such peace. And startled, why? To realize that these Christians possessed something to which he was a stranger of.

For amidst the storm, he admitted, I was afraid to die. So who's this peace for? At that point, it was not for John Wesley because he was not in Christ. He was a lost missionary.

But by being saved and found in Jesus Christ, Him representing us before God the Father, His righteousness clothing us, being declared righteous because of what Christ has done, he could have not only legal peace with God, but experiential peace as a Christian now. That's who it's for for those who are in Christ. So the believer should not let our hearts be troubled because the peace of God is protecting us.

The great Defender who guards our city and is upon our walls is the peace of God, which Paul right away describes as surpasses all understanding. This peace is from God. And you could say to me, well, explain it, James.

What does it look like? I'm sorry, it surpasses all understanding. But you who are a Christian, the times you've had that peace, you know what the experience is like. You might try to think, well, how do I word it? Someone may word it different than another.

But I'll tell you one thing, it means you're not anxious. You're trusting. You're stayed upon Jehovah.

Hearts are fully at rest. Finding as He promised, perfect peace and rest. Because of what Christ has done, because of Christ being in control of our circumstances, there's a comfort from God that is unexplainable.

But it is not something that you can't experience. You can experience this. What does it look like? This peace from God? It's to have circumstances that the world says call for us to be very troubled.

Yet, rather than be troubled and afraid, God gives His peace to us in the midst of the storm. It's like that John Wesley example. The text says the peace of God will guard.

Meaning, who does the guarding? Let's think about this peace from God. The peace of God will guard. Who's guarding us? Who's guarding the heart and the mind? Who's guarding? The peace from God.

It's like God is supernaturally guarding your heart and your mind. You don't look and you don't say, yes, I figured out the right way to think and I'm guarding myself from anxiety. No.

You look at the Lord and you say, the Lord has flooded me with peace that I can't even explain. The Lord is guarding my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus. I don't get it.

What does Isaiah 26.3 say? He keeps them in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him because He trusts in Him. Who keeps them in perfect peace? The Lord. That's part of this peace that surpasses all understanding.

God guards us with the peace. He's keeping us in perfect peace. Even 2 Thessalonians speaks the same way.

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. Wait, what Paul? May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace? So this peace comes from God.

He's the giver of it. Not your circumstances changing, but God giving you this peace supernaturally. He guards the heart.

It is. It's supernatural. You can't explain it.

You look around and you think, why do I not feel self-pity right now and tons of anxiety and fear? I mean, these circumstances demand that, don't they? But I don't have that. There's a peace from God. How do you get it? Look at the text.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God surpasses all understanding. We'll guard your hearts and your minds in Christ. So you could say, how do I get this peace? A short answer would be praying to God and letting your requests be made known to God.

But let's think for a moment. Prayer, supplication, entreaty, requests. We find these words here.

Putting a need before God. That's what Paul says. Make this known to God.

Now, many people, you know what they say to that? I've prayed, but I'm still anxious. I just prayed for 40 minutes, brother. I'm still full of anxiety.

Okay. Is the verse not true? Or someone says this, it's of no use for me. I pray and it's not working.

So the simple answer is not pray. I'd be cheating you all and not doing honor to God's Word if I just said, well, the thing you need to do is pray. Just go pray, brother.

Pray. I mean, the text does say to pray. But there's more here that we need to consider.

So here's some things to consider. I want to say that I hope will help you diagnose kind of like what Bobby did in his message, which diagnosed why my prayers are not being heard. If you hear from Bobby's message, he gave different reasons why our prayers weren't heard.

There's going to be a little overlap here. But here's some things to consider. First is this, you say you pray, but I ask you this, are you living a life of prayer? Or is prayer some little traditional 911 call when things aren't going your way? The text says, in everything by prayer.

The text does not say when you're anxious, pray. Does it? It doesn't. The text doesn't limit it to that and it's not saying when you're anxious, pray.

No, Paul's actually just saying you as a Christian, in everything, pray. In everything. He's absolute in saying be anxious for nothing.

And he's very absolute in saying in everything, by prayer, supplication, thanksgiving. We're always to be letting our requests known to God. This text does not call us.

This is not a verse to take and say, well, I'm anxious, I should pray. This is a verse to take and say, I should be praying all the time. Constantly devoted to the Lord in prayer.

And what is prayer? I'm going before the very throne of God. Access through the blood of Christ. I'm praying to the King of the Universe.

No flippant thing. No small thing. It's not, hey buddy, here I am.

It's holy, holy, holy. I am a man of unclean lips. And here I am before the living God.

True prayer is a life of devotion to Christ. It's not some quick fix. When a problem comes, we should already be praying so that we won't be anxious when faced with the trial.

You see? You should already be living a life of prayer. It's not like the Christian says, well, the peace of God guarded me. I only want that guard five hours a day.

I want the peace of God guarding my heart and mind 24 hours a day. All the time. Therefore, live a life of constant communion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is not saying you're in a pit. This is how to get out of the pit. He's saying, I command you to not be anxious.

I command you to let every quest be known to God. And if you live this way, you will not fall into anxiety. You won't.

Fall into it. In prayer, we're going through Christ to God Himself. This is waiting.

So that's the first question. You say this isn't working. I would ask you, are you living a life of prayer? Are you in everything already praying? Constantly acknowledging the Lord in part of your ways? All of your ways.

As Nathan Rages just preached on weeks ago. So, second thing that people run into problems with these verses. What about your heart when you're praying? What's going on in your heart? The text describes the heart of the praying person.

And what does it say? It says specifically, in everything by prayer and supplication with what? Thanksgiving. I believe that describes the heart. They're coming with a heart of thankfulness to the Lord.

It's prayer with thanksgiving. Not prayer with grumbling. Not prayer where you have anger at God.

God, I can't believe You did this. Lord, why? Oh, and give me Your perfect peace. Nope, none of that.

Is that how your heart is when you pray? Are you actually entreating God for help? And at the same time, thanking God for His goodness? Lord, thank You for this trial. You're going to make me more like Christ. You're going to get glory.

It's been granted to me to not only believe in You, but also to suffer for Your sake. Lord, I'm rejoicing that You've counted me worthy to suffer for Your name. Lord, You chose us to allow this to happen to.

Thank You. Thank You. Thank You.

Then you're praying with a thankful heart. Guess what? That peace is going to guard you. It's going to guard you.

Paul says, give thanks in all circumstances. Well, what did he just say verses earlier here? Verse 4, rejoice in the Lord always. Are you coming to the Lord, rejoicing in Him, thankful to Him, and making your requests known to God? I think one of the biggest reasons this verse, people read it and they can't experience the promise of the verse, is that when they go to the Lord to make their requests known, they're not actually thankful for all that God has done in their present circumstances.

They're actually grumbling and upset and angry at God for those present circumstances. And they don't get peace. If you have a grudge against the Lord and think He has wronged you, His peace will not come when you pray.

You must first repent and forsake these wicked thoughts that imply that God is not completely concerned with all of your needs. Did not He who gave His own Son? Will He not graciously give us all things? We have to keep renewing our mind. God will provide.

God has not missed us. This has not gone off of God's radar. He's doing this for my good.

Pastor Stephen Cole about this text, he was going to a very important meeting, and he was walking up the sidewalk from the car and he was very anxious. He was anxious. He didn't say very.

He said he was anxious. And he says this, I was reciting Philippians 4.6. A lot of people run to that verse, but it wasn't in the home. Where's the peace? When two little words with thanksgiving jumped out to me, and the Lord reminded me that I had failed to give thanks for this difficult situation, I paused and said, thank You, Lord, even for these trials.

And immediately, I was flooded with His peace. The Lord worked in that meeting that he then had an obvious way. That's what it looks like.

A souk. He kept him in perfect peace. Did that pastor keep himself in peace? No, it was the Lord.

It was the Lord supernaturally doing something right there in his heart, in his mind, as it was guarded by the peace of God. Another question that some, they don't get this verse. They don't see this promise in their life.

I would ask you this question. Are your expectations of what this verse describes correct? Are your expectations correct? What do I mean? The Lord promises what here? Peace. Does He promise the removal of your circumstances? Does He promise answered prayer? Right there? No.

He promises, I want to hear your request. But He doesn't promise, I'm going to change your circumstances. I think that's one reason why people don't experience it.

They go praying to God with an expectation that the way to get not anxious is to pray and God changes my circumstances and based on a circumstantial change, I now have peace. Brethren, there's nothing supernatural about that peace. The lost humanity feels peace when things are going good in their circumstances.

The text shows us we're given peace from God despite our circumstances. The storm may still be raging, but there is peace in the storm. There's sufficiency from God.

So another thing I would ask you. You say prayer isn't working. And kind of like Bobby's message, I would ask you this question.

Brethren, what about your life? What about your life? You say, I don't have peace. Well, like Bobby's message, are you living with your wife in an understanding way? The Bible says if you don't live with your wife in an understanding way, your prayers are hindered. And your prayers for peace are not going to be there until you humble yourself, go talk to your wife and tell her, honey, I was wrong.

Fill in the blank. So wrong expectation there. What about your life? Look at even v. 9. Look what Paul says there.

What you have learned. What's one thing we learned? The Christlike mindset in chapter 2. What you've received and heard from Paul. And seen in me.

Look what Paul says. Practice these things. Live out a Christlike life.

And look what Paul says. And the God of peace will be with you. I tell you, brethren, you're not going to experience the peace from God if the God of peace is not near you in a real experiential way with His presence.

And you know why the Lord is not at times in the believer's life? Because through our sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit by Whom we've been sealed. So you want peace from God? Do you have the God of peace with you? And Paul, amazingly, he says, if you practice these things, the God of peace will be with you. Implying this is not just about prayer.

It's also about practice. Because if we have known sin in our life, the Lord wants us to deal with that before we come to Him in prayer. And that probably is the very reason we don't have peace.

It's because something's defiled in our conscience and there's known sin that we're not dealing with. Are we rejoicing in the Lord always? That's what we've learned in Paul. Am I practicing that? What did we learn from Paul? To be thankful in all circumstances.

So Paul says practice this thanksgiving and the God of peace will be with you. And then when you go and pray in thanksgiving, the peace from God will come and flow through you. Where's our mind? Even v. 8. Paul says right here, he just talks about our hearts and minds being guarded in v. 7. And then he says right here where our mind should be.

If there's anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Whatever's true, honorable, just. And you can read that whole list there.

Where's your mind at? What are you thinking about? This is the same thing in Isaiah 26.3. He keeps them in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him. Why is his mind stayed on Him? Because he trusts in Him. As you trust the Lord, your mind is on Him and then perfect peace is there.

Perfect peace. Peace that surpasses all understanding. So, my point on this one is what's one reason you don't experience this? Where's your mind at? Is the God of peace with you? Are you walking and seeking? No, not perfectly, but striving to live like the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not earning something by a work? It's

simply He's walking near to the Lord and He manifests His love to us.

Psalms 119 says, Great peace have those who love your law. Nothing can make them stumble. Nothing can make them stumble.

Isn't that a little arrogant for him to say that? We should have a hope that by the grace of God, I don't ever have to go and have that attack of fear. I don't ever have to go and fall into that paralyzing anxiety. It doesn't have to be.

There's such power from God here. There's such truth in His Word that the psalmist says those who love your law, nothing makes them stumble. Why? Because their mind is so filled with the truth of God that they can't respond by stumbling in that situation.

Truth. So, live like Christ, have a thankful heart in the midst of a trial, and as you pray, God's peace will guard you. As you live a devoted life to the Lord, there's going to be that peace.

We should expect to experience it. So I've said these things right here to try to help you all who feel like this verse doesn't work. Because that's not the case.

The verse is not an empty, hollow promise. I think we often are the ones with the problem. We're not thankful.

Sin against our wife, like Bobby pointed out, or something else, or sin in our speech, as he mentioned. Now lastly, let me give you an encouragement and a warning. Look at v. 5. We looked at it last week.

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. And then look what Paul says. The Lord is at hand.

And as I said last time, I think this points to both things. That the reason to let your gentleness be made known to all, because the Lord is at hand. And, the Lord is at hand, therefore, do not be anxious about anything.

Meaning, I think that's one of the reasons not to be anxious. The Lord is at hand. And we looked at it last time.

What does it mean? The Lord is at hand. At one, it means the Lord is near and in control. He's near in His presence.

He's not far off. Kind of like v. 9. The God of peace be with you. That idea.

The Lord is at hand in that sense. That's one of the takes on what that phrase means. He cares about you.

He's near to you. He's not far off. One of the things the enemy wants us to believe in the midst of a trial is God is far off.

What does Peter say? Cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you. So God cares for you. Did you know that, believer? God cares for you.

Obviously, you knew that. Because He so loved you, He sent His Son as a sacrifice to satisfy His wrath that you deserve through Christ suffering that wrath on the cross. Cares for us.

Therefore, He says cast your anxieties on Him. He's fully aware of our situation. Why should we not make every request known to God? Isn't it amazing what the text says? With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

God wants to know our requests. He wants to know what's on your mind and on your heart. He wants you to go to Him in prayer, petition, in treating Him for needs your own, for others.

If you're still thinking, well, does the Lord really care for me? Look at v. 19. What does Paul say? My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus. So God cares for you.

He wants your prayers to be made known to you. The Lord is near. The God of peace will be with you.

And He's going to supply every need of yours. So for a moment, you think that's the encouragement from the Lord is near. There's every reason to go to Him.

Every reason to go to Him. Doesn't God already know everything? Well, Psalms 139 says He discerns our thoughts from afar. If that doesn't keep Paul from writing, God wants you to make that request known to Him.

You don't just sit there, well, God knows about this. No, God's saying you come to Me and thank Me for what I've brought upon your life. Now, a warning from this.

It says the Lord is at hand. And the other take that many take on this is that the Lord is at hand as far as Him coming back to judge the world in righteousness. And Paul's saying the Lord is at hand because of this account that you will give to God even for the believer.

He's saying do not be anxious about anything. Meaning, there's a proper fear of God where the Christian realizes I don't want to sin against the Lord. He is near.

He is coming. At any hour that I know not. We even see something similar in James 5. He says, establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Do not grumble against one another, brothers. Why? Don't grumble so that you may not be judged. And then listen to what James says.

Behold, the judge is standing at the door. Don't grumble. Why? The judge is standing at the door.

The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious. The Lord is standing at the door.

Think about it. Maybe some of you are anxious of something right now. If I told you Jesus Christ was standing outside of that door, and we could even hear His footsteps coming, His nearness.

He's near us, believer, in an experiential way, but He's coming again one day to judge. That would affect. You'd think this is foolish.

Why get anxious about this in view of eternity? In eternity, will I look back and justify my anxiety and say I had a bunch of reasons to get anxious? No. You'll think, Lord, how could I have responded in such a way? So both of these, I think, to some degree are true. The Lord is near in that He's aware and ready to help.

And He is also near in that His second coming could be any hour. So, brethren, we have an invader who wants in your heart and mind. And that invader is anxiety.

And that city you need to defend is your heart and your mind. And the defender who will defend you at all hours of the night in a supernatural way that you cannot explain is a supernatural peace from God that surpasses all understanding. And that supernatural peace is fetched through thankful prayer to the Lord who is near, who will richly provide, who is sovereign over all things and knows about all of your circumstances even before you come.

He knows your thoughts from afar. Have you experienced this peace? I was talking to a brother recently and he said he was struggling in secret prayer. He wasn't getting through.

It would be easier to come to the corporate prayer meeting, pray at the corporate prayer meeting. I remember as a new Christian, I had that happen. I'd struggle in secret prayer.

It would be hard to sustain law and prayer. Not saying you have to pray long for God to hear, but there's a sense of really praying. There's men of old who said, pray until you've prayed.

Just because we have a prayer meeting on Wednesday night doesn't actually mean we really prayed. Just because you get up on Wednesday and pray doesn't mean you really pray. That you really believe to God.

That you really went before a throne of grace. The Pharisees prayed three times a day and they didn't really pray. So have we experienced this? If you say, I want it more, well, the Lord is very ready to send a garrison of His peace and surround your carriage as you ride through this wasteland of this dark world which is full of tragedy.

And some of you know more than others. I was talking to a brother visiting today and Richard Bennett who used to be in Austin and he still is active trying to reach out to Catholics. His wife has cancer in his diene and Richard Bennett has celiac disease and he's struggling with eating and he's going to starve to death eventually.

Those are trials. Yet, even in that, there's a peace that can surpass all understanding that will guard your heart and mind. And so Richard Bennett's carriage is getting near the end, and yet that peace of God will guard the heart and the mind all the way to the end, all the way to reach heaven's coast.

It's for those in Christ. And if you're not in Christ, you can be justified and positionally in Christ by faith alone in Christ alone. You can surrender all of your sin, all of your pride, all of your anxieties, and say, Lord, I entrust these to You.

Take my life and let it be a living sacrifice to Thee. I don't want my life anymore. I lose it for Your sake.

Paul is writing this from prison where clearly his thoughts are so guarded that he is able to expound on these truths and confidence in Christ. You'd think that we would be the ones writing Paul. Paul's the one writing us.

What a powerful witness. Here one application is, brethren. Think of the witness you are to your family if you're full of anxiety and fear.

A believer with peace in the midst of varying trying circumstances and facing possible death who can say to die is gain and boast in the God's peace that will come. That is a powerful testimony to the lost world that we're different. That we have peace.

That we don't crumble when the towers of this life crumble and fall on us. And that even in the moments where we do get anxious, we don't stay in it. We're going back to the Lord.

Lord, help. So, should you fly away like a bird in your trials? Like the psalmist said, no. Don't.

Rather, you should fly to the throne of grace for help in a time of need. As he said in Psalms 55, verse 22, cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you. He will never permit the righteous to be moved.

He will keep you in perfect peace. He. He.

God does this. Do you pray? Do you practice? A holy life? Yes. But at the end of the day, this is not something you have to figure out.

It's something supernatural from God. Paul says in Colossians 3, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which you were called in one body and be thankful. Psalms 62, trust in Him at all times.

All times, O people, pour out your heart before God. God is a refuge for us. See, love.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You that there is such a thing as a peace that surpasses all understanding, that we don't have to have hearts troubled, that we don't have to be anxious. Lord, we're thankful that You're the God of peace.

You're the God of comfort. That You give peace. You give comfort.

Lord, these are such good promises. Lord, we know as a young church here today where most of us are young, Lord, we recognize that the only way these things are going to grow and be more real in our life is as we continue to have trials in these next years of our lives. Lord, would You help us to be thankful for whatever our lot may be.

Lord, You're seated on the throne. Lord, would You keep my brothers and sisters here this morning in perfect peace? Lord, we thank You for all that You've done and are doing. We thank You for sending Your Son to die for us.

Lord, there's so many requests. And we just bear them before You and we ask, Lord, that You would help in these times of need. We cast our burdens on You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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