

Session 13, The Perfect Peace of God

What Do Christians Desire More Than Anything Else as We Try to Live in This Fallen World?

Financial Success? A Good and Productive Family? No Serious Problems? Good Health?

***Philippians 4:6-9**, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (peace that passes our understanding, KJV). 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. 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.”*

I contend that what Paul spoke of in Philippians 4:6-7 is what every Christian longs for more than anything else and what I believe is the most effective and useful tool for the Christian given in the entire Bible.

That is, The Perfect Peace of God.

It is:

- The cure for anxiety,
- A test for the existence of God (of course, He doesn't have to prove Himself), and
- The key to what everyone in the world is searching for.

The first two verses (4:6-7) contain a conditional promise of God.

The difference between conditional and unconditional promises are whether you have to do something to get what is promised or not (a promise without our intervention or...a promise that requires action on our part...an obligation).

In this case, if you do three things, God will give you something.

Your three obligations are:

- 1. Prayer,**
- 2. Supplication, and**
- 3. Thanksgiving.**

Although all three would seem to fall generically under what we call prayer, they are three distinct actions.

1. **Prayer**—The word "prayer" here means a devotional and worshipful communication with God.
Talk to God about what He means to you. Worship and adore Him in prayer.
2. **Supplication**—"supplication" means to make request.
Let God know what you're concerned about. Talk to Him about your needs.
3. **Thanksgiving**—Thanksgiving is more than the holiday we will celebrate one of the last Thursday's of November.

It means what it says: the giving of thanks.

- ✓ Thanking God in the midst of your circumstances.
- ✓ Thanking Him for using it to draw you to Him.
- ✓ Thanking Him for everything you can think of that has resulted or will result from the situation.

Now, God's end of this bargain is the peace that passes understanding.

If you will do these three things, God will give you this peace.

This peace guards your heart from distress, and your mind from racing. Although the situation you've been praying about hasn't changed, you suddenly have peace in the midst of it.

God will always be faithful to keep this promise if you are faithful to do the three actions in prayer: worship, request, and thanks.

As the Scripture says,

Isa. 26:3 (KJV), “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

“You, LORD, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you.” (GNT).

Actually, verse 6 tells us the meaning of a living prayer life.

Verse 6, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”

- ✓ **Be anxious for nothing:** This is a command, not an option. Undue care is an intrusion into an arena that belongs to God alone.
- ✓ **But in everything by prayer and supplication:** Paul wrote that **everything** is the proper subject of prayer. There are not “some areas” of our lives that are of no concern to God.

Prayer and supplication: These two aspects of prayer are similar, but distinct.

Prayer is a broader word that can mean all of our communication with God, but **supplication** directly asks God to do something.

Many of our prayers go unanswered because we do not *ask* God for anything. Here God invites us simply to let your requests be made known.

Get this...He wants to know!

- ✓ **Be made known:** God already knows our requests before we pray them; yet He will often *wait* for our participation through prayer before granting that which we request.
- ✓ **With thanksgiving:** This guards against a whining, complaining spirit before God when we let our requests be made known. We really can be anxious for nothing, pray about everything, and be thankful for anything.

Verse 7, The Promise of Peace (A more detailed idea of the Peace of God).

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

The Bible describes three great aspects of peace that relate to God.

- **Peace from God:** Paul continually used this as an introduction to his letters; it reminds us that our peace comes to us as a gift from God.
- **Peace with God:** This describes a relationship that we enter into with God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- **Peace of God:** It is beyond "all mind"; that is, beyond our power of thinking.

What is God's peace? “The unruffled serenity of the infinitely-happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God.” (Charles Spurgeon)

✓ **Which surpasses all understanding:**

❖ **It isn't that it is senseless and therefore impossible to understand, but that it is beyond our ability to understand and to explain - therefore it must be *experienced*.**

❖ **This peace doesn't just surpass the understanding of the worldly man; it surpasses all understanding.**

Even the godly man cannot comprehend this peace without the Holy Spirit giving it to him/her.

✓ **Guard your hearts and minds:**

❖ **The word guard speaks of a military action.**

- This is something that the peace of God does for us;
- It is a peace that is on guard over our heart and mind.

When people seem to "lose" their heart or mind, it often is connected to an absence of the peace of God in their life. The peace of God then does not act as a guard for their hearts and minds.

The Right Place to Put our Minds...The Right Attitude...The Right Actions to Assure Peace of Mind and Heart!

Philippians 4:8-, "Finally, 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."

Whatever things are true: Paul's list of things on which we should meditate translates well from the Greek to the English; there is no great need for elaboration upon each item:

NOBLE...JUST...PURE...LOVELY...GOOD
REPORT...VIRTUE...PRAISEWORTHY:

These, Paul would say, are the fruit and the food of the mind that is guarded by the peace of God. When we put these good things into our mind, they *stay* (imbedded like a rock) in our mind...and then (praise God): they come forth from us.

Meditate on these things: Much of the Christian life comes down to the *mind*.

- Romans 12:2 speaks of the essential place of being *transformed by the renewing of your mind* and
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 speaks of the importance of *casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

What we choose to meditate on matters.

What Paul describes here is a practical way to bring *every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.

Philippians 4:9, A Return to the Idea of Following Paul's Example.

Philippians 4:9, “*The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*”

- **The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do:**
 - Paul had the integrity to present himself as an example of all these things to the Philippians.
 - He really could say, "Follow me as I follow Jesus."

And the God of peace will be with you:

If the Philippians did as Paul had instructed, not only would they have had the peace *of* God, but the **God of peace** would have also been with them.

We need to pray for others before we pray for ourselves!

To receive the true peace of God, we must ask and receive according to His Word.