

Philippians 4:1-5

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[0 : 00] Well, in Philippians, we're starting chapter 4 now, and this, I'll go ahead and tell you, is probably one of my most treasured texts in Scripture when it actually comes to walking through trials and suffering, and one that has really ministered in my heart over the years.

And so, we're going to walk through just a few of the beginning verses, pretty much verses 1 through 5 first, and just kind of talk through them a little bit, but the main focus is going to come in the following verses, and we're going to talk about prayer and the peace of God and so forth. So, first of all, starting in verse 1, he tells them, he says, My brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

So, this is like a term of endearment, like yearning to see someone that you love very much, that you've been separated from for a long time.

I remember when we actually taught through Philippians years ago, when Nathan and Wes and I were in school up here, I was waiting for my lung transplant at the time when I actually got to teach on this particular text.

[1 : 24] And so, and I was in the hospital a lot, and so this really close group of believers that I had learned to love and really just held dear in my heart.

It was hard to be away from them for, you know, weeks at a time, months at a time, being in the hospital. And so, but I remember I got to come out and actually teach about this, and this was the immediate thing on my mind was, you know, I miss you guys, and I long to see you guys.

And he calls the Philippians my joy and my crown. That's really powerful, powerful language. He had a lot of problems with most churches that he established, Paul.

And, but the Philippians seem to be like, hold this really, really special place in his heart. Like they were, there's some people you do ministry with, and some just seem like they're always sucking the life out of you and always just nagging, complaining about things.

And then there's other people that are just a constant encouragement. Like you just don't have to worry about them. Like, wow, they're just, they're just going to be there. They're going to be giving their lives away and serving.

[2 : 38] And that's kind of like how he felt about the Philippians. He really held them dear in his heart. And so he, he tells them to stand firm in the Lord in that verse.

And my beloved, a very, a military term, meaning hold your ground. Like if you're being attacked, like to hold your ground, like a defensive position against overwhelming odds.

You know, hold your ground, stand firm. And then he addresses an issue that comes up. And this isn't irrelevant to us. These are the names of two women that are in the Philippian congregation. And so they're there. This is here for a reason. And if you really become like involved in the life of any church body, and you're, you're really connected and committed and you're serving there and living out life with people, you're going to see like a lot of junk surface in the lives of the people that you're with.

And you can see that you'll see a lot of controversies and issues arise in the outworking of how the church is actually to be.

[3 : 48] And so this is some kind of dispute between these two women. These two women were probably pretty prominent in the Philippian church. And more than likely, they were talked of in Acts 16 when Paul actually came to Philippi and he found like a lot of women praying.

And so this possible, they were a part of that group. And he, something had come up where they were like, there was like a little faction, factions kind of forming with each, with each woman.

And he, he, he tells them, you know, I entreat you. I advise you. I implore you to agree in the Lord. And so to be like the same mind spiritually, to be like in spiritual harmony with one another.

And so what can we agree on? Let's agree in the Lord. I'm going to mention this a little later, but most, this unity, most divisions in the church, they all come because people have their own ideas. They want to agree on what they want, not really what the Lord wants. They don't really want what scripture wants. This unity is a result of being proud, stubborn, irrational, and harsh in your dealings with your brothers and your sisters.

[5 : 12] And years ago, before I actually, while I was in school up here, I was still a member of a church in Norcross, Georgia, in Gwinnett County. A great church, but there was around maybe 700 members, I'd say.

And we had undergone a huge work of God, just kind of like a return to scripture and return to the way Christ actually commands the church to be.

And because of that, there were some pretty big, like, factions that started forming. People that wanted things their way and not really what scripture was saying. And all these things were not small issues.

Because there were, like, major doctrinal issues that things like the inerrancy of scripture and so forth that a lot of people were dividing on. And so, but it was just crazy because I remember a lot of those meetings where we would discuss these things.

There would be, like, you know, a few hundred people in a meeting along the congregation. And, like, my pastor, he would clearly read, like, a direct command from Jesus or right out of the scripture that doesn't really need to be, like, whoa, what did he mean by that?

[6 : 26] Something, like, very clear. And immediately people would stand up and they would just be, like, disagreeing. And it was, had nothing to do, it was all about their opinion. They couldn't, like, say what he said.

They couldn't really argue what was being said. It's like they, he's like, did you not hear what I just read? Like, and it just comes from people wanting their way and selfishness and pride.

And so he's, so often when there's two factions, it often can take someone else, like a third party kind of coming in and trying to reconcile the two groups.

And it's possible that where he mentions this, this word companion there, do you see that? Like, like, in verse 3, I ask also my true companion.

They're not really sure if, who Paul's referring to there. But in the Greek, this actually could be a guy's name, just called my true companion.

[7 : 23] And Paul's asking him to be, like, a third party to kind of go in and mediate. And so his name actually means two oxen on a yoke carrying the same load.

Pretty cool. Like he's a companion, someone that's kind of helping you in your labor. And then he also calls a guy named Clement to be another party to help reconcile these women.

And we don't really know anything about Clement, plain and simple. I guess that he's mentioned there. So obviously he was an important member in the church. So, but then he says, right here, he mentions Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

And if you remember a good while back, we read from Revelation and the judgment, the judgment scene before the throne of God. And we mentioned the Lamb's book of life.

And it's called the book of life, the Lamb's book of life. And it was written, get this, it says this in Revelation, before the foundation of the world.

[8 : 31] This book was written. And with the names of all that are redeemed that would be in Christ, inheritors of eternal life. So a lot of people think that there's a guy up there, like a little angel with a pen, and every time someone gets saved, he's like, yeah, we got another one.

But it's like it was written a long time ago, way before the world existed. And so he was like, but think about that. He's saying their names are in the book of life.

So what more could we have in common? Like what can we do to kind of reunite these factions? Like we are, our names are written in the book of life. We're going to be together for all eternity.

We're all joint heirs with Christ. Stop this foolishness. And so then he calls them to be, right here he says, verse 4, Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again, I say rejoice. And we'll revisit that in just a second. But then he says, let your reasonableness, I can't barely say that word tonight, let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

[9 : 35] And so usually when people are in quarrels, in general, generally speaking, you're not in your right mind. Sometimes people, they're losing touch with what the true reality is.

And when he says reasonable, he means like be kind, be gentle, be gracious, respectful, reasonable in your dealings with one another.

And if you're doing that, it'll guard from a lot of hostility towards each other. So it's the very opposite of like being out of control and just kind of attacking someone and like being irrational about what you're actually arguing about.

Flip over to chapter 2 real fast in Philippians. And Paul has already talked about how do we bring unity? How do we dissolve these controversies?

Philippians 2, verse 1 says, So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, the same mind, that's important, having the same love, being in full accord of one mind.

[10:48] So he mentions one mind twice there, same mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each one of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others, and have this mind among yourselves, which was yours in Christ Jesus.

And then he gives the example of Christ's humility as the sole motivation, sole example, sole power for how we're to live with one another. So he's been talking about how is unity preserved in the body.

So we go back to chapter 4 there, and we'll jump back into this next part. But he says, Rejoice in the Lord.

Again, I say rejoice. The Lord is near. So when he says this, he's calling for a joy that's not dependent on circumstances, but rather like a deep, abiding joy, an inner joy that comes from a relationship and a satisfaction that only is found in Christ.

And this is kind of like setting us up for where we're going to go tonight. But like glad in yourselves, in the Lord is kind of what he's saying. You know, when we truly realize who God is and what he's done, like on our behalf, we have great reason to rejoice.

[12:14] Whenever we despair and whenever we fall into temptation, there's always a failure to see. There's a failure to remember who God is and remember who we are.

And we lose sight of that, and we actually are convinced that sin is better for us in the moment than actually trusting in Christ. So we lose sight of things. And so he says it again, and he repeats, Again I say rejoice.

And then he says, Because the Lord is near. The Lord is at hand. So often, in trials or whenever, whatever you go through, you may even feel this way tonight, is you don't feel like the Lord is near at all.

I've been feeling that way a little bit earlier today until I actually started studying this. It really ministered to my heart. But the Scripture is very clear that the Lord encompasses His people, that He's not just chilling out somewhere.

Like He's with you and He is in you. I think I just have four places for you to turn outside of Philippians. But keep your hand in Philippians, but go to Psalm 34 real fast.

[13:35] So keep your hand in Philippians, but go to Psalm 34. And I messed this up.

See what I did was I had, I moved this down here, but I already told you to turn to it. So keep your hand there. We're all going to go there. Go back to Philippians though. I'm sorry. Forgive me for that. So your turning has not been in vain.

Just keep it there. So I have three points tonight about prayer. And then following that, just some examples of what we're talking about looks like.

So the first one is, we're going to see in the following verses, the need for prayer. So let's just read the rest of it.

Turn in verse 6. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[14:35] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. So the first, number one, is the need for prayer.

We see the need for prayer here in this text. But he mentions like, don't be anxious about anything. So anxiety, fear, stress, doubt, these are, prayer is the only medicine, the only remedy for those things that are attacking your soul.

And what happens is that when trials come on us, and suffering comes on us, we lose sight of things. We, when they're staring us in the face, we often forget who God is.

We forget what we know about God to be true. And we take our eyes off of God. We put them on the circumstances. And, and when we do that, when we're looking at the overwhelming circumstances rather than God, that's when anxiety, doubt, fear, kind of can just come in and just completely overthrow you.

And that's a problem. It's a failure to actually see who God is. Anxiety. And, uh, so, you ever, you ever been there?

[15:58] You ever felt like overrun? Like, man, like, it's like one thing, and then it's just like an avalanche of things, and you can't stop it. And just, you feel like you're overrun, scattered, confused, and what just happened?

And like, kind of dumbstruck by things. And, and it happens to the most mature believers. Like, just go and read any of David's Psalms, you know?

And like, you'll see him, like, sorting through things in his mind. You'll see him, uh, you'll see that in a lot of his circumstances, he's lost sight of God. He's, he's, he's, uh, kind of preaching to himself a little bit.

And he's, you start to doubt God's goodness and God's sovereignty when you're just looking on your, your circumstances. So this is an example of that. Good turn to Psalm 34 now.

Example of that. And he, uh, um, would arrive eventually at something like this. Psalm 34, verse one.

[16:59] I will bless the Lord at all times. Sound familiar? Like in everything, you know, do not be anxious, but in everything. I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes his boast in the Lord. Let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord and he answered me and deliver me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant. See that? Okay. Intentional looking to him.

They're radiant and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried. And the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord and camps around those who fear him and delivers them.

There's the idea of how the Lord is near. The Lord's at hand. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. So, David had to like bring it back to what he knew was true.

[18:04] When he just thought about his circumstances, he would get overwhelmed. And so, so we're, we're needful. We're needy people. Like we, prayer recognizes that we can't do things on our own, that we need God to step in and minister to us.

It's a, it's a humble confession of, I can't do this and I'm not God. You are. Please come and minister to my spirit. And so, so ask yourself what you're anxious about tonight.

School, relationships, finances, family, success, health, whatever. Like just, just stop and think about it. There's usually something on your mind that's troubling you.

That you're like, there's something going on now or something pending that will be coming. And so he's saying, you know, think about these things. So that's, that's the need for prayer.

We could go on about the need for prayer all night. but jumping back to Philippians, we're going to like talk about the, the remedy for anxiety. So back in Philippians four, the next point, number two is instruction for prayer.

[19:17] The instruction for prayer. We see in verse six, right? Do not be anxious about anything, but rather in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

So it's going to, it rings all throughout scripture. Pray at all times, pray without ceasing, be devoted to prayer in everything, no matter what circumstances come.

He's encouraging you not to be dumbstruck. When something does come, he's saying, instead of just kind of freaking out and losing it, like gather yourself and pray.

Like, I think we just really make little of prayer. And we tend to, you ever heard anybody say this?

Like, well, like you like finish sharing with them, like a very hard circumstance.

Like, well, all we can do is pray. And it's like, kind of like poor prayer. Kind of like, it's not really that all that powerful. So like, man, no, like, if you were praying to a human being, or praying to some other thing, then you could probably say that, but not when you're praying to the, the giver of life, and the living God.

[20 : 33] It's powerful. And so don't ever like belittle prayer. And I'll need help and reminders of that as well. But no matter how dire, how serious the circumstances are, we're to pray.

And so it, Paul says in Colossians four, I believe it's like, be devoted to prayer. So it's like, he's saying, make it a much, a part of your normal existence is eating and sleeping.

Like be devoted to it. You're devoted to sleeping, right? I am. I need to do it more. Devote yourself to eating, you know, like devote yourself to prayer in the same way.

He's saying, so I'll, you can write this verse down, but Romans 12, verse 11 says, do not be slothful and zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

So there's so many other things I could read, but he's just saying like, be constant, be vigilant, wait upon the Lord, go to him, be patient during trial. And so back in the rest of that verse, he says, and everything, my prayer, supplication with thanksgiving.

[21 : 50] Supplication is kind of a hard word to hammer down, but at least in a Greek context, it meant like to take an olive branch to a sovereign or a king and like offer him.

That olive branch is a sign of peace. And so you would bow down and you would offer it to him. And because you were at, you needed something of him, you were asking like a favor or asking, you know, him to do something for you.

And so you would go and offer him an olive branch as a, an act of peace and humility to that, to that sovereign. So that can carry over pretty well to our relationship with God, for sure.

But we're earnestly laying our request before him and saying, I can't do it. I can't do it. You know, I can't do it. And I need you to step in.

And so supplications, somebody's translation might say petitions, same idea. It means like to be specific, you know, be specific about what you're requesting with God.

[22 : 50] And, and under this, I have like, this is all underneath number two on instruction of prayer, but I have just some little bullets underneath this little sub points, if you want to call that.

But sub point number one is prayers for our sake and benefit prayers for our sake and benefit prayer doesn't exist necessarily because God needs it.

Not at all. He gave us the awesome gift of prayer so that we can see him and experience him in amazing ways that we could communicate and share with him, commune, commune with him.

And so if the Holy Spirit is abiding in us as, as believers, either you will, you will pray as a result of like, of love and gratitude to God, or circumstances will force you to pray as a believer.

You ever like got kind of slackish, kind of sorry in your prayer life and not devoting yourself to prayer. And then you're like, I'm doing pretty good. And then like, bam.

[23 : 53] And like, you're like on your knees, like, Oh Lord, the Lord will do that. He'll do what it takes to get you on your knees. And so, so prayer is for our benefit. God has given us that awesome gift to like, to communicate with him and to connect with him.

so sub point number two is, is, is we're to pray specifically. Um, like it says, we're to lift up our petitions and supplications to God.

And for several reasons, it strengthens our faith. It strengthens our confidence before God. When we see him answer us in specific ways. If you're just like praying that general prayer of like, Oh, just your will be done.

And it's great. That's true. You need to pray that, but also be specific with God. When we pray your will be done, it's, it's more or less saying it follows your specific requests.

And you're, you're, you're saying, I don't know what's best. I don't know because I'm, I'm ignorant. I hope that this outcome is, this outcome is what I want. And I think this is a good thing, but I don't know.

[24 : 58] So your will be done. You know, it's, it's a confession of humility and trust in God's sovereignty when we pray that, but it shouldn't just stop us from being specific with God.

Cause it will strengthen your faith. And it will build your relationship with him when you see him answer in very specific ways. So we're to go before him in that way.

And, and he cares about us deeply. And that's why we're to, to be specific with him. And, excuse me. But when we also do that, being specific, it authenticates our prayer.

It really does. Are you just saying a formula or are you actually bringing like real desires, real serious things that are on your heart to God? Or are you just kind of going through the, the checks of, of what you're supposed to say to God?

And so when we pour out our affections and we plead with God, it really makes it real. It makes it real. Like we're really coming to God with things that are on our heart. And God cares. He wants us to do that.

[25 : 58] First Peter five, seven. We're to cast all our anxiety on him because he cares for us. First Peter five, seven. Cast our anxieties on him because he cares for us.

And sub point number three, it kind of goes back to what we were saying. Pray, pray his will be done. Pray, pray in his will. Because we don't know, like I said, if what we're praying is the best thing.

Back when I was, uh, dying with, with CF, like I would pray for healing. All right. I had more oil dumped on me than McDonald's French fries.

Like I had like people praying for healing, you know, like I had, I believe that God could do it. But at the end of the day, I'm not God.

I don't know what would be better for me to die for me to live. You know, is it going to go back to chapter one to live as Christ, die as gain. Do I believe that? And, or am I just wanting it my way?

[26 : 56] And so I would just be specific with God. But at the end of the day, he knows what's best. And so it's a, it's a humble recognition that God knows the best outcome. And, uh, and as we grow into relationship with God, you really want your will to be his.

That's what you keep wanting. Like, man, I don't want it to be my will be done. I want his will to be done. And my will is seriously messed up at times. So, okay, uh, hold on Philippians.

Go to first Thessalonians chapter five, just to the right a little bit. First Thessalonians chapter five. And a man who discipled me when I was 18, 19, 20 years old.

This is a verse. It was just always on his lips. He would always just shoot this one out at me. Um, first Thessalonians five, go to verse 16. And I want you to see like the consistency here.

Rejoice. Always pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ. Jesus for you.

[28 : 07] Very powerful. And like it's a recognition that what's happened, happening to me right now is not an accident. Things are not just happening to me. This isn't random.

This isn't chance. It's not fate kind of hovering over me. It's, it's, it's God. And, um, you know, I've often said that in the old Testament, in the Hebrew language, they don't actually have a word at all for chance or luck.

They don't have a word for it. Cause they were, they were implying, like they understood that all things were governed by the sovereign hand of God. Things didn't just happen. It was all God ordained.

So, so when you do that, you're to give thanks in all things for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. So, yep. Go back to Philippians again.

Philippians four. We're going to go to the next part of this. All right. And this point three, last point, is, uh, the promise of prayer, right?

[29 : 15] The promise of prayer. Verse seven. All right. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

So the peace of God is going to be the reward, um, or the promise of prayer. And, and it's a peace that he says, like surpasses all comprehension, understanding.

It doesn't make sense. It's weird. Like it's, it's different than what you would see somewhere else. And it's a, it's a peace that like implies like an inner calm, like a, a tranquility of the soul, um, that Christ has promised to give to believers, his peace to believers.

And, and often, um, when, when a lot of junk was going on and times are getting pretty serious and trials are coming and the disciples start freaking out, like Jesus brings them back like to this.

And, uh, so I think, um, yeah, you definitely want to turn here and turn to John 14 real fast. Yeah.

[30 : 31] John, John 14, John 14, verse 25. And this is, you know, towards the end, last few hours of Christ's life before he was arrested.

And so these are urgent matters on his mind and on his disciples, minds. And he begins to talk about the Holy spirit. And, uh, John, John 14, verse 25.

He says, these things I've spoken to you while I still was with you, but the helper, the Holy spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you.

And then he says, peace. I leave with you. My peace. I give to you. Not as the world gives. Do I give to you? Let not your hearts be troubled.

Neither let them be afraid. So, so it's a piece that you can't actually get anywhere else. There's not another store that sells this. It's like, it's, it's in Christ.

[31 : 33] And that's it. There's not a, you can't make this piece up from somewhere other place. And while you're in John, just go over two chapters to chapter 16. And, uh, a really huge, all encompassing verse here and go to verse 33 towards the end.

And he says, I've said these things to you that in me, you may have peace in the world. You will have tribulation, but take heart.

I have overcome the world. So, yeah, in Christ, Jesus didn't promise smooth sailing, easy life.

Nope. And he's like, but take confidence, have peace, because I've overcome the world.

Like I've, I've defeated it. I've risen above it. I've conquered it. So, sorry guys. I've been digging some, uh, some Puritans this week.

Um, don't ever, man, I ought to recommend some good Puritan books for you guys. A lot of it, it's worth it to get some Puritan gold. So, this is, um, Jonathan Edwards.

[32 : 48] And he, he's writing about like the peace of Christ. And the peace that Christ gives to his people. He says, Christ's peace is a virtuous peace and a holy peace.

The peace that the saints enjoy in Christ is not only their comfort, but as a part of their beauty and dignity. Wow. Like it's something that kind of makes us glow and the midst of crazy situations.

They, they are virtues and graces of God's spirit. We're in the image of God and then partly consists. Christ's peace is an unfailing and eternal peace.

It is everlasting. It is what no time or change can destroy. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul.

Pretty cool. Yeah. J Edwards. So, all right. Now I want you to think about, think about this. Like the peace that Christ gives is something that like permeates from the inside out.

[33 : 52] It's not a, it's not an external thing that you try to run after and get. It's something that comes from within. It's a peace that abides in us and shows itself coming out.

And, so many people seek to find peace in, in their circumstances, in people, whatever.

Like, so when you're going through something like, what's the first thing you do when, when something hits you, pick up the phone and, and try to talk to somebody about it and tell them what's going on. Nothing wrong, nothing wrong with that.

But are you looking for your ultimate source of peace from someone telling you it's going to be okay? Or, I'll see this in the hospital a lot and God had to really teach me. I think that it took me until I was about 23 or 22 to really learn this.

And, and to forgive me years, I just had a hard time with this, but, and, uh, not above that now, but I, I would be looking for the doctors to tell me you're okay. You're okay.

[34 : 52] Or I just couldn't have peace until he came by and said, you're doing good. Here's where you are. And I couldn't just like get beyond that. And, uh, so it was something definitely had to learn.

So I was looking for something outside of myself to comfort me and give me peace. So another Puritan, I mean, go ahead and write this book down.

Good book. Uh, Jeremiah Burroughs. There was a book, um, on Philippians. It's called the rare jewel of Christian contentment.

Man, good book. It's a book that Nathan West and I read together. We were in school up here. The rare jewel of Christian contentment. And this is something he says.

I'm going to give you a little illustration here about, um, this idea of internal, external kind of thing.

He says, I will unfold this further to you with a similar, to be content as a result of some external thing is like a warming of a man's clothes by a fire.

[35 : 55] But to be content through an inward disposition of the soul is like the warmth that a man's clothes have from the natural heat of the body. Okay. So, we're all wearing clothes right now.

So, if you're warm, it's probably not because you got near to the fire and got warm. It's, there's another kind of heat that makes us that way. And it's the heat from the body that makes us, makes us warm.

So, that's what he's saying. So, a fire would be that external thing that made you warm and your body, an internal kind of thing. And then he says, a man who has a healthy body and puts on clothes.

And perhaps at first, on a cold morning, they feel cold. But after he has had them on for a little while, they warm. All right. Now, how did they get warm? They were not near the fire. No, this came from the natural heat of his body. Okay. So, you ever done that? Like, it is. It was warm. It was freezing in my room. I got up and I was like, shivering.

[36 : 54] I put on some, some clothes that were on the ground, put them on. And soon though, like the heat got on my, you know, through my, through my clothes and I was warm. But then he's like, that's what happens when you're healthy.

Right. But what happens when you're sick? You get cold really easily. At least I do. Like I'm like freezing and I need something external. to warm me up. So, then he says, now when a sickly man, the natural heat of the body has deteriorated.

But on his clothes, they did not get, they did not get warm after a while. He must warm them by the fire. And even then, he will soon be cold again. So, so this, let's tie this into our relationship with God.

When we are abiding in Christ and fellowshiping with him and, you know, seeking him, seeking his face daily, like our, spiritually, we're kind of healthy, so to say.

Like we're, and so, like his peace will be in us. It will permeate from inside. But if we're having a rough time, we're not abiding in Christ, kind of doing our own thing, haven't learned our lesson yet, kind of going off and seeing if we can do it on our own, whatever.

[38 : 04] And, junk happens to us. we don't have peace. We have to go to some external thing to like give us peace. And, we look for those things. so Christ's peace is what comes from within.

It's like having a, a healthy body. And, something we don't have to go look for on the outside. It's something that's in. So, really, a really helpful illustration. And that's what the peace of Christ kind of operates like.

It's something that comes from within. So, um, and the rest of that verse, it says that the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds. So, again, this is another military term, guarding your hearts and your minds.

It means to, to garrison or to, to watch over. And, your hearts and your mind need to be watched over because they're under assault by, by lies, by things that are not true, not of God.

And so, the peace of God is what kind of sense of watch. over your, your mind, your thinking, and the thoughts that you're having, as well as like your, your desires and your affections, your heart.

[39 : 09] And so, God promises to guard you against fear and anxiety and, and doubts when, when the harsh realities of life come. So, uh, so knowing that God's sovereignly watching us over you, you should bring a lot of peace.

Uh, and when we forget that, um, all kinds of stuff can happen. I write, you can write this down.

Matthew 10, verse 29 says this, Jesus is talking about, you know, harsh stuff coming.

And he reassures his disciples and he tells them, are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. But even the hairs of your head are numbered.

Fear not. Therefore, you are more value than many sparrows. So, a little bird out in the middle of the mountains right now, it falls over and dies.

Like that didn't happen apart from God allowing it, or, or making it happen. I'd rather say he wasn't uninvolved. It didn't happen apart from God. And he's saying like, if that's true, how much more you, that's what he's trying to say, like who are of much more value than the sparrows.

[40 : 23] Even the hairs of your head are numbered. So like, when you remember stuff like that, it, it'll minister peace to your, to your soul. It won't be like a switch that goes on. It might be like a process that kind of happens inside of you.

So those are, those are the three points. And then, I'm going to give you two, just examples real fast. One, one example.

There was a, this is just an incredible story. It kind of blows my mind. but his name was Joseph Scriven. And he was born in 1819 and, and, and Dublin, Ireland.

And he, he graduated from Trinity College there when he was 24. And so he was very similar age, similar stage of life that you're all in. And so after he graduated, and this is in 1845, he graduated.

He, he got on his horse and he rode out to, uh, the river bank. And he was going to go meet up with his fiance. And, uh, cause they were supposed to be married the next day.

[41 : 31] So he was kind of going and hanging out with her. And, uh, and they had been childhood sweethearts. They had known each other since they were little kids. And kind of just always, I'm going to marry that guy. I'm going to marry that girl.

Kind of, kind of thing going on. And they really loved each other. But moments before he arrived, like she was thrown from her horse and into the river, into the rapids.

She was knocked unconscious and she drowned like minutes before he got there. And, really, really hurt him. Really, uh, grief stricken. You know, he kind of like grabbed her body out of the water and just kind of held her.

You know, that's all he could really do. And, he knew it was, he knew it had just happened because her body still had some warmth. You know, it wasn't like something that happened way before. And, uh, so he was 25 when that happened.

I'm just heartbroken. And, uh, so he turned to the Lord to find, you know, peace and, and comfort. And he did. Um, he had a magnificent prayer life.

[42 : 30] He's one of those guys that was devoted to prayer. So, so real pain. He went to the Lord. And, and got, um, great comfort from him. But, around that same time, maybe a year later, he decided to like immigrate to Canada.

Um, and he moved to a town called Port Hope, which was on the shores of Lake Ontario. And, he devoted himself to like the principles found in like the Sermon on the Mount.

That was just like what always circulated in his mind. And, he was, uh, what he did was he offered like free, free, humble acts of kindness and service to the people there.

Um, he would cut wood. He would like assist people that needed help. Um, he, uh, was always looking to like do a good deed and to help somebody. Um, He became known as the Good Samaritan of Port Hope.

And he actually would only help the people. Think about this. He would only help the people that couldn't afford to pay him. So he wasn't like, what can I get?

[43 : 35] He was just, if you had money, if you had a lot of money, he might not actually help you because he knew that you could get somebody else to help you. He would only go after the destitute and really needy people. So he became known as the Good Samaritan of Port Hope.

But eventually, he fell in love again with a woman that lived there, a golly woman. They spent a lot of good time together. They got engaged.

But weeks before their wedding, she got hit with really bad pneumonia. And he just kind of watched her deteriorate, kind of like nursing her by the bed and watched her die.

So like two fiancés died. And again, overcome like imaginable sorrow, he fled to Christ.

I mean, just think about what you might be saying like, Lord, I do not understand this. Like what is going on? What have I done? What? I've been here just giving my life away to these people.

[44 : 34] And this is what I get. I mean, a thousand things could be going through your mind. But apparently, that wasn't what was on his mind. It was like, why, God? It was more, he just was broken.

And he went to the Lord to get peace and comfort. And so that happened to him twice. And he just continued to live out the rest of his life in Port Hope as a single man, just serving and loving people and glorifying Christ through his good deeds.

But he received a letter while he was there in 1855. So 10 years. He'd been there for about 10 years at that point. From his mom, who was still in Ireland at the time.

And she had gotten really sick. And so he wrote her a poem and like mailed it to her to kind of comfort her. And the poem was called, originally, Pray Without Ceasing.

That's what he sent to his mom. But these were the words that he sent to her. He said, What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.

[45 : 41] What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often forfeit. And oh, what needless pain we bear.

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Have we trials and temptations? Is there any trouble there? We should never be discouraged.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful who will our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness. Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer. In his arms he'll take and shield thee. Thou will find solace there. So that's where that story came from.

[46 : 42] That's where the words of that hymn came from. Birth from a man who probably knew grief at a whole new level. We probably don't know. And the Lord ministered to his heart.

Later on that poem was published anonymously as a hymn. But eventually they found out that he wrote it. So he didn't have any clue.

He didn't write it to be kind of made known. It was just for his mom. So it's helped bring a lot of comfort to hundreds of people throughout the world. So that's one illustration of just how the peace of God really ministered.

And another one, I'll just share you a personal one. But I think when I was about 22, I was in a hospital in Atlanta at the CF Center off Clifton Road near Emory.

And so I've been working pretty hard to get my lung function up. And I thought that they did the test and stuff.

[47 : 42] And it said that I was about 58%. But that was good for me. I was like, heck yeah, that's fine. Because they were saying you might need a transplant soon. And you're kind of like in doubt for a while.

I'm like, no, that won't be me. Okay. I'll be cool. You know, that's going to happen to these other people. That's kind of what you think. But so I actually was getting packed up, ready to go.

And my doctor came in. His name is Dr. McCain. And he's not a believer. And he's really experienced a lot of sorrow in his life.

He's been divorced. A pretty awful divorce. And one of his sons committed suicide a few years ago. And so he's very just skeptical. But he was a good friend to me.

He was the kind of doctor that actually when he got off work, he would come hang out with me in my room. And we'd order pizza and wings and watch a movie kind of doctor. And he never wore the white coat.

[48 : 40] Just kind of really chill dude. So we were pretty close. But he came in. And he's like, you ready to go? I said, yeah.

And he said, let me just look at your stuff. One more time before you go. And he put out all the test results. And he started getting a concerned look. And he pulled out a pen. And he started doing some math on the paper.

And I was just like, what's going on? And he said, something's wrong. They haven't been doing your tests right.

Because you're actually this tall, not this tall. And your height and your weight and stuff like that, that actually plays into your lung function. So they have the wrong height, apparently.

And so when he began calculating all that, he actually found out I was at, I was at like 30%, not 58%.

[49 : 37] And I was just like, man, like gut shot, kind of speechless. And he just kind of put his hand on my shoulder and just kind of was like, probably need you to stay for another week so we can keep looking into this.

And I'm sorry, I'll be right back. And he went back outside. And I was just kind of sitting there, literally like I was just dumbstruck. And what I really was worried about, like the phone call I'd have to make to my mom so I'm not going to come pick me up anymore.

So I had to deal with my mom. You know, I've never had that feeling before. So if she's okay, I'll be all right kind of thing. And so just really overwhelmed. And so last place you can turn.

Turn to Romans 8 real fast. Romans 8, verse 26. And this is what I kind of experienced in addition to Philipians 4.

Romans 8, verse 26. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray as we ought.

[50 : 46] But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches the heart and knows what is in the mind, what is the mind of the Spirit, excuse me, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. So I really couldn't even find the words to pray.

Like I was just kind of stuck. But I really did feel like the Spirit was interceding for me. And I really just kind of sat there for a while. And he started like reminding me like the truth of the Word.

And in a process of about 15 minutes, like I was just like, all right, that's the reality. We're going to, I'm just going to declare war on this thing. I'm just going to like, you know, just get going. I had just huge, like a huge flood of peace that kind of came in. So, so basically the Lord will either calm your storm or he'll allow it to rage while he calms you.

[51 : 52] Kind of the difference. Like he won't always change this, but he might change you while you're in the middle of it. And that's just really what I experienced. And so like the peace of God that surpassed all understanding really did, you know, guard my heart and my mind.

And I was even able to kind of share that with my doctor a little later. So, yeah, let's do it. Like this is, it's a war to keep battling. Just keep your mind on the Lord and don't lose sight.

Don't allow anxiety and fear to slip in. So we're going to respond with singing. I know I went a little over time, but we kind of started late too. So guys, y'all can come on up now and pray for us.

Father, you are the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our afflictions. And God, when we feel overrun and trials, temptations, and anxieties are eating our soul up, God, please just remind us in the midst of that to fix our eyes on you and to allow the circumstances to kind of grow dim.

And Father, that you administer your peace through your Holy Spirit to our hearts, to our minds, Lord, and that would lead to rejoicing. Because you are near.

[53 : 19] You're never far away, even though we may feel like it at times. And so, Lord, this isn't an easy formula, but it's real and it can be true.

And if Christ abides in us, Lord, it can be a reality. And so, Lord, I pray that we would bring our cares and burdens to you even now and allow the peace of God that surpasses all understanding to minister to us.

We love you, Lord. Thank you for the gift of your Son. And we just give you praise in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.