

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)



## Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32220

### Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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### The Peace The Passes Understanding (Philippians 4.4-7)

Theses words are being written at a time of international turmoil. We are frightened by the prospect of war. God has exhorted us to pray for those in authority that peace might abound everywhere (2 Timothy 2.1-2). Yet even in times of world accord many individuals know nothing of what it means to experience real peace.

Sin is hostility toward God (Romans 8.7) and because of our sin, we have made ourselves His enemies. But God has taken the initiative to reconcile us back to Him (2 Corinthians 5.18-19). Those that continue to live estranged from their God will never know lasting peace — “There is no peace for the wicked’, says the Lord” (Isaiah 48.22; 57.21). But those that are reconciled to God can have “the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension (4.7).

The thing that astonishes me most about the peace God gives is that it is not dependent on peaceful outward circumstances. When Paul of the peace of God to the Philippians he was in prison for preaching Jesus Christ (1.13) and they were suffering for their faith (1.27-30). The situation was not conducive to peace, but the peace that He gives is greater than our circumstances.

This truth is demonstrated not only in the letter to the Philippians, but also in the record of Paul's teaching there (Acts 16.12-40). In Philippi, Paul and Silas were accused of teaching customs unlawful for Romans to observe and, as a result, the magistrates tore off their robes, beat them with rods, and threw them into prison (16.21-24). Yet, in the midst of this shameful treatment, these servants of God had peace, for "about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God" (16.25). God's peace is not robbed from our hearts by physical pain or persecution but it conquers these difficult outward circumstances (John 16.33).

Is that hard for you to believe? Or, perhaps a better question: Is that hard for you to live? I know that I sometimes have difficulty getting a handle on these truths in my life. The question is: What can I do to experience the peace that God can, and will give me? Some of the answers are found in the context of Philippians 4:

**1. The Peace of God is dependent on a clear vision — a deep relationship with our Lord.** Look at Philippians 4.4-9 closely. Did you notice that two times Paul speaks of "the Lord" (4.4-5), three times he speaks of "God" (4.6, 7, 9), and once he mentions "Christ Jesus" (4.7, NASB)? The point is that if we are ever going to experience God's peace our minds have to be fixed on Him. "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26.3, NIV). We must remember His sovereignty, His power, His wrath, His mercy, His love, etc., if we are ever going to be able to rise above our experience.

The book of Hebrews was written to a group of Christians who were suffering for their faith (Hebrews 10.32-34; 13.3). How could they stand strong in the fire they were being put through? By looking to Jesus. Read Hebrews 12.1-4 and notice how the author encourages his brethren to fix their eyes on Jesus and to "consider Him." "As a matter of the utmost importance, he has turned their eyes, not to themselves, hoping for sufficient inward strength, nor to their agonizing troubles, nor to their persecuting contemporaries but to Christ. No believer can cope with adversity unless Christ fills his horizon, sharpens his priorities and dominates his experience"...

(Brown, *The Message of Hebrews*, pp. 13-14).

The author of Psalm 73 stated that he almost lost his faith in God as he observed the prosperity of the wicked, but he began to find peace when he focused his eyes on God in worship at His sanctuary (v. 17). There is no indication that His outward circumstances had changed, but by looking to God his own perspective was changed.

## **2. The peace God gives demands that we cast our cares upon Him.**

After we realize who God is, we then must turn to Him, bringing our difficulties before Him in prayer. "Be anxious in nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God" (4.6). 1 Peter 5.7 says, "Casting all your anxiety upon Him because He cares for you." See also Psalm 55.22. Believing prayer brings God's peace. If you ever question whether your distress has become so great that it is beyond God's power to help, read 2 Kings 18-19. If you ever doubt the intensity of His love for you, read Matthew 7.7-11. God is willing and able to deal with our problems, but in His own time and way. Trust Him, take your burden to Him, and leave it there!

**3. The surpassing peace of God requires that we give thanks to Him.** In the midst of the exhortation to make our request to God we are instructed to do so "with thanksgiving" (4.6). As we give thanks to God we are reminded of all His assistance in the past. Gratitude for God's goodness in the past gives peace in the problems of the present (2 Corinthians 1.10). If the Israelites had constantly given thanks for God's deliverance from Egypt they would have trusted God to give them victory over the giants of Canaan.

If you do these things, "the God of peace shall be with you."

Written by; Tommy Peeler

Article taken from: Christianity Magazine, November 1990 (340)