

Don't Worry About Anything

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Date: 03 November 2019

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[0 : 0 0] Turn with me, if you will, to Philippians. I'll be looking at Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 through 9. If you're in a prayer meeting, you'll notice that I used the same message about six weeks ago in prayer meeting.

But as Fred asked me and I was preparing for this week, I just kept coming back to feeling that I needed to share this message. I think it's a very powerful and important message in our day and time.

And a lot of the challenges and things that we face in our Christian walk. And so I really felt strongly about sharing this again. Also, Jamie, who normally is in prayer meeting, he does anything he can to get out of hearing me preach.

So he scheduled surgery or something that week. And I felt like this is just for Jamie today. You know, Jesus tells us in many places throughout Scripture things that we often read in our Christian walk and we think how difficult and how hard they are for us to really apply and to fully obey and, you know, apply into our daily walk with the Lord.

And in Matthew 6, Jesus tells us not to worry. He tells us several circumstances that we shouldn't worry about. But bottom line, we shouldn't worry about anything. And this is one of those things that I find difficult in my own life.

[1 : 3 2] And most individuals probably find difficult to go through life and simply not worry about anything. Now, there's plenty of things to worry about. But as we become parents, doesn't that add to our list of things to worry about?

And as we become grandparents, which I did this year in February, I now have an eight-month-old grandson, had three daughters, love them all. But now I've got a grandson.

It's not that I worry more about him than I worried about my children, but it adds to the things that we worry about, doesn't it? You know, we have so many things that we can worry about.

And Charles Mayo of the Mayo Clinic said this, worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly affects our health.

Basically, we bring about our own detriment of our own health and our well-being by worrying. And, you know, the fact is a lot of things we worry about never happen anyway.

[2 : 3 9] They just, we worry about, I think 90% of the things we worry about never occur or never happen. But there's no wonder Jesus tells us not to worry, and the Bible instructs us not to worry, because it really is a detriment to our well-being and our health.

So how do we walk through life? How do we go through the journey of our Christian walk with the Lord and stay true and faithful to the Word of God?

How do we allow the peace of God to rule and reign in our hearts and our minds? Well, good news. Philippians gives us the answer to that, and that's why I want us to look today at Philippians chapter 4, and I want us to look at verses 4 through 9.

It says, Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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.

[3 : 55] Finally, brothers, 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 into practice, and the God of peace will be with you. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, Father, Father, we come to you today.

We open your word, and we read these words that you have given to us. And I pray that your Holy Spirit would speak to each of our hearts. I do not know all the things that cause each of us to worry or to fear or to be anxious about.

But I pray, Lord, that through your word, you show us how we can give these things to you and trust you with them and that we can allow the peace of God to rule and to reign in our hearts.

And it's in your holy name, I pray. Amen. You know, how do we maintain the peace of God within us and not allow the circumstances of life to overwhelm us or cause us to go through life worrisome or to be overwhelmed with things?

[5 : 20] Well, the first thing Paul says here is to rejoice in the Lord. And this is one of those things that I rarely, if ever see Paul say, I'm going to say it again. I want you to really get this.

I want you to hear it. Rejoice in the Lord always. I'll say it again. Rejoice. Why does he say it that way? Why does he say, I'll say it again? Because of how important it is.

But let me ask you, what do we have to rejoice in? As believers in Christ, what do we have to rejoice in? And how does it impact our demeanor or our outlook upon life?

Well, let's think about it for a moment. As believers or children of God, we have been set free from the penalty of sin and we have been set free from the punishment of sin.

And we have a relationship with Jesus Christ who promises, I will never leave you nor forsake you. And then when we start really thinking about who we are in Christ, it doesn't matter what else is going on around us.

[6 : 29] It's who we are in Christ and who Christ is that causes us to rejoice. Years ago, I had a gentleman, he had a, it was kind of like a calendar thing that he made, but it had different, the different names of God and what they meant.

And I thought, I started using those in my daily prayer life of thinking each day or each week, one of those aspects of God and who he is.

You know, sometimes we get focused upon what has God done for me lately, but rather we should really start thinking about who God is.

And when we really focus on who God is and that we have a relationship with him, that we're a child of God, that causes us to rejoice no matter what else is going on around us because nothing can take away your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Nothing can take away that you're a child of God, you've been set free from the penalty of sin, you've been set free from the punishment of sin, and he promises that he will always be with us and never leave us nor forsake us.

[7 : 42] Is that something to get excited about? Amen? Is that something to rejoice about? Now when we think about that and we rejoice, how does that change your outlook on life?

How does that change the circumstances around you and how you see them? When we stay focused on who God is and what he has done for us and who we are in Christ and we can rejoice, it makes all those other trivial things in our life slide to the background and it gives us an uplifted, encouraging spirit and it also helps the peace of God rule and reign in our hearts.

When we start thinking about all the things that are going on in the world, we think about all the political things and the division in our nation and it can worry us to death.

But when we take our eyes off of that and we spend time, rejoice in the Lord always. Rejoice! And stay focused on who God is, what he has done for us, and who we are in Christ.

It changes the whole perspective on life. And we can stop worrying about the things that are going on in life and think about how God is a sovereign God and he is in control.

[9 : 02] Now, a few years ago, Jim and I were in Peru and normally we stay in what's the IMB guest house. Many of you have stayed there. But that year the guest house was full and so we weren't going to be able to stay there.

But they had an apartment, the International Mission Board had an apartment where some of the missionaries had gone home and they told us we could stay there which was actually much nicer than the guest house and we enjoyed it.

But while I was there, I noticed in the hallway there was a bulletin board. And I don't know if the parents, homeschooling their kids, because they were full, whoever was there was full-time missionaries and whether they gave them the assignment to write out who you are in Christ and all the things Scripture tells us about who we are and how we relate to Christ.

And I was really impressed. It was handwritten. So I wasn't going to sit there and recopy it, you know, modern day thinking. I just took a picture of it with my cell phone.

But then I came back and I typed it up. And it may not be something you can see, but it took three PowerPoint slides and a full page of all the Scriptures that tells us I'm accepted in Christ, I'm secured in Christ, and I'm significant in Christ.

[10 : 25] I've got sheets up at the front on both sides that I would encourage you to consider picking up and looking at these. And even maybe take one a day and read it, meditate on it, include it in your prayer life, thank God for it, and really focus on who we are in Christ.

Because when we focus on that, that causes us to stand before God and rejoice and worship Him and celebrate Him and helps us to understand how valuable we are because God said we're valuable.

Now those of you who still have children at home or you have grandchildren, I would especially encourage you to pick this up and pass it on to them because I've noticed as I've raised my children that the world tries to tear them down.

It tries to belittle them and put them down and, you know, just squash any self-confidence or any self-image that they have. And with my girls, I try to encourage them to know who they are in Christ, not who some other kid says they are or what the world tries to do in them, but their value comes in who God says they are and the value that God has placed upon them.

But that's true for us adults too. You know, we need to have a self-image of ourselves in who God says we are and the value and the worth that He has placed upon us.

[12 : 02] So I encourage you to pick those up, copy that before you leave. Now, after Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord always, he then goes on to give us a two-step process of not allowing worry to overwhelm us or to allow the peace of God to rule and reign in our heart.

But before I give you those two steps, I want to mention, Paul is writing to Christians. He's assuming that his individuals that are reading this are born-again believers in Christ.

Because if you do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, you're not going to find that peace in your heart and your mind. No matter where you look, you may find glimpses or you may have moments of contentment.

But overall, throughout your life, you're not going to have that peace that goes beyond understanding. And one of the things that really worries me today is I get out and I meet individuals, you know, even church-going people.

I realize that there's a belief system that has somehow invaded our society that if people are a good person, if they attend church even casually, or maybe their names are on the row, or sometimes they've even been baptized, they believe that they are a child of God.

[13 : 25] But that's not the teaching of the Word of God, is it? You know, the Word of God teaches that we've surrendered our lives to Him and we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Just because we attend church or just because we're a good person doesn't mean we're a born-again believer in Christ. And so today, if you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, I would encourage you to think about that and speak to me either after the service or sometime come back and speak to Pastor Fred when he's back from vacation or to someone, a spiritual leader that you know that could speak to you about that.

Because I really do think that there are a lot of people in society today that really are going to be shocked when they enter into eternity because they think they were a good person and they did good deeds.

And they maybe even attended church some, but they did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And it's going to be too late for them when they find that out.

And so I would encourage you to really contemplate in your own heart, in your own life, what are you trusting in for your salvation? Is it a relationship with Jesus Christ or the fact that you just come and come to church?

[14 : 45] But Paul is writing the Philippians. And the Philippians had every reason to be discouraged, to be anxious, or to be worrisome.

You know, they were suffering severe persecution because of their faith in Christ. They were facing disunity and disturbances within the church.

They had false leaders who had followed up Paul and come into the church and was trying to tear down the gospel message. And some were struggling with the very necessities of life.

You know, they were facing and struggling with about everything that we possibly could imagine that they were up against. But Paul wanted them to know that despite those circumstances and despite those difficulties and hardships, that they could have the peace of God in their hearts and in their minds.

That no matter what's going on around us, when we have that relationship with Christ, we can have peace of heart and peace of mind and we can sleep well at night and we can go through our days without worrying.

[15 : 57] And let me share with you this two-step process that Paul gives us here. The first, he says, is to tell God what you need. Go to God in prayer and tell God what you need.

Now, another trend that I've seen in a lot of individuals' prayer lives today is that we treat God like Santa Claus. And we go to God and say, give me this, do this for me, give me that.

And it's a lot of want more than needs. And that's not what Paul is really talking about here. He's talking about present to God your needs.

Not only physical, but spiritual and other needs that you may have in your life. But go to God and share those things that you need in your life.

There may be things that you're struggling with mentally or emotionally. There may be physical things that you have need. But learn to take those to God and present them to you.

[16 : 57] Now, have you ever noticed that you've done that? You've taken the time and you've gone to God and you share and then you start worrying even more than what you were beforehand. And you wonder, why did I even pray to begin with?

Because all it did is make me think more about my problems than before. I found myself doing that. And it's made me wonder, should I have even spent the time in prayer?

But then I realized what I was doing. I was not going to God and giving those concerns to Him. I was just telling Him about them. And then I was trying to hold on to them and keep them for myself and then try to handle them.

And I just worry even more because it becomes more apparent that I can't handle these things on my own. but I'm trying my best and it just makes me worry. But when we really go to God and we give these things to Him, it's like 1 Peter 5, 7.

Peter tells us to cast all your burdens upon the Lord because He cares for you. Now what do we do when we cast something? You do it like you've got those, you've seen people have something on a string and they throw it out but then it comes right back.

[18 : 10] Or when you cast something, do you turn loose of it? It says, cast all your burdens upon the Lord for He cares for you.

So the principle or the truth in Philippians here is when we go to God and we give Him our worries and our concerns and our burdens, we turn loose of them and we give them to Him and then here's the real key.

This is the key. We trust God. We trust God to take care of those things in His way even when it may not be our way, even when we don't like the way He does it.

It may bring pain into our lives. It may bring discomfort into our lives. It may bring even more struggles in our lives. But we know God is a God of love who cares for His children.

He cares for us. He has a perfect plan and will for our lives and He is sovereign and He can handle and take care of the things that go on in our lives.

[19 : 30] And so the real key is do we trust God? Do we really trust Him with our lives and our circumstances even when it's not the same will or plan as what we want?

You see, sometimes we pray and we're like, I don't even know if I want to ask God this because I want it my way and I don't think God will want it the way I want it and I want it my way.

But we've got to learn to trust God and His will for our lives. Do you really trust Him today? Do you really know He cares for you?

He loves you? He can handle your problems. He can handle your worries and your concerns. He can handle the things that are going on on the world scene.

He can handle global warming or the political division in our land. Can we give those to Him, turn loose of them and trust Him?

[20 : 45] Because when we do, guess what? What does the Word of God say? Not what Jeff says.

This isn't a feel-good motivational speech today. What does God's Word tell us? The peace of God which is beyond human understanding will rule and reign in our hearts and our minds.

Now imagine, have you met people that go through life and you could just look at them and tell they don't have a worry in the world. They're confident, they're just optimistic, upbeat, positive.

You've met people like that and you wonder, what do they not know that I know? Or what makes them so confident? What makes them have so much peace?

They don't know what's going on with the United States and Russia. They don't know what's going on with China. I mean, did they not know what's going on with global warming? I mean, we could run around and be frantic about the things that are going on in our world but when people see you have peace in your heart and in your mind, a peace that is beyond human reason, they're going to want to know how you have that peace.

[22 : 11] This week I had a lady call me. She's not a member of this church, doesn't attend here but I've met her through a community Bible study she just wanted me to pray for her because she was just diagnosed with stomach cancer.

She said it's stomach cancer that has no cure for it. But she wanted me to pray for her but bottom line she wanted her cancer and her life to bring glory to the Lord.

She wanted this experience to be a witness to God and she was trusting the Lord in this situation no matter what else happened.

You know when we trust God when we really really grow to trust God and I'm not saying by the way that I'm there yet. I'm not saying I never worry I'm still growing like the rest of us but when we get to that point where we're growing and we learn to trust God more and more and more that even in times when our world is crumbling around us even in those moments when the doctor has given us bad news or we've been laid off from our job or marriage is not going well we can trust that God has a will and a plan for our lives and we can trust that He's working to bring about His will.

He may be molding and shaping us for future service. He may be removing things out of our lives that we need removed so that we look more like Christ and He's preparing us for the things that He has in our lives but when we trust Him then that's when the peace of God will rule and reign in our hearts and then the next thing He says is to thank Him He says with thanksgiving you know when we lift our burdens or cast our burdens upon Christ and we give it to Him then we can thank Him for it because we know that He's going to be working to bring about His will and James 1.6 tells us that if we pray but doubt then we shouldn't expect anything from the Lord and so when we give it to the Lord and we really have a thankful spirit we're showing evidence that we're trusting God that He's going to answer our prayers in a manner that He wills not necessarily ours so when we pray you know we need to follow that up with thanking

[24 : 47] God in advance thank you Lord in advance for I know that you're going to hear me and you're going to respond years ago I was struggling because I knew someone with cancer and I had never seen God heal anyone miraculously with cancer before you know terminal cancer and so I asked a gentleman how do I really pray and trust that God is going to answer you know I wanted to have faith but I wanted to believe that God would answer in the manner in which I was praying and he told me your faith isn't in that God will do what you ask your faith is in God your faith is that God is in control and that he is a sovereign God and will bring about his purposes and his will and as Christians even if we have a terminal illness and we're facing death we know we can trust God we can trust him knowing that if our life does end we will spend eternity in heaven with him and our goal is that our life and our death would bring glory and honor to him and that people would see God in us in whatever

God allows into our lives now look with me quickly at verse 8 and 9 finally brothers whatever is true whatever is noble whatever is right whatever is pure whatever is lovely whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praise worthy think about such things whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me put into practice and the God of peace the God of peace will be with you next to trusting God's plans for our lives learning to keep our mind focused upon that which is holy that which is pure that which is true and worthy of praise may be one of the hardest things that we learn to do we live in a world where negative news sells doesn't it bad news sells and so it's really hard because everywhere around us we're getting all this negative news negative messages negative stories you know all this negative all the time and it's hard for us to keep our minds focused on that which is pure that which is holy that which is good that which is admirable and so how do we do that well I've had to turn the TV off in the mornings and not watch the morning news because the morning news is filled with everything negative and bad you can find

I used to love getting up in the morning and after my prayer and Bible study I'd like to eat breakfast and watch a few minutes of the news I'm a headlines guy I don't read long stories I read headlines bam and I'd watch headline news or I'd watch a few minutes of one of the local news channels and be on my way but I found I have to quit doing that because everything on there is negative everything especially the CNN and Fox News both of them are always focused on what's wrong or what's you know not right about this group or that group or our nation or something and so I decided I don't need that in my life anymore I may still read some headlines but occasionally watch a little bit of the news just so I know what's going on in the world but I don't spend much time with it at all and focus more on spending time with God in the morning spend time in the word of God

I also like to listen to music in the mornings and play messages that are getting in my head and starting my day off focused on God focused upon who he is focused upon his word his promises and his truths and get my day started right and then throughout the day we need to make sure we're feeding our mind with positive things so how do we do that?

for me it's music you know I like to listen to Christian music for those of you who are irritated at people playing Christmas music I've already started playing Christmas music I want those positive messages in my mind positive thoughts in my head and keep me going throughout the day for you it may be something different for you it may be taking a walk in nature it may be memorizing scripture and reciting scripture throughout the day it may be something different for you but we need to find what is it going to take to get us to cut the negative demoralizing depressing messages out of our mind and feed our mind with that which is holy that which is true that which is pure and that which is good and when you find yourself drifting into worry or negativity and getting away from focused on God just stop you know most of us have spent a lifetime probably having the wrong thought processes and it takes time years maybe the rest of our lives to try to reprogram how we think and so when we find ourselves thinking wrong stop make a conscious decision that I'm not going to think like that and get back to the Lord baby stop and pray and ask God to help us to stop worrying about all these things or stop being anxious about all the stuff that's going on or stop just having negative thought processes and refocus upon the Lord that's where scripture memorization is really handy because we can quote a scripture we can remind ourselves of things that God's word says contrary to the words of the world and get ourselves focused back on the Lord or for me again it's Christian music because it refocused my mind and my attention upon the Lord and we focus upon who God is what he's done what he's capable of doing rather than to focus upon the things we're worried about you know years ago my last church my secretary had a little thing little picture it was a cartoon but it said instead of telling

[31 : 39] God how big your storm is why don't you tell the storm how big your God is and we have to focus and recharge the way we think to stay focused upon God and when we do these things when we really trust God we go to God when we find ourselves worrying go to God pray about everything instead of worrying pray about it give it to God trust God and thank him in advance for what he's going to do and the word of God not Jeff the word of God tells us what the peace of God which is beyond human understanding will rule and reign in our hearts and our minds let's go to the Lord in prayer Father we thank you we praise you for your word and your truth and your message we thank you for it today Lord and we ask that you forgive us where we've spent time worrying where we spend time doubting and I pray Lord that you help us to continue to grow in our ability to trust you to believe in you and to give our burdens and our concerns to you and trust you that you're going to work in them to accomplish your purpose and your will and we thank you for that in Jesus name amen

I'm going to ask the musicians I guess William to play quietly and you continue to pray and if I can pray with you this morning I'd be glad to do so and if I can pray