

Philippians: The Book of Joy (Phil. 4:4-7)

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[0 : 01] Amen. Well, good morning, church. Good morning, church. Man, don't you love this beautiful, gray, western Washington weather we have going here?

I do want to welcome you this morning on behalf of Scott and the rest of the team. I want to welcome you and those that are watching by video. We want to welcome you as well. So go ahead and turn open to Philippians chapter 4. We've got four verses to consider this morning, looking at verses 4 to 7.

Familiar text, so we're just going to blaze right through it. Promises, promises, right? You guys heard it, right?

Paul says finally. He didn't really mean finally. So let me pray for us and quiet our hearts before the Lord and then we'll dive into the text.

[1 : 06] Let's pray. Lord, we're reminded of the words of the psalmist in Psalm 46, 10, where he writes, Lord, we're going to be still before you this morning.

We want to quiet our minds, our hearts. We want to be still before the proclamation of your word. Lord, would you speak to us.

Might we be an undistracted people this morning and as we walk with you this week. Lord, would you minister to people as they have need. They need encouragement that you would provide it. They need conviction that you would do that as well. If there's courage that you want to grow in us, please, Lord, have your way. We commit our time to you.

Holy Spirit, would you empower me, give me unction and clarity of thought. And we will give you thanks, Lord Jesus, for what you give to us this morning through the beauty and power of your word.

[2 : 20] In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So I was thinking about technology a little bit this week as we come to this text. And I was just thinking about how much technology has altered just the human experience in particular in the last 150 years, specifically related to the communication, just the information access and flow that we have today.

And it really affects the fear of what we're aware of, what we think about. And I think of technology as sort of advancing, it increases our range in terms of information and communication, which can be a good thing, but it can also be a detriment.

And so things have changed a lot in the last 150 years, right? 1844, invention of the telegraph.

People could now communicate. communicate through Morse code.

And that was revolutionary between cities. I mean, it completely, like, put the drumbeat and, you know, signal fire companies out of business forever. A little telegraph humor there.

In 1876, the invention of the telephone. So no longer do people have to translate dots and dashes. They can speak in their own language.

[3 : 47] In 1895, the radio was invented. Sort of have this image of a Norman Rockwell painting of family, you know, huddled around the family radio, listening, the listening box where stories are told.

And then in 1927, the television where stories are shown. We have to use less of our imagination now to receive and process. This one's for free.

Frozen food was invented in 1929, which I think is sort of comical because the microwave didn't come around until 1946. So you have 15 years of Stouffer's frozen in your freezer with nothing to... At any rate. That didn't even need to make the list. That was for free. In 1983, the PC was invented. In January, the Time Magazine named the 1982 Man of the Year the personal computer. And eventually then we have access to the internet.

[4 : 52] Today we walk around with these supercomputers in our pockets that double as telephones. And I think the... I don't know if this is true. You'll have to ask Kamesh after service. He

can fact check me here.

But apparently our phones have 120 million times the processing power of the computer that got Apollo 11 to land on the moon. Okay.

Kamesh is good with it. Okay. So it's such... Think about that. And I just... If we lived 200 years ago, our human experience would be so very different than today.

Like how much would we know? What would we be thinking about? We wouldn't be thinking about things beyond our neighborhood or the city in which we live.

What would we think about? And maybe the better question is, what would we worry about as we consider the text this morning? What would we worry about other than local matters?

[5 : 52] But today, right, we have podcasts and we have news organizations that decide for us what's newsworthy outside of our neighborhoods and tell us what we ought to be concerned about.

And some of that stuff, probably, we ought to be concerned about. And not only are we told what to worry about, but now we can go out and we can retrieve it ourselves.

And I know some of you belong to that secret society of self-diagnosers, anonymous. And I would just, you know, WebMD.

Just stop. Okay? Stop. For your own sanity and peace. But I think my point here is that we live in this day where it's easy to stack layers of stress and worry to a life that probably already has its share of anxiety-producing issues.

Amen? Amen? So this morning, we're going to be looking at a familiar text related to this issue of worry. I think, unfortunately, this text has become, at times, it's turned into a platitude.

[7 : 02] And we don't really think about the truth of it and the power and the promise of it. So I want us to listen this morning with ears and hearts of faith. This promise today, it really has everything to do with our joy as well as our peace.

And so this morning, as we dive into the text, we have four verses. It's really the verses 6 and 7 that deal with this particular issue. And so we're going to hit the first two very quickly, verses 4 and 5.

And they're a bit of a review, but I think for continuity, Paul continues to remind us of some things.

So let's blaze through these so we can get to this promise related to how do we deal with this issue of worry in our lives.

So beginning here in verse 4, Paul writes, he says, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. So Paul here, it's not a new thought. In fact, this is a restatement.

He says it in chapter 3, verse 1. Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. This is the theme of this letter, joy. And what did we learn about joy? Joy a few sermons ago.

[8 : 14] Joy is different than happiness, right? Happiness is based upon our happenings, circumstance, right?

All my teams won. My bracket's intact. I'm smarter than my coworkers. I'm happy, right? It's well with my soul.

I got a promotion. No. But let's say for argument's sake, right?

Oh, I got a promotion. I got a raise. Oh, I'm happy. Right? Or why? If your husband's like, hey, I'm going to take you out tonight. You're like, a date? It's been six months.

A date? Right? And it's, right? Happiness dependent on happenings. And joy is different than that, right? Joy is volitional in nature.

[9 : 10] It's a choice. Not beholden to circumstance of each day. And we know this because Paul actually commands it. He says, hey, rejoice.

Rejoice. But he says, rejoice in the Lord. Joy is rooted in the gospel story that God is writing in your life and in my life. Rejoice in the Lord.

Yeah. Romans 8.1. There's no condemnation for those in Christ. Oh, my sins are forgiven. It's well with my soul. And I would say we would do well to remember the gospel each and every day.

Reminded that the slate has been wiped clean for our joy church. Amen? And so we're commanded. And that's reiterated throughout this letter. So Paul reminds the Philippians, again, do this.

And then he goes on and he gives a quick exhortation that it first sort of seems to stand alone. He says then in verse 5, he says, let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

[10 : 17] The Lord is at hand. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. Reasonableness. This is to restrain yourself from retaliation.

This is gentleness. And I think this is very counter to our culture, church.

It's not a reasonable culture. This is a protest culture. This is a litigate culture. And yet, as believers, we're called to walk in restraint, to walk in gentleness.

And I think actually what Paul is doing here is he's actually reminding the whole church that the things that I reminded those two women about, and Scott shared with us last week in Philippians 4.2, where he says, hey, I entreat Iodia and I entreat syndicate to agree in the Lord.

So Paul had an issue. They weren't getting along. They needed to forgive and come to a place of back of koinonia, a fellowship. And he's saying, hey, the stuff I reminded them about, it's for all of us.

[11:24] Every one of us is to walk in a gentle posture. And I like how Paul says it here. He says, the reason that we can do this is because what?

The Lord is at hand. Okay? The reason we don't have to retaliate beyond the truth of the gospel that we've been forgiven and much so we can forgive is the thing that Paul reminds them of here. He says, because God, the Lord is at hand. God is going to handle it. And I think as Paul says, the Lord is at hand here. The sense here, the emphasis here is not, he's not, I don't think, emphasizing the presence of God.

I think he's actually talking about the Lord returning. The Lord is going to return. And recall, because he says this back in chapter 3, he says in Philippians 3.20, our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think what Paul is doing here is he's reminding the Philippians, the Lord is returning, and when he does, he'll judge perfectly. You judge imperfectly. God judges perfectly.

[12:31] He will exact justice far better than any of us can. Right? Paul told the Romans in chapter 12, leave it to the Lord, because the Lord says, vengeance is mine.

I will repay. So leave it in his hands. I don't have to take matters into my own hands. Because they're in God's. And I can now live peaceably with all.

I'm going to trust that he's got it. Okay? So Paul reminds the Philippians of these things of joy, of walking in a restrained and a gentle posture.

We don't have to go around demanding our rights and exacting justice. God's going to take care of that. He's going to take care of that. Okay. Okay. Let's get into our core section this morning, this familiar text, as we consider this issue of worry and anxiety.

Paul writes, beginning here in verse 6. He says, Now, if I asked how many of you guys have heard that before, probably a lot of hands would go up.

[13:46] It's a very familiar text. And we don't know, as Paul writes this, like, don't be anxious about anything. We don't know what was producing stress for these believers in Philippi.

They didn't have technology at the day to be concerned about this town next to them and then over there in Rome. Like, the communication was very limited.

But there were things going on in their sphere of knowledge, awareness, where Paul says, Hey, I don't want you to walk in a posture of anxiety. And he's exhorting them to not be anxious.

Anxious. What is anxiety? What is the word here, anxious? It's to be troubled. It's to be worried. Maybe a better word is to fret over.

Don't fret over this stuff. Don't do it unless circumstances warrant it. Is that what Paul says? No.

[14:53] What does Paul say? He says, Do not be anxious about what? Anything. Guys, that's comprehensive. Right? Everything fits under the banner of anything.

And maybe you're like, well, that's easy for Paul. But he was a great apostle. He doesn't know my circumstance. You may be going through something very difficult.

And I don't want to minimize. I don't want to make light of it. It could be incredibly distressing. I'm not dismissing that. But it should minister to all of us that Paul is the one giving this exhortation.

Because of all men, Paul knew worry. He knew difficulty. He knew fretting over things. He had much. Like, it wasn't that Paul was just occasionally in a difficult chapter.

That comprised the book of his life. And he tells us in 2 Corinthians 11, he gives us a little snapshot beginning in verse 24 where he says, Gosh, I'm going to go on a boat.

[16:31] Danger at sea. Danger from false brothers. In toil and hardship. Through many sleepless nights. In hunger and thirst.

Often without food. There was no food to comfort in cold and exposure. Church, humanly speaking, Paul's life is a complete dumpster fire.

I mean, it doesn't get more difficult, more trying. So he's not writing this as though he is through a difficult chapter.

We know where he's writing it from. He's on home arrest. He's chained to a Roman soldier. He's not on the Caribbean in a hammock.

He's not in a cozy lodge at Schweitzer. He's on home arrest. And execution, perhaps, imminent. And I believe that Paul had the integrity to follow his own words when he says, Hey, do not be anxious about anything.

[17:36] Paul is experiencing joy as he writes about joy. Even in conditions that are less than joy or peace producing.

Church, worry is a huge joy stealer. Amen? And the enemy is a thief. He wants to steal, kill, destroy. Worry is a calling card. He loves this. Gets you worried about stuff. Right? You tied up in knots over something, easy to lose sight of joy.

Oh, I got this medical test, this exam, and now I'm right. The results aren't coming for three days. Right? And it's just, oh, how's the joy?

Maybe you're in a season of waiting for God to answer a prayer request that you have made over and over and over. Well, how's the joy? Maybe you're financially in a place where you're just, you're upside down and the bills are just, they're just stacking up.

[18:49] How's the joy? How's the peace? And need I even mention, it steals joy, but worry.

I think it also shelves us related to missionary activity, church. The enemy knows this. Right? Get us absorbed in worrying on the inside.

What happens? Our eyes are averted from people in need of rescue and ministry on the outside.

That's what happens. When our eyes and hearts are concerned for others, however, we have less time to be anxious on the inside.

Interesting how that works. Right? Man, if I wake up today thinking about, Lord, let me be a blessing to somebody else, I'm not so stirred up on the inside about my own concerns.

Church, nothing good comes from a spirit of worry. Amen? You guys don't believe it.

[19:56] Nothing good comes from a spirit of worry. Amen? There's no benefit. Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 6. He says, hey, and which of you being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

So worry doesn't produce joy. It doesn't produce mission. It doesn't give us a bonus hour of longer life. And Paul's exhortation here, it just leaves no room for a pattern of worry in the heart of the believer.

But church, this is not some flesh-driven exhortation to simply stop. Okay? This isn't the just do it campaign of the 90s or 80s.

I don't know. I'm getting old. It seems like it was yesterday. There's a resource that we have, church. We have a gift, actually, from the heart, from the hand of our king to combat worry.

And here it is. The second part of verse 6. Let's look at verse 6 again. Do not be anxious about anything. And here it is. But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[21:22] What's the resource that's often untapped? What is it? It's prayer. It's prayer. Well, Jay, what's prayer?

Well, let me give you a very simple definition. Billy Graham defines prayer this way. Prayer is simply talking to God. Okay.

I can do that. And it's something that's possible because Jesus has removed the barrier of sin between us and the Father. So we have this thing called prayer.

And so maybe this morning you're like, prayer? Really? You're going to prayer? I know about prayer. I've been doing the Christian thing for a while. Right? Of course, Jay. You're a pastor. You have to say the answer's prayer. Just pray about it. Just pray about it. Jay, my life's falling apart. Just pray? Really?

[22:20] Am I paying for this one? Prayer doesn't stand in isolation, church. Okay?

I'm not saying just pray. Pray. There may be other activities to combat worry that buttress our prayer life. So this isn't some Pollyanna should say.

Just pray. Okay. There may be other things. Let me just list five. I already mentioned one. Other things that we can do in concert with prayer.

Well, let's engage in mission. That'll help your worry. Church, I was suffocating under a mountain of worry in 2015. I had lost my job, my health, my income, church community.

It was a bad time a decade ago. This is a good time. Man, 55 is so much better than 45, just for those that are nearing 45.

[23 : 21] But I'll tell you what. As I got into my car and I began to minister to people, sharing the gospel, praying with them, what happened?

All those things that were just this overwhelming, dark, gray cloud, it sort of began to clear. And it grew out of the fact that every day I was thinking about the Lord could use me.

The Lord could use me. And as we get engaged in serving people, being used of Him, man, it helps all those things that would just begin to just stare at ourselves, they begin to fade.

So I would say, man, in addition to prayer, be involved in ministry. That's going to help you. Second thing, how about you just claim some of the promises of God?

Hey, this is biblical meditation. Like, yes, God's Word. Like, biblical meditation is not emptying the mind. It's filling it with true realities of God and His promises.

[24 : 25] How I'm worried. We'll claim a promise. Here, write down Psalm 46, 1 and 2. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth gives way.

The mountains, they move, they slide into the sea. That sounds pretty bad. But the Lord is my refuge. He's promised to be that and my strength. I'm going to meditate on my God today.

It's going to help you with the worry. A couple other things. Life together. This is the body. I have a couple mentions here. Third thing we can do, it's encouragement.

You struggle with discouragement and worry? Gather with a brother. Gather with a sister.

Encourage one another. That helps with the worry.

It's a huge grace. When somebody is in a difficult season, just the mere knowledge that you're not alone is profound. And I think so many of you know this.

[25 : 30] When you were in a place and then all of a sudden somebody, they saw you and you had a sense they understand, they get it, I'm not alone. And God just uses that ministry of presence, of the gift of his body.

The local church. It's a good thing. Or how about life together? In addition to prayer, how about taking some wise counsel? Well, my stress is financially, we're upside down.

Well, go get some wise counsel related to finances. Pray and go get some wise counsel. And then finally, I think this one's underutilized, although maybe not so much here in eastern Washington.

If you were back in Seattle, you would need this, but you guys, I think, maybe get this. Get out and enjoy God's creation. Scripture says the heavens actually declare the glory of God.

God. Creation speaks about the God behind all the created cool stuff around us. Jonathan Edwards, who wrote Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, part of the first great awakening in America, people think, oh, he was a downer.

[26 : 45] No, he was obsessed with beauty and understood, right, that the beauty in creation is a reflection of the infinite. God refreshes us through, yes, a fallen, yet good creation that he's given us to enjoy because he speaks like, yes, I'm real.

I can't speak to Helen Keller's faith. It's a little unclear where she was there. But man, she was deaf. She was blind by the age of two.

And yet, she could see the beauty of creation all around her. And this is what she said. And she says, I cannot see. I who cannot see, I find a hundred things of interest that interest me through mere touch.

I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf. I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch or the rough shaggy bark of a pine.

I feel the delightful velvety texture of a flower and discover its remarkable convolutions and something of the miracle of nature is revealed to me.

[27 : 52] Occasionally, if I am very fortunate, I can place my hand gently on a small tree and feel the happy quiver of a bird in full thong. Like she was attuned to God's creation and I think there's a gift there for us, church.

Man. Man. Some of you may need to go outside and just... Some of you may need to go by a telescope where you can just look at the moon and be reminded God's holding that right there by the power of His will.

Or get out and see a beautiful sunset. Or look at the night sky and the galaxies. And just... He's got things under control. He's holding it all together by the power of His will.

He's got this and He's got me. And the Lord will minister to us through His creation. Now I had a sixth one I'm not going to mention, but I will because I just said it.

I think exercise is in there as well. So get outside and move. And I think God's designed our bodies to respond in a way. All of this. See, there's other things that we can do in concert with prayer, right?

[29 : 01] There may be a comprehensive approach, but the key question is this. Is prayer the central vehicle you're committed to as you daily live amidst the real worries of life? And that's what Paul is exhorting us with.

Or do we somehow lean on things other than prayer? Do we deal with stress, anxiety in destructive ways?

Do we seek peace in wasteful ways? We look to distract ourselves. Oh, I'm stressed. I'm going to shop. I'm going to watch sports. I'm going to be entertained. Or I'm going to do it through self-medicating.

I'm going to flee to a substance for my inner shalom. Or pursuing evil to distract, to escape.

The Scottish writer Bruce Marshall in the mid-20th century penned words often attributed to J.K. Chesterton where he says, the young man who rings the bell at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God.

[30 : 01] So what are you filling that space with where God's like, man, I want to be the one to bring you peace? Those are all broken cisterns that can hold no peace.

And so, what is this central gift, grace that God has given us in our arsenal to confront the anxiety, the fear?

It's prayer. It's prayer. And it's not leaning on something else centrally, church.

It's actually leaning on someone else. It's not just prayer. It's prayer to a God that's involved in creation, in your life.

Colossians 1, 16, 17 says, for by him all things were created. It's all his. And if you skip to the end of that, verse 17, it says, and in him all things hold together.

[31 : 07] Church, this is, prayer is like being reminded of the presence of a friend. A friend often brings us courage, brings us security.

Well, how about someone more than a friend? It's your father. And there's solace when we're like, yes.

Prayer connects us. In Disneyland, I've shared this before, one of my daughters, three years old, was stuck on a rope ladder and the big kids were just running over her.

And I saw, and I was like, she was just frozen. Three-year-old frozen, not good. And, what did I do? I like, jumped into action, got up on that rope, grabbed her, brought her down.

And then, a few moments go by and she looks at Julie, she's like, Daddy rescued me. And I was like, yeah. Like, it's our father.

[32 : 13] It's our father. Who's with us? It's not some small genie in a bottle. We keep in a pocket. It's Jehovah Jireh.

God says, I am your provider. It's Jehovah Rapha. I am your healer. I'm the God who heals. It's Jehovah Nissi. I am the God that is the banner that goes before you into every battle.

And I am also Jehovah Shalom, the God who is your peace. So come to me. He's the one that holds all things together through the power of His will. He's with us.

Which is why, actually, church, we can walk in peace today. Regardless of this, the mountain slides into the ocean. We can board airplanes.

We can serve on foreign mission fields. We can boldly identify with Jesus in a culture that hates God. because the Lord is with us.

[33 : 16] And we've been given this gift to seek His presence. Let's look more closely this gift of prayer to deal with our worries. What kind of prayer specifically?

Paul describes it for us here. He says, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Supplication. That's a petition. So specifically, Paul's saying, make a request. It's a request. Ask God.

Paul's giving us permission to ask God for things? Yes. Yes, He is. Ask Him. Church, that's a good thing. You're actually being obedient to Scripture when you ask God for things.

Don't be complaining when you do it. Do it in a spirit of thankfulness, but ask. Ask Him. Church, I have a personal goal in life.

[34 : 27] I never want to hear the Lord say to me what James records in James 4.2 where He says, Jay, you do not have because you do not ask.

That is a personal goal of mine. I would suggest that you ought to make it one of yours. I would much rather not have because God said no versus it was on me for not asking.

So I'm just going to ask. And if I could just give us one principle related to prayer this morning. The first principle of prayer. Here it is, guys.

Are you ready? Remember, you're paying big money for this one. The first principle of prayer. Pray. Pray. Pray.

Pray. The theologian S.D. Gordon said it this way. You can do more than pray after you have prayed but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

[35 : 37] Say it one more time for people like me with small minds. You can do more than pray after you have prayed but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

Well, what should I pray about? Well, everything. Pray about everything. What is it that's weighing on your heart? Well, I don't know.

Well, whatever's there. Let me give you an image of prayer. Our family. We have an excess of chickens. chickens. It started small and then it just and we were up to about 50, 60 birds and it was like six and they were cute and then it just oh, we've got to get with that and this variety and we got I'm just saying we have them all.

We collected them all of every variety, every color and our chickens lay eggs in places they're supposed to but then they also lay them all around our home, our property and you just be out walking around all of a sudden you're like there's an egg.

Okay. I better pick that thing up. Right? And I think prayer is kind of like that. You go through the day I don't know what to pray about and then all of a sudden you spot something you spot an egg.

[36 : 56] Right? Oh. Okay. Now, am I going to carry that thing all day? No. I'm going to talk to the Lord about it and then I'm going to put it in the basket.

Right? And this is where the metaphor breaks down because then we crack them and we eat them but just I think as the Holy Spirit kind of works in our life and we go through the day there's certain things that just sort of like we get burdened for.

Those burdens are like spotting an egg and when you spot an egg what do you do with it? Well, you don't dismiss it. You don't ignore it. Go, okay. I was walking through the day and this person came to mind I'm like, oh, I'm going to pick it up and I'm going to pray about that.

Lord, just thinking about Scott today. I know he's not feeling well you know, moving some things in his backyard bending in ways he shouldn't his back's out again and Lord just so I've talked to the Lord about it.

Is that a real thing? That is a real thing. Okay. This is like reality TV in a way. It's pretty cool. But the things and you just all through the day you're collecting eggs you're putting them in God's basket.

[38 : 02] Right? And then you don't carry them. You don't have to carry them the rest of the day. Oh, Lord, this thing I'm concerned I got this appointment this meeting. Oh, I've got this I got to say some hard things and Lord go before me and okay I'm going to give that to you it's in your basket.

Okay. Now I'm going to live. So prayer is like that. Hopefully, I don't know. Hopefully that will help you. I can spot things spot eggs put them in God's basket.

In terms of what else to pray about next to praying for those things that the Lord brings and salvation of the lost let me just give you a chief prayer request of mine.

And I hope this is helpful for you. And it's I pray it all the time. Okay. James 1 5 If any of you lack wisdom let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given to him. If you lack wisdom ask God. Ask. There it is again. Let's talk to the Lord about things. The reason that I mentioned this verse in particular church is to dispel I think a wrong view about prayer.

[39 : 13] Some of us think prayer is like man if I pray and then I got to wait and I'm looking for some external internal sign. Right. I think God's going to like whisper to me something.

So I pray and I'm like okay. Hey. Huh. Nope. Man. Yeah. Nope. Didn't get anything. And I'm like well it didn't work. And I think we have a wrong view sometimes about prayer.

Like prayer is trying to figure out what God's already decided for our life and we got to somehow tap into that so he'll tell us back. When I think scripture actually lays out well actually ask for wisdom so that you can make real free choices in life that honor the Lord.

And it happens to be the thing that maybe he's placed in your heart and do the thing that you want. So I'm asking for wisdom all the time. Not trying to get this little secret signal from the Lord.

Okay. God doesn't need me to pray to speak in my life. Okay. He's spoken in a book. And if he wants to do something supernatural beyond this he can do it without prayer.

[40 : 20] In fact Paul the Apostle wasn't even a Christian and God's like hey Paul got his attention. Right? So I think we need to be careful on that. Prayer centrally is how God hears our voice.

How we have his ear. God's word is centrally how we hear his voice. Did you catch that? God's word is how we hear his voice. Prayer is how we have his ear.

And I would say think about prayer as a conversation that you didn't begin. God's already started it. These things that he's shown you now pray over them. I pray for wisdom.

I ask before I drive typically I talk to the Lord. Lord if I give me opportunity to share something of the gospel of encouragement to somebody that gets in my car. Would you give me wisdom as I have conversations?

I don't always know how to answer questions or how to respond. Help me in that. And I believe that he does. But I'm not like listening for like okay. Some of you are like well Jay I don't still get how prayer works.

[41 : 32] And full transparency I don't either. I'm just I know and you're letting me be a pastor here. I get it. I don't completely know how it works either church.

What I do know are there things that can inhibit our prayers. Scripture reveals these things. So I would say let's remove those to sort of lower the drag coefficient and be more assured like Lord's hearing.

Right? One of the things that we're given in this section is hey when you pray do it with what? A spirit of what? Gripeness? Thanksgiving. Okay? I'm not thrilled to bestow blessings on my kids when they're griping and entitled.

Our Heavenly Father I think we understand something of Him in that. So Paul says when you do it do it with Thanksgiving. It says in James 4.3 don't do it with wrong motives. You want to just you're asking for things to spend it on your passions.

Those aren't good prayer requests. So don't make those. Right? The aim the mission of this church is that what? We would live unto the what? The glory of God.

[42 : 44] So I think many of our prayers should be Lord I want to give you glory in this give me wisdom to know what that looks like now go freely live. Instead of trying to decipher the secret plans God has that He didn't really tell you about but if you just are quiet long enough it'll be like it'll pop into your head.

It just it doesn't work that way. We're actually called to live by faith so we don't fully know but we take what He shared with us and we apply it.

We live unto His glory and seeking to honor Him and then I think there's actually freedom to do what we want. To lay yourself in the Lord He'll give you the desires of your heart.

He worked through our desires. There's freedom. There's joy in walking with the Lord in this life.

What else hinders our prayers? Well we don't have intent in terms of turning from sin the psalmist Psalm 66 18 if I had cherished iniquity in my heart the Lord would not have listened.

My prayers aren't working. Well are you harboring sin? Have you partitioned your life? I've told God you get 90%. Well here's another one for men honor your wives.

[44 : 03] 1 Peter 3 7 honor the woman so that your prayers may not be hindered. There's things that we can do to lower the drag co-efficiency of our prayers to our Heavenly Father.

Even with the right motives church and posture before God there's no promises of how He will respond. There's not a secret equation here for you math people.

That's not our realm. God's the benefactor. He determines how it plays out. If He says no, no is a grace. Maybe in disguise. And yet there's peace in knowing that I don't have, you don't have, not as a result of us not asking.

Right? Amen? You don't have because He didn't ask. So ask. And let God decide. Sometimes it's wait. How many love to wait?

Nobody loves to wait. The scripture writers didn't love to wait. The psalmist. Psalm 71. I don't want to wait. Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

[45 : 12] O Lord, make haste. I'm going to repeat it. Make haste. Hurry up. Help me. And let's see. Yet, church, as we bring our requests to God, there is a promised result.

Verse 7. Here it is. Here's the promise. It says, And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Will guard your hearts. this word is a military term will protect by by a military guard don't you love that will prevent a hostile invasion of worry into your heart god says i'll do that for you your worries lay them down at the cross on the back of your very good capable god who's promised to shepherd you all the days of your life to never leave to never forsake we know the promise the exhortation of first peter 5 7 cast your anxieties on him he cares for you so bring them bring those things cast them on him and this word to cast is beautiful it's like throwing heavy cargo on the back of a beast of burden so you don't have to carry and maybe my egg analogy is not so good because it's not so burdensome but if you carry a bunch of them it is you put them in his basket give them to give them to the lord you got a heavy burden give it to god one of our daughters she came into town this week so that's kind of fun but she came with a 75 pound luggage suitcase and i picked her up at the airport and i was like shocked i was like what in the world are you doing i was like thinking about this text i'm like 75 pounds good night what's in there peanut butter i don't know what are you bringing and it was just like how in the world can you imagine pulling that 75 pound luggage around with you all day and yet some of you are doing that because you're neglecting this gift the lord has given you called prayer and so be like clara who just said dad you take it there it is give your stuff give that suitcase to your heavenly father let him deal with it he'll carry it cast that heavy burden he wants to carry it so you don't have to let's pray father we're thankful for this promise of a peace that surpasses understanding lord we're thankful that prayer is not just this it's not it's not a an equation to write it's it's communion with a person it's communion with you lord and we love the fact that you're actually described as the prince of peace and so lord i don't know what's going on in the lives of your people i don't know the difficulties but lord i think about habakkuk's prayer where your mind is in habakkuk 3 though the fig tree should not blossom the fruit beyond the vine the produce of the olive fail the fields yielding no food flocks are cut off from the fold there be no herd in the stalls and yet yet i will rejoice in the lord i will take joy in the god of my salvation lord would you minister to your people today by your presence speak to them clearly through your word and lord lend your ear to to us as we cry out and father as we do as we take those things that are just heavy cumbersome they weigh in our souls down lord might we give them to you for you've promised to carry and lord let us walk in the joy of our salvation lord thank you for this gift of prayer we want to be a people that pray in your name we pray amen thanks for joining us thanks for joining us thanks for joining us