

Peace? In Christ!

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[0:00] Good morning. We're going to read the Bible now. So if you can open up to Philippians chapter 4. I'm going to start at verse 2 and read through to 23, the end of the chapter.

Philippians 4.2.

And I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern for me.

[1:40] You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am in to be content.

I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet, it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you, Philippians, yourselves, know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

Even in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gifts, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment and more.

I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours, according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

[2:54] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Be with your spirit. All right.

Good morning, church. How are you doing? Good morning. It's good. It's good to be here. Yeah, we're going to be diving into Philippians 4 today.

And it talks about something called anxiety. And just before I jump in the sermon, I want to share that some of my friends actually do suffer from anxiety, like as a medical condition.

And so I don't think today's passage is to target people with that. Medical condition anxiety is a very complex thing. It's both physiological and mental.

[4:01] And it's just very, very complex. And so if you suffer from that, please don't feel that this passage is like we're attacking you or judging you. It does provide some resources to help, but it's not saying this is the cure.

You just do this and you'll be great. And if you're not great, then there's something wrong with you. It's not like that at all. So I just want to put it out there before I start. And why don't we pray now as we come before God's word.

Yeah. Father God, you're a very, very good God. And your word is enough for the whole of life.

And Lord, we remember those people, our friends, our brothers and sisters, who suffers conditions that plagues their life in a very painful way.

Lord, I pray that you may comfort them personally and through your word. And Lord, today we just want to worship you well, really well, through the word and through the gospel of your son.

[5:20] Help us with that. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Peace. Who doesn't want peace, please put your hand up.

Okay. All right. We're all good here. Politicians love promising it. The five rings of the Olympic Games symbolizes it. Nations fight and people die for it.

But what is peace and how do we get it? In English, the word peace usually describes what's not happening. No fighting, no conflict, no chaos.

But when the Bible talks about peace, the word peace is actually far richer than nothing bad is going on. In the Old Testament, the word is shalom.

That's how Judeans greet each other every day. It carries the meaning of wholeness, completeness, a life that is restored to the way God meant it to be.

[6:24] Not just calm on the service, but well-being at the core. In the New Testament, the Greek word is irini. The idea of being joined together.

It carries similar elements to shalom, but it adds unity, inner steadiness, and it's not just the absence of war, but again the presence of God's wholeness.

So when we hear Paul saying, grace to you and peace from God in Philippians 1, verse 2, he's not wishing the church, hey, have a great worry-free or trouble-free weekend or week.

He's saying, may God's wholeness be with you. Do you think that kind of peace is actually possible on this side of eternity?

Or is it only a dream, an aspiration that can only be realized when we are in heaven? Today we are going to look at Philippians 4, verses 2-9.

[7:24] A section where Paul shows a church in conflict and believers under a lot of pressure. How the peace of God can and must become in real day life.

I'll be sharing the passage with three points. First, it's in your bulletin. Making peace in the troubled church. Second, showing peace to the troubling world.

There's a typo in the bulletin, by the way, it's my fault. And the third point is finding peace for our troubled heart. Are we ready to dive in? Or do you need another coffee?

Maybe coffee. All right, let's go, all right. Point one, making peace in a troubled church. About 10 years ago, I attended a peacemaking conference.

It was a pastor's conference in Houston, you know, where they used to launch rockets and stuff.

And one of the U.S. speakers was from Houston. And he shared that 60 years ago, there was only one Chinese-speaking church in the whole of Houston.

[8:32] Now, Houston is a huge city, okay? It's much, much bigger than Newcastle or Sydney. And there's only one Chinese-speaking church for all the migrants, you know, who spoke Chinese. And then the guy, the speaker at the time, shared, but now we have 20.

So I said, oh, wow, praise the Lord, right? You know, like 60 years, you know, 20 churches. You do the math. That's one new church in every three years. Pretty good. But then he added, unfortunately, those were not church plants.

They were all church splits. And that's exactly the kind of situation Paul is addressing here in Philippians chapter 4.

As wonderful as the Philippians church was, you know, he called them my joy and crown and my beloved in verse 1. If you look at verses 2 and 3, it shows us that there are two influential women, Evodia and Syntyche.

And they were likely leaders in Paul's church planting team originally. Problem is, they're locked in conflict. And most commentators agree this disagreement that they're having was serious enough to threaten the unity of the entire church in Philippi.

[9:42] So the question becomes this. How does Paul call the troubled church to make peace? How do you overcome this massive problem that many modern churches have faced and are facing?

Let's look at verse 2 here. Paul says, Why does Paul name names here?

Is he trying to shame them? Not at all. Paul isn't creating drama here. He's making peace. Instead of pretending everything is fine, you know, and just have communion and have pizza, you know, Paul addresses the conflict openly because the conflict is already impacting the church publicly. And when a disagreement is affecting the whole church, you deal with it in front of the whole church, not behind closed doors. That protects a body of Christ from gossip, confusion and division. And that's the cancerous stuff that usually quietly kills the entire congregation. But notice about something striking here. You have two leaders fighting and Paul never tells us why.

[10:55] Who's right here? Who's wrong here? We don't know. Because Paul chooses not to tell us. Sometimes Paul does take sides. You think of 1 Corinthians.

Look at Galatians. Truth matters. Doctrine matters. But here, the issue isn't doctrine. It is the heart. So Paul gives a simple command here in this verse.

Agree in the Lord. Agree in the Lord. What does that mean? It means, well, not blind agreement. It doesn't mean pretending nothing is wrong or refusing to make changes until everybody is happy. Agree in the Lord here literally means have the same mind in the Lord. Have the same mind in the Lord. What does that mean? Well, Paul already explained that, what that same mind is when we're back at chapter 2.

It is the mind of Christ. Self-giving, humble, and sacrificial love. Was it in Christ's best interest to lay aside his glory and put on human flesh?

[12:02] No, but he did it for us anyways. Was it in Christ's best interest to endure the shame of the Roman cross? No, but he did it for us anyways.

This is why Christians can move from conflict to peace in the Lord. Because we've been touched, changed, and humbled by Jesus' sacrificial love.

Whether we are Christian leaders or not, Christians agree on two things in the Lord. First, we are sinners, though we sometimes forget. Second, we are saved by grace.

Forgiven with a forgiveness that we do not deserve. Though we sometimes forget that too, don't we? And if we agree that we are all sinners, how can we treat ourselves as morally or in any other way superior to the person we are in conflict with?

And if we agree that we are forgiven by forgiveness that is undeserved, how can we withhold forgiveness from others when they don't deserve it?

[13:12] Miroslav Vov, what a name. A Croatian professor of theology at Yale says this. Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans and myself from the community of sinners.

Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans and myself from the community of sinners. When we remember who we are, sinners saved by grace, conflict becomes an opportunity to display the gospel, not destroy the church.

In fact, some of the deepest gospel growth happens when conflict is handled really well. Happens in marriages too, right? Yeah.

The best way for a church to avoid conflict is to be shallow. Hey, how's the weather? How's the quickest score?

What's your next home improvement project? I'm working on this. No death. No honesty. No admonishment. No confession. No growth.

[14:23] But the scripture says this. As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Can iron sharpening be ever done without friction?

No, right? Growth always costs something. Christians shouldn't fear conflict. We shouldn't even aim to just resolve conflict because even the world can do that.

We should learn to do conflict so well and so lovingly that non-Christians would look at us and say, there is something Jesus about that. Not saying we should look for unnecessary conflicts, you know, stir the things up and rock the boat.

Just for the sake of doing it. But when conflicts do arise, let us use them really well for God's glory because the gospel changes everything.

One of the best resources I've used that help churches conflict well is called the Watermark Conflict Field Guide. You can Google it and it's a free download.

[15:30] The guide is basically a Bible study based on Ken Sandy's peacemaking principles written by an evangelical independent church that I did some training with.

The church has 1,000 small groups, 10,000 committed members. They renew membership every single year. 300 staff and 10 elders. Can you imagine the kind of conflict and the amount of it they have to handle?

You know how schools and workplaces practice fire drills, right? You can't have a school that doesn't do that or a workplace. It's against the law. They are done so that people know exactly what to do during an actual fire.

The biblical guide that I was talking about is like a manual for that drill. It's straight out from the Bible. It's covered in Bible verses that talks about conflicts. Moving now on to verse 3, embedded in Paul's call for help is to resolve this conflict is a vivid reminder that they are not just leaders and members of a church.

They are gospel soldiers. The term translated as true companion in the ESV here literally means yoke fellow or sometimes used to call people fellow soldier.

[16:53] Paul can be calling on a particular person or the whole church here. But the message is clear. Church members help one another fight through conflict, not fight one another. The word labored in this verse, describing leaders in the conflict, literally means struggle together.

It doesn't matter if we fight in a church. We struggle together for the gospel, for the same king. We struggle together is yet another military term. And, you know, and when we go back to verse 1, stand firm is another one.

People have fought side by side. I know most of us haven't fought the World War II here, although some of you might have. They share a common, unique bond. If you can't relate to it, think of Forrest Gump.

You know, Forrest and this guy Baba and the Lieutenant Dan, they became like the closest of friends and brothers. Not because they hang out in a quiet suburb, but because of what? They survived the battles together. They watched each other's back and got out alive together. And you see the same heartwarming camaraderie in pretty much all of those hero and war movies like Marvels and all that.

[18:07] The church is meant to have the same bond, but even stronger. United in Christ, we battle not against flesh and blood, but the spiritual forces of darkness every single day.

When the church fights with the real enemy, she stops fighting herself, that's each other. And when the church lives like soldiers, peace, that is the wholeness, the unity, the completeness, becomes the fruit.

So how do we make peace in a troubled church in a nutshell? First, handle conflict with the mind of Christ, powered by the gospel of peace and of grace.

Second, live like gospel soldiers in Christ's army. Help each other, fight side by side, not against each other every day. That's Paul's call to the church then, and that's the same call to us today. Next, let's move on from peace within the church to peace outside the church. So we come to point two. Showing peace to the troubling world.

[19:17] Verses four and five. What is the most repeated command Paul gives in Philippians? Very loudly. Rejoice.

All right? Rejoice. And he says it twice with one breath here. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. He's not forgetful. He doesn't have Alzheimer's.

You know, he's deliberate. The church, though healthy, was feeling the world's pressure, and it's starting to wear down their witness. That's why in an earlier passage, Paul's saying, do everything without what?

Rumblings and disputing and complaining. You know, their witness was starting to suffer because the pressure was real. In Paul's day, the Greco-Romans tolerated Jews because Judaism was ancient and legally recognized.

But Christians, especially Gentile Christians, were hated. You know why? Because first, Christians were seen as atheists. They refused to offer sacrifices to any gods.

[20:22] So whenever famine or plague struck in the Roman Empire, Christians were the first to blame. They angered gods. They wouldn't offer sacrifice. Second, Christians were seen as subversive.

Unlike Jews, Christians evangelized. Went across culture, class, gender, everything. The Romans found that very destabilizing.

So the Philippians were being pressed on every single side. One escape was to blend into Judaism and gain legal protection.

You know, get circumcised, whatever. Another was to give in and live like pagans. Paul says no to both. So what's the way forward?

Paul says rejoice in the Lord always. Always. Is this the act of rejoicing? Yeah, you could be happy all the time. No.

[21:20] Romans says to, Romans 12 says this. To rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. You cannot act joyful and weep at the same time.

Like, you can't do that. Paul is talking about a state of rejoicing. A settled gladness rooted in the Lord. And the Philippians understood exactly what that meant themselves.

And why that mattered. Because Philippi was a very proud Roman colony. After the Rome civil wars, Augustus settled the veterans there in Philippi and gave them something very prized.

Called the italic rite. Now, it's not a font that does this. Italic. It means that their soil was legally Italy. They enjoyed exemption from certain taxes.

They got protection under Roman law. And, of course, the honor of being a Roman citizen. These were privileges everybody wanted. A reason to rejoice.

[22:26] So, when Paul says in chapter 3, our citizenship is in heaven. It was very explosive to them. As if he's saying, you know the joy of Roman citizenship.

Now, lift up your eyes. In Christ, you have something infinitely better. A kingdom. An inheritance. A status not earned. Because your family moved house. But because Jesus came down and gave himself for you.

That is why we can rejoice always. Not because it is easy. Or life is easy. It wasn't then. And it isn't now.

But because who you are, belong, and who you belong to never changes. If you're in Christ, your king is here. He's present. Your future is secure.

Your inheritance is untouchable. Your citizenship is eternal. This is the anchor that keeps a Christian in a constant state of rejoicing.

[23:24] Despite the circumstances. No matter how the world tries to discourage us. When my daughter Esther, she's not here today so I can talk about her. She was three years old.

And one of my colleagues saw that she was cute. And asked her to become a flower girl. You know, you walk down the aisle and all that before the bride does. At the dress rehearsal, I think it was like a day or two before that.

You know, we held her at the aisle dressed up. And she put the brakes on. And she was kicking and screaming. Panicking. But I'm so glad my wife knew her really well.

She pulled this out. It was a strawberry chubba chub. Okay. Okay. She loves it. And this thing turned her dread and all her troubles into delight.

On the day, she boldly skipped down that aisle with the green. And this chubba chub literally sticking up in her mouth in a constant state of joy. I can show you the picture later if you want.

[24:29] Paul says, rejoicing in the Lord is just like that. The church must have that mental posture before she can show God's peace to a very troubling world.

Being in the Lord is our chubba chub. We've got to be sucking on that every day. Paul then continues in verse 5. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

Now, this reasonableness sounds a bit lame. The actual word in the Greek, if you look at other translations, English translation, says gentleness.

Okay. But it doesn't mean, like, you know, be a softy. Okay. Or, you know, be weak. It means strength that is restrained for the good of others. Justice tempered with mercy is another way to put

it.

In the Old Testament, we see Jacob wrestling with God. In Genesis 32. God touched his hip and dislocated it, causing some serious permanent health issues.

[25:32] That is gentleness. God could have destroyed Jacob with just a word. And Jacob knew it. So Jacob said, after the wrestle, I saw God's face to face and yet my life was delivered, saved.

God's strength was restrained for Jacob's benefit. That's gentleness. And David did the same thing. He found Saul sleeping in a cave, you know, and Saul was going after his life without cause. He could have just ended his life right there. You know, he knew that, you know, David already knew that he's the next king. You know, just one strike and it would end all his troubles. And then he can start raining.

But he didn't do that. He held back. That's gentleness. And of course we have Jesus being the ultimate lion and the lamb that demonstrate this divine gentleness.

Before Pilate, the most unjust trial ever in human history, he said he could summon more than 12 legions of angels, 60,000 of them, and wipe out all his accusers.

[26:39] But he didn't do that. On the cross, perfect justice met perfect peace and grace and mercy. God poured out his perfect justice onto Jesus, something that we deserved, so that we can benefit from the mercy that Jesus deserves.

That's divine gentleness. The Roman world, like ours, is obsessed with power. Money is power. Violence is power.

Sex is often used and portrayed as power. You will find power in all the top-selling songs, movies, Netflix, headline news, everything.

You know, all the supernatural stuff that people are watching these days? It's the same everywhere and the same every day. But Paul says gentleness, sacrificial restrained strength is how we must show God's peace in a troubling world.

Why? Because verse 5, the second half, says this. The Lord is at hand. The Lord is at hand. He sees everything.

[27:52] He will judge perfectly. He will vindicate his people and he will do so soon. So the church can afford to hold back power. Let go of rights and respond with gentleness.

Because we trust the king who judges justly. And in this power-hungry world, it is gentle strength, not brute force, that makes the church shine like stars.

People won't turn to Christ and to our perfectly just and merciful king because we fight back.

They're not going to do that. Our protest is not going to help.

But they might do so because we hold back and share the gospel with them. So how do we show peace to the troubling world in a nutshell again?

One, rejoice, a constant state rooted in the Lord. Two, reveal gentleness, strength restrained for the good of others.

[28:50] And three, remember, the Lord is near. Is that my time? Time's up? With one more point to go. So far, we've covered making peace in the troubled world and also showing peace to the troubling world.

Now we come to the third and final point. Let's get a bit more personal. Find peace in our troubled hearts. The moment has come when we finally arrive at Philippians chapter 4, verses 6-7.

All right, not only do we get to say 6-7. Everyone, 6-7? Okay, all right. Get it out of your system for the rest of the year, hopefully. Okay, this is one of the most well-loved and quote in Philippians that is actually meaningful and not meaningless like 6-7 is.

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

Is Paul saying to the Philippians church that's already being pressed on every side, Don't worry, be happy, it's going to be a beautiful day. Stop worrying about those threats that may never come.

[30:13] Stop fearing the lack that you never have. He's not denying their problems here, friends. He's redirecting their focus from me to Christ.

He's calling them to replace over-worrying, that's me focused, with thankful and worshipful, prayerful worship that is Christ focused. Why?

Because most of our worrying problems, most, not all, are ultimately worshipping problems. When we believe that God is worthy of our trust and affection and we express it, what's that called? Worship. That's worship. When we lose sight of God's care and control and fix our eyes on fear, what do you call that? Worry. That's worry.

We often don't realize it, but worry usually just begins with a tiny little bit of uncertainty and fear that we are not fully saved in God's hands, and that little thing grows and quietly unnoticed.

[31:18] It presses on us, becomes a big tree with big roots, you know, and everything falls down on us. Full-blown worry. Now on to curing worries. Paul says, Let your request be made known to God.

How is that going to help us with worries? Doesn't God already know what we need? Why bother asking? Yes, God knows everything.

Long before we ever pray. But what if God, what if asking God, what if praying is not for God's benefit, but for ours?

Parents understand this really well. When your children are babies, you could tell from just one cry, okay, what they're after, what they need, right? This is a hungry cry.

This one's a nappy cry. This one's a burping cry. That one's a sleeping cry, yeah? Any nods here? Any moms? Yeah, okay, good. I didn't do it, but anyway.

[32:21] But when they got a little older, the moment they go, Mom, Dad, you already know what they're after. A lot of times. But still, you want them to ask.

Why? Because asking builds trust. It builds connection. It teaches them that you're someone who cares for them.

You are someone that they can come to, not because you need the affirmation, but because it's good for them. No loving parent would want their kids to grow up undistanced, untrusting, or emotionally disconnected simply because the child never learned or never needed to come to them for their needs.

And in the same way, God invites us as his children to bring our prayers and requests to them, not so that we can inform him, but so that he can form us.

Here's what Tim Keller says about prayer in his book called Prayers. It's a really great book. I highly recommend it. Prayer is the one, sorry, prayer is the only entryway into genuine self-knowledge.

[33:33] It is also the main way we experience deep change, the reordering of our loves. Do most of our worries not come from wrongly ordered loves?

And Keller continues, Prayer is how God gives us so many of the unimaginable things that he has for us. Indeed, prayer makes it safe for God to give us many of the things that we most desire.

It is the way we know God, the way we finally meet, treat God as God. Prayer is simply the key to everything we need to do and to be in life.

We must learn to pray. We have to. Prayer isn't just informing God about our worries. It is being formed by God into better worshippers.

Getting back to the passage then, what will happen when we replace worry with thankful and prayerful worship? Verse 7 says this, Our hearts and minds are a little bit like a block of Swiss cheese.

[34:53] Not like cheddar cheese. Swiss cheese has many, many holes. It's quite easy to tear apart, actually, and lots of gaps in there. And with all those openings, we become vulnerable to intrusion, like worry, anxiety, and so much more.

Unless those holes are being protected by something strong, something can get in basically any time. We need something to stand guard, something to hold these things out.

In verse 7, Paul tells us what that guard is. It is the peace of God, the shalom of God. They're not just calm feelings. It's about God's completeness, His wholeness.

His restoring presence, it comes from being united to Him. That peace stands like an army around our hearts and our minds, guarding every gap and every weakness.

Paul says it's beyond human understanding. And don't miss this. Paul says it's only available in Christ Jesus, our King. So if we want this peace to guard our anxious heart, Paul says we bring everything to God, turning worry into worship through prayer.

[36:07] But Paul doesn't stop with the peace of God in verse 7. He says, he repeats peace again in verse 9. He says, he takes it a step further. Not only will God's peace guard you, the God of peace Himself will be with you.

He's just not sending stuff. He's coming. He's here. He'll be there. But how are we, forgiven sinners, supposed to get God's presence? The answer is, we don't get His presence because He's already given that to us.

If by faith we're in Christ, then God is already with us and in us. In the Old Testament, before the Pentecost, you have the prophets, the judges and the kings, you see the Holy Spirit coming and going.

He'll empower certain people to do certain things and then sometimes He would leave. Now we saw that in King Saul in 1 Samuel and then the same idea can be found in David's prayer in Psalms 51.

But after Pentecost, the Spirit's indwelling becomes the permanent seal for all who belong to Christ. Let's say He's not leaving. It's for sure.

[37:14] That's a reassuring incident. However, although God's presence is there, the way we live absolutely affects the way we experience His presence.

It's like a couple going out on a date. Imagine, you know, sometimes you sit at restaurants, you know, even a couple, they're clearly going out on a date and then they're just on their phone and they have headphones on and they're like scrolling through YouTube or whatever, right? They're both right there, fully present, but they're not enjoying each other's presence and relationship. So in the same way, God is with us, but if we don't have our hearts and minds heavily guarded, we don't get to enjoy having Him at all or as much on this side of eternity.

Brothers and sisters, the world is constantly and loudly blasting narratives at you and at me everywhere we look and listen.

You're not good enough. You're not enough, in fact. You need more. Follow your heart. Live your truth, not some other truth out there. And when every message around us says that unless we get this next thing or become this next version of ourselves, we're missing out on the good life, of course, we get anxious.

[38:42] Do you know that Adam and Eve fell for the same thing? They didn't want to miss out on becoming like God, right? It says in Genesis, even though they were already made in the image of God.

How does that make sense? Satan's ancient trick hasn't changed since then. He just rebranded it for our modern years. The world's forecast, sorry, the world's broadcast is so loud and so subtle that trying to just block it out, you know, extract yourself from the world or something, it doesn't work.

So what do we do? We need spiritual noise-canceling headphones. Not something that Nimi blocks the noise like that. It is something that blasts a different and stronger signal to drown out what the world is sending us.

And that's exactly Paul's strategy if we look at verses 8 and 9. Verse 8 says, in a nutshell, feel your mind. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever true, honorable, just, you know, something that's right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, that are things that cause for agape love, whatever is commendable, if there's anything excellence, you know, of character, and if there's anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Feel your mind. You know, the word think here means to dwell on, to ponder, to turn something over and over in your mind. You know, Paul is telling us to use this filter, you know, a 6x12 filter, like a sieve.

[40:12] You know, whatever goes in and out of it, you know, not, you know, you put it through this filter. Not what your screen shows up, you know, and feeds to you, or what our imagination feeds to us.

You know, put things through this filter. This is intentional reoccupation of our hearts and minds. You know, stop letting our, the land of our heart just be free for all for our enemies.

Reoccupy it. Take it over. And notice what Paul doesn't say. He doesn't tell the experience, tells you experience God's presence by emptying our minds, like some Eastern meditation technique,

you know, oh, think about nothing, you know, wellness, you know, think about wellness.

No, instead he calls us to fill our minds with what God calls good, things that is truly fit for human flourishing. Because if we don't intentionally preoccupy our minds and hearts as defined by God, what is good, the world will gladly fill that space for us.

It's like a garden, you know, you leave it unplanned, the weeds grow, and weeds grow faster than anything, as you probably know. They take over. So what do we do? We must out-plan and outgrow the weeds, fill it up.

[41:29] And besides filling our hearts, our minds with good godly stuff, and this is the very last point, verse 9 says, leave it out. Leave it out. What do you have, Paul says, what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, not me, that's Paul, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul's not saying, go take a course, listen to more podcasts, I mean, those things are good. But the words learned and received here carries the idea of apprenticeship, discipleship, catching and carrying forward the way of a master.

You know, stuff you see in movies like Karate Kid, like Mr. Miyagi, you know, Star Wars, and of course, in the Bible, you know, in the ministries of Paul with Titus and Timothy and of Jesus, of course, with the Twelve.

Paul is saying, you've watched me lift this out, now practice it too. Do it, don't just sit on it and you will, and then you will experience the God of peace. We all need to model after somebody.

I love this church as opposed to another church that only have uni students. I'm not going to name which one. Because we have a lot of mature elderly Christians who have gone through massive struggles of life.

[42:52] Not just because they're older, although it adds up to a couple of thousand years old here, right? But because they have gone through the struggles and the reality of life. We can model, have them as model, ask them as model, ask them to pour into our lives, go follow them around.

I've shared this in a small group. Don is Don here? He's somewhere up there. When I was working at Apple, he religiously shopped in front of Apple Store every single week with a massive Christian book with a Christian title on it, right?

So that people would sometime maybe perhaps rock up and strike a conversation. And sometimes he falls asleep, by the way. But, but, but, but, you know, it's, you know, he's intentional, you know, it's discipleship and, you know, there's so much good stuff.

You know, with Rob here, you know, former pastor with so many great people here that we can really model after. And I encourage you to join a small group, get into community and be discipled. Just sitting around listening to stuff online is not going to grow you. Right? It's not going to get you the God of peace, as Paul says here. See in me and then practice it.

[44:05] Let's go see so that we can catch it, not just be taught it, and then we go live it. Think about these things and practice them and the God of peace, wholeness, will be with you.

That is God's promise only in Christ Jesus. So a very, very quick summary. Point one, to make peace in the troubled church is to handle conflict with the mind of Christ, powered by the gospel of peace.

Live like gospel soldiers in Christ's army. Help each other, fight each other side by side, not against each other. And point two is to show peace to the troubling world.

First rejoice, a constant state of being rooted in the Lord. Reveal gentleness, strength restrained for the good of others.

And remember, the Lord is near. And finally, to find peace on our troubled heart, pray, not to inform God, but to be formed by God himself and to reoccupy our minds and lives with good godly stuff and be disciples so that we can enjoy God's presence in Christ.

[45:17] Let's pray. Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you because you leave us not in this world just to suffer and hang around and be worried and get troubled by the world.

But we are here so that we can shine like stars and we can experience through all the troubles that we experience. Lord, I pray for your peace, your wholeness, your unity to wrap around this church

all the days of our lives.

Help us not be peace fakers and conflict avoiders, but people who are equipped and ready and embrace conflicts and be able to use it well to display your amazing son and amazing gospel with the mind of Christ that you've given us.

We thank you, Lord. Be with us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.