

# Protected by the Peace of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. So that's what we've been doing here while recognizing the holistic approach. We're looking specifically at this spiritually.

[ 2 : 14 ] And so what we're going to do is tonight we'll finish up Philippians 4, but that's not going to end the series. We're going to look at some other passages in God's Word that deal with the same topics of worry and anxiety.

Philippians 4, as you know, is not the only one. And so this is kind of our home base, but we're going to look at some other ones in the coming week. So let's look here at Philippians chapter 4 and stand if you're able to do so as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Philippians chapter 4, beginning at verse 4 down through verse 7. The Apostle Paul in a Roman prison is writing these words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And he tells the church at Philippi this, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say rejoice.

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. So here's our key verse. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[ 3 : 36 ] This is God's Word. Pray with me. Pray for me. God, I ask now that you would come and talk to us. You've been teaching us so much about this. Thank you by your grace that you've given us verses like this, inspired of your Spirit to teach us how we can be anxious for nothing.

And so I just ask the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, as our teacher to come and to guide us into the truth of your Word, we pray tonight, all to the glory of Christ.

And we ask it in His name. And God's people said, Amen. Amen. You can be seated. It was Landon Cunningham's ninth birthday, and all he wanted to do was go to a Major League Baseball game.

He'd actually never been to a Major League Baseball game before, and he was a huge fan, God bless his heart, of the Atlanta Braves. But he and his family lived in Orlando, Florida, and that made it difficult for them to get all the way up to Atlanta to catch a home game for the Braves.

So Landon's dad, Sean, thought he would surprise his son by taking him to a spring training game in Florida, a game between the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Atlanta Braves.

[ 4 : 49 ] Little did the two of them know that by the time that game was over, they would be a national story. But here's what happened. During the game, one of the players for the Pittsburgh Pirates, outfielder by the name of Danny Ortiz, was up to bat.

As he went to swing and hit the ball, the worst possible scenario happened. As he finishes his swing, he slips and the bat comes flying out of his hand, goes flying into the stands straight towards the face of young Landon.

And as if that wasn't bad enough to make it even more frightening, Landon wasn't paying attention. He was actually looking down at his dad's cell phone, texting his mom a picture of the game.

And that's when Landon's dad did what good dads do. With literally only a few seconds to respond, Sean reaches over to protect his son from the bat hitting him square in the face.

Here's the picture that went viral. Faith family, look at how close that was to a disaster. When this picture went viral on social media, as you can imagine, national news outlets wanted to interview Sean and Landon, and they did.

[ 6 : 18 ] And when they asked Landon about the incident, here's what he said, quote, My dad is my hero. As long as I'm with him, I know I'll be okay.

Close quote. Faith family, one of the most comforting things, and you know this, one of the most comforting feelings that you can experience in life is the feeling of being protected. The feeling of being safe.

The feeling of being secure. And the reason why I know that is one of the most comforting feelings you can experience is because think about all the things we do to get that feeling of security. People do all kinds of things to feel safe and secure. Or they put security systems in their home to feel protected. Or they save up money in a savings account so that they can feel financially secure. Think about it. In relationships, people want to feel protected and cared for. It's why we go through the wonderful experience of TSA. So we can feel secure and safe about our flight.

[ 7 : 25 ] It's why we spend millions and millions on military defense so that as a nation we can feel protected against attack. It's why some of you have guard dogs. No, no, no, no, no.

I mean real guard dogs. Real dogs. Real dog. Guard dogs, right? And it's why if you're a parent, you know. I don't know that there is anything more I feel as a parent than just wanting to make sure that my kids are safe.

Every one of us in one way or another wants that feeling of protection. We want to feel like we are safe and secure. And so I want you to stop and think tonight about this.

If a good earthly father will do anything he can to protect his son, how much more your perfect heavenly father wants to protect you?

You look at that picture. If a good earthly father will do anything he can to protect his child, how much more your perfect heavenly father wants to protect you?

[ 8 : 39 ] And of course we know that does not mean that you will not go through suffering. We know that that does not mean that life will not be hard. What it does mean is that our heavenly father through it all will protect us no matter what.

In this world you will have tribulation, but take heart. I have overcome the world. So life will be hard and there will be suffering in life, but our father desires to protect his children.

Now here's the question we would ask. What in the world does that have to do with anxiety? Like I thought we were talking about anxiety and worry and stress and depression. Like what in the world does that have to do with the issue of anxiety?

Here's how it focuses on that. Notice this on the screen. Anxiety is nothing more than the emotional response to a lack of security. We know this.

Anxiety is just the emotional response to a lack of security. When you don't feel protected, when life is out of control, when you're in a place that is unsafe, how do you feel?

[ 9 : 46 ] You feel anxious. You feel worried. You get stressed out. But on the other side, if you're in a safe place and you feel secure, then what do you experience?

Peace. You're not anxious. You're not worried. Let me give you a very, this is a very simple but obvious example. Imagine that you knew without a doubt that a thief was going to come to your house this evening to break into your home.

You knew that was coming. There was a real thief that really was coming after you and tonight would try to break in. Now, you have no weapon. You have no locks on the door.

You have no guard dog. You have no security system. You have no training in any type of boxing or MMA or anything. It's just you defenseless and someone's coming after you.

How do you feel? You know, you're scared. You're nervous. When you go to bed at night, those eyes are going to be open and you're going to be listening to every sound and you're going to be anxious and worried about everything.

[ 10 : 49 ] Why? Because nothing's guarding you. You have nothing to protect you. But imagine if you had this. Imagine, you know this one thief, this one intruder is coming after you, but you have, and I mean the entire, the entire U.S. military guarding your home along with a police force and SWAT team and they've got troops and tanks and missiles and guns and air support and they are guarding your home outside and guarding your home inside.

How do you feel at night? You don't even need a MyPillow to go to sleep. I mean, you are snoozing, man. You're not going to worry at all.

You're not going to be anxious. Why? Because you've got somebody guarding you. You've got people, powerful people guarding your home.

Here's what you know. Notice this on the screen. Security eliminates anxiety. Right? Isn't that simple? Like we all know that's true. Security eliminates anxiety.

If we know that to be true, and it is, then man, oh man, do I have good news for you. Some of you already know where I'm going.

[12:07] That's good. Listen, listen. Do you know what the Bible promises you here in Philippians chapter 4? Listen. When the thief of anxiety, when the intruder of worry is coming after your heart and coming to kidnap your mind, here's what's guarding you.

Verse 7. Is there a better promise in the Bible than that?

That the peace of God is like a guard dog protecting your heart and protecting your mind in Christ Jesus against the thief and the intruder of anxiety and worry.

That's what God promises us here. He's going to protect us. Now, before we break all that down and dive into verse 7 tonight, let's step back as we've done every week.

I want to give you the full context of these verses so that we remember what we've talked about in the weeks before. First of all, the meaning of anxiety. Remember, do not be anxious.

[13:34] That word anxious is the present imperative, active imperative here in the Greek. All that simply means is you would translate the verse grammatically correct this way.

Do not be continually, say continually, do not be continually anxious about anything. In other words, you're going to worry.

Worry is not a sin. You're going to feel anxious. Anxiety is not a sin. The issue is you don't have to be captured by that. You don't have to live in the prison of anxiety or the prison of worry.

We've talked about it this way. Notice it on the screen. The presence of anxiety is unavoidable, but the prison of anxiety is optional. So Paul is talking about an ongoing state of anxiety.

In my conversations with people about this series, one of my close friends said, that may be the most powerful point that's been made thus far. That Paul's not talking about you're never going to have a moment of anxiety.

[14:37] He's talking about the fact that you don't have to be enslaved to the feeling of anxiety.

You don't have to let the thief take over your home. You don't have to let the intruder take over your heart.

We don't have to live in this continual state. And so we've talked about, here's the outline that we've looked at each week. First week, we talked about the calming presence of God. The Lord is at hand.

You're never alone in your anxiety. God is with you. And then we talked about two weeks ago, the continuous practice. That there are things you need to do. Remember we talked about that when you feel anxious and when worry begins to surface in your heart or in your mind, what do we call it? A warning sign. Here's the warning sign. Notice it on the screen. Anxiety is the warning sign telling you, stop and spend time with God. The oil light on the dashboard is saying, stop and go to a professional that knows how to change the oil and get it fixed.

You're feeling chest pains. Stop. Go to the professional that knows how to treat you to get that fixed. When anxiety and worry begins to surface in your life, stop and spend some time with God.

[15:51] It's warning you about something. It's telling you that something's off and something's not right. And notice this on the screen, Faith Family. No one knows how to fix you more than the one who created you.

Listen, listen, listen. I haven't even started preaching yet. I'm barely fired up. All right? Listen, listen. I am all for human counselors.

I think they have a role. They have an important role. My concern is when people go to counselors and never go to the wonderful counselor.

There is a wonderful counselor. His name is Jesus. And who knows better how to fix you than the one who created you?

So go to an earthly counselor. That's fine. Nobody's against that at all. What I'm against is never going to the one who can actually solve your issues and give you peace.

[16:54] You see? No one knows how to fix you more than the one who created you. So there's some action things you need to do. You say, well, how do I go to the wonderful counselor? Well, the text tells us, and we looked at this two weeks ago, you need to stop and praise.

Rejoice in the Lord. And again, I say, say it. Rejoice. Stop and praise. You say, I don't have anything to praise God about in my circumstances. Well, it's not rejoicing in your circumstances.

It's rejoicing in the Lord. Third, and there is always something to praise God for about who God is. So stop and praise. Second, stop and pray. Make your request made known. Tell Him what you're going through. You say, He already knows. I know. But He wants you to say it. He wants you to get it out. He wants to have a conversation. He wants to commune with you. Talk to Him.

Talk to Him. And make your request known with thanksgiving. Stop and praise. Stop and pray. And third, we stop and ponder. It's all in the text. Think on that which is what?

[ 17 : 55 ] Pure and honorable and trustworthy. Like, think on these things. What Paul is saying is, rather than getting caught up in the uncertainty, set your mind on what you know is true.

And a great place to start is the cross and empty tomb of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because what you're worried about may not happen, but the cross and the empty tomb did happen.

So think on what is true. So, with all of that, let's go back to our outline. So we've got the calming presence. The Lord is at hand. We've got the continual practice.

Praise, pray, ponder. And now we get to our last point tonight, which is in Philippians 4. When we do these things, when we remember that God is near, He's not going to leave us alone in our anxiety.

And when we have made it a habit, just like taking Advil for a headache, to praise and pray and ponder the true things of God, then the promise kicks in.

[ 18 : 56 ] Verse 7. Verse 7. It may not be on the screen. Verse 7 is, The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Notice this on the screen. Here's the beautiful thing. We not only get the peace of God, we are guarded by the peace of God. I just want to stop for a minute.

Because listen, this is one of those passages that I thought I knew until I studied it. And it's just so easy because you memorize it. You just think, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, if I pray and if I praise God and if I ponder what's true, I'm going to all of a sudden begin to experience the peace of God in my life.

I'm not saying that's not true. I'm just saying that's not what the text says. The text says it isn't just that you experience the peace of God. It's that the very peace of God comes and fights for you, protects you, guards you, sets up camp like the U.S. military outside your home, outside your heart and your mind, fights off the intruder of anxiety so that you can experience his very peace.

That's powerful. Your father wants to protect you when you're worried. It's the songs we sang about tonight. All of them had to do with God being a shelter or a fortress or faithful.

[ 20 : 34 ] This is what Paul is talking about. So let's spend the next three hours, just kidding, next three hours breaking this down. First of all, what the peace of God is. What the peace of God is.

Now, to understand this, we need to know that there is a difference biblically between peace with God and the peace of God.

Those are two things, both taught in Scripture, but they are different. First, the peace with God. Take, for example, Romans 5, verse 1.

Paul says this, In other words, you know this, the Bible teaches that we were born in sin, and we act on that, we become separated from God, we are actually enemies of God, there is enmity between us and God, and because of what Jesus did on the cross, in forgiving our sins and paying for our sins, when we put our faith in Christ, the biblical word is reconciled.

So now, we're not enemies anymore, we're friends. We've been reconciled to God through the cross of Jesus Christ. That's peace with God, but that ain't what Paul's talking about here.

[ 21 : 55 ] He's not talking about peace with God, he's talking about the peace of God. That is, come on, think with me tonight, the very peace that our sovereign God daily lives in, eternally lives in, that peace is what guards our hearts and our minds.

First of all, we need to know that the peace of God is an inner calm. It's an inner calm. I don't know if you know this, but God is never nervous. That should comfort you tonight. God is never nervous. He's completely sovereign. There's no circumstances that He doesn't control. There's no problem He doesn't have power over. There's no reality that exists outside His mind. There are no surprises, no doubts, and no wondering how it's all going to turn out.

God was, God is, and God always will be at peace. That is the state in which God exists. The very nature of His character is an inner calm.

He doesn't get nervous. He's not freaking out in heaven. Why? Because He knows all. He has power over all. He has a plan, and it is sovereign. So it's inner calm.

[ 23 : 12 ] Secondly, the peace of God is a unified whole. A unified whole. I get this from actually the Hebrew word. Anybody know the Hebrew word for peace? Want to shout it out? Look smart. Shalom.

That's exactly right. All of you said it, so you all get points. Shalom. It's the word for peace in the Old Testament. But the Hebraic people didn't mean shalom as the absence of trouble, like that kind of peace.

Shalom was the idea of a complete life. It was total fulfillment. It was everything working together in unity. And the reason why we need to understand that is because it's actually the opposite of anxiety.

The word anxiety actually means to be divided. To be pulled in different directions. How many of y'all feel like that most days, right? I mean, you are stretched like Stretch Armstrong.

Some of you are way too young to even know what I'm talking about, but just play along. You are stretched everywhere. And you're divided. And I got to go there, but I also need to be here. And what about if that happens?

[ 24 : 14 ] And if that does happen, how is that going to impact this? And worried about it. You're divided. You're stretched. You're all over the place. No wonder you're worried. But shalom, peace, is the idea of full unity and completeness.

And so here's the point. God, the peace of God, is never divided. It's never stretched in multiple directions. It's always unified.

God is always in a state of shalom. Inner calm. Unified whole. And third, the peace of God is a supernatural reality.

In fact, Paul says it in the text, does he not? The peace of God which, what? Surpasses all understanding. That is, it's supernatural. You say, what does it mean that it surpasses all understanding?

That means it's a supernatural thing. It isn't like the peace you can get or find anywhere else.

Somebody say amen. You're not going to find this peace at Walmart.

[ 25 : 18 ] You're not going to find this peace in your parents. You're not going to find this peace in it because it surpasses all natural understanding. Why? Because it is a supernatural reality.

Jesus said this himself in John chapter 14, verse 27. Peace I leave with you. Watch. My peace. I don't just leave you any peace.

But my peace I give to you. Watch. Not as the world gives. This is supernatural.

This is unlike anything else. This is otherworldly. This is the peace that God, the triune God, lives in eternally.

And that I give you. And listen, listen. Oh, come on. When you experience that and it begins to guard you, you start doing things you can't understand. And you don't have an explanation for.

[ 26 : 24 ] I really shouldn't be responding this way. I mean, in a good way. Okay? Not responding in a bad way. I'm responding in a supernatural.

This is not a way I would respond on my own. I know. Because it isn't your peace. It's the peace of God that has intruded your home.

And has taken over and guarded your heart and your mind. And now all of a sudden you're beginning to respond in ways that people think you are absolutely crazy.

Because there isn't an explanation for it. Let me give you an example. And I'm not saying that any of this is easy. None of this is easy. Amen? It's one thing to have peace when the cancer is over.

That's natural. Find me one person on the planet that isn't going to experience a, Woo! Yes! I'm so thankful when the cancer is gone. But what about if you have peace as you're going through it?

[ 27 : 33 ] And the outcomes are unknown. And all of a sudden you begin to experience a peace that isn't normal. Isn't natural.

Listen to me. That's what your father wants to do to your heart. That's what your father wants to do to your mind.

He wants to protect you. And give you a supernatural, beyond all understanding, peace in your life.

Are you all with me tonight? Is this like, give me more, give me more, give me more.

Like, this is good. I ain't talking about the preacher. I'm talking about the word of God, okay? Listen.

So what is the peace of God? If you can find that summary, put it back up there.

The peace of God is an inner calm. It's a unified whole. And it's a supernatural reality. Now watch. Take all of that and then read into verse 7.

[ 28 : 33 ] So here's what happens. Watch verse 7 again. And the peace of God that we just explained, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

So the second point is what the peace of God does. We know what the peace of God is. What does the peace of God do? And this, again, is what the amazing thought for me in this verse came out as I began to study this.

The word guard is actually in the Greek, a military word that has an imagery of an army surrounding an entire city to keep it safe and protected.

Now keep in mind, do you not think that would have been a very vivid image for the Apostle Paul? Paul is writing these, literally, the very words you're reading, he's writing where?

In a Roman prison. And how did they do prisons in Rome? You were chained to a guard. It wasn't like a prison where you were just thrown into a cell and they locked the door and you hang out in there and, you know, snuggled with a MyPillow or whatever.

[ 29 : 41 ] You weren't in there by yourself. Literally, if you were a prisoner in Rome, you were chained to another soldier. Meaning, you were being guarded all the time.

Now you get that imagery in your mind. Paul is like, and the peace of God will. What would be a really good illustration? Oh, I know, guard your heart and minds in Christ Jesus.

He's like, listen, I know what it's like to be guarded. I know what it's like to have someone with me all the time watching over and watching out for me.

And Paul says that's what the peace of God does to the child of God. When they pray, and they praise, and they ponder in the midst of their worry. Somebody say, preach, preacher.

That was weak. But I'm going to let it pass. Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.

[ 30 : 43 ] Anyways. Now keep in mind what this promise is. The promise is when we remember that God is at hand. So it isn't like this is going to happen no matter what.

But this is coming from the flow of the text. Which is when we remember that God is at hand. And we stop and praise, and stop and pray, and stop and ponder. That is when God activates His peace into our lives.

Whereby it guards us against the intruder of worry. Now, it does not say that the peace of God will guard your body. We can still fall sick. It doesn't say that the peace of God will guard your possessions.

We can still lose things. It doesn't say that the peace of God will guard our reputation. We can still be objects of slander and gossip. It says that the peace of God guards our hearts and our minds. Which is Paul's way. Because when we think of heart, we think of love and emotion. That is not the case in the ancient Near East. Certainly in the Old Testament, the idea of heart was your very core.

[ 31 : 45 ] It was all of who you are. And so Paul is getting to the essence of the peace of God comes and guards all that you are. It may not change your external circumstances.

You may still be... Oh, somebody preached for you. Don't you love it when the Lord just gives you a thought in the middle of saying something? You may be in a Roman prison on the outside, but you're not in the prison of worry on the inside.

That's what's going down here. Right? When you pray and you ponder and you praise God, He activates His peace that comes into your heart and mind and guards against anxiety and worry. And so things may still be happening on the outside, but you're at peace on the inside. Notice Isaiah 26, verse 3. You keep Him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because He trusts in you.

Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. So, we know what the peace of God is. We've talked about that.

[ 32 : 57 ] Secondly, what the peace of God does. And then the last thing I'm going to say tonight is, where is the peace of God found? Where is the peace of God found? Verse 7. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds, say these three words with me, in Christ Jesus.

In Christ Jesus. These may be the most important words of the entire verse. In Jesus.

In Christ Jesus. Why? Here's why. Because, get this, listen, listen. The essence of the Christian life is that His life becomes yours.

I want you to think about this with me. This is powerful stuff, right? Jesus. You say, is it just like all of a sudden, like I get this feeling? I get this emotion of peace?

No, no, no, no. You actually get the person of peace. Your life is identified with His life, and His life is the peaceful life.

[ 34 : 21 ] In fact, the life of Jesus is the peace of God. Let me show you in Ephesians 2, verse 13. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ, for He Himself is our peace.

That is, Jesus, the very person of Jesus. It's not an emotion. It's not a feeling. It's not just a state of mind. It's a person. The peace of God that gets activated into your heart and mind to guard you against anxiety and worry is the person of Jesus Christ.

Why? Because the person of Jesus Christ is the peace of God. This is so gospel. It isn't about an emotion.

It's not about all of a sudden I'm in a good mood. It's that you're in the very life of Christ. And there is no greater life to guard you against the intruder of worry and anxiety than Jesus Christ.

How does God input His peace into us? He does it through the very life of Jesus. And who is Jesus? Jesus is the one that told the raging storm, peace, be still, and it obeyed.

[ 35 : 45 ] He is the one who stood falsely accused and yet had no need to fight back. He is the one who never let the circumstances of His life deter Him from the focus of His mission.

He is the one who took other people's anxieties, whether it be disease or the death of a loved one or deliverance, and He spoke calm into their life. He is the one the Bible calls the Prince of Peace. He is the one that did something one day on Calvary that surpasses all understanding. He is the peace of God. And His life is our life and in Him we have the peace of God.

And listen, do you know what this means? Do you know what this means? Listen, we're going to come back to the peace with God. Here it is. Notice it on the screen. You can't experience the peace of God until you first have peace with God.

Or let me just say it a different way. You can't experience verse 7 without Jesus. And so if you don't know Jesus, tonight would you trust Him?

[ 37 : 04 ] Because far greater than an invitation to a mindset of peace is an invitation to the very person of peace, to the very life of peace.

And that life has a name and it is Jesus Christ. And in Him you have the peace of God. Do you know Him? Do you know Him?

Do you love Him? Do you pursue Him? Come to Him tonight. And if you've never done that, I plead with you for the first time in your life, surrender and put your faith in Christ that you would have peace with God.

And once you have peace with God, then you can experience and be protected by the peace of God. One of the most well-known hymns, it's your favorite, one of the most well-known hymns, one of my favorites, it is Well With My Soul.

We actually sang it a few weeks ago. And I know that there are some of you that know the story behind the song, but some of you won't. It was written by a man by the name of Horatio Spafford in 1873.

[ 38 : 10 ] Spafford was a very wealthy businessman from Chicago, but he lost almost all of his real estate holdings in the great Chicago fire. As if going through all of that loss wasn't enough, he decided that they were going to go to France.

And so he sent his wife and his four daughters on a boat to go over to France, and he was going to join them later. He was simply hanging around to assist D.L. Moody, the great evangelist out of Chicago, in a revival.

On the evening of November the 21st, as the ship where his family was in was traveling, it collided into another English vessel and began to sink. By the time that rescue could get there, all four of those precious children drowned.

Only his wife survived. And on his way across the Atlantic to rejoin his wife, the captain of the ship announced when they were passing that place where his four daughters were lost.

And he went into his cabin, and he began to write the lyrics of the great hymn, It Is Well With My Soul.

[ 39 : 25 ] Lyrics like this. When peace, like a river, attendeth my soul, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well, with my soul.

