

Do Not Be Anxious About Anything

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[0 : 00] Philippians 4, 1181 in the Pulpit Bible.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Judea and I entreat Chesintahe to agree in the Lord.

Yes, I ask you also, through companion, help these women who have laboured side by side with me in the Gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, 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 made known to God.

[1 : 11] 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. 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 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.

[2 : 32] 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 gift, 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 and glory in Christ Jesus. 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 your spirit.

[3 : 45] Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. Again from Sing Psalms, we sing Psalm number 17. Psalm number 17 from Sing Psalms.

And this is on page 18. We sing verses 3 through to 8. Though you examine me and probe my heart and mind, and though you test me in the night, yet nothing you will find.

I said I will not sin in anything I say. For those who practice violence I have kept far away. From every evil path by your word I am preserved.

My feet have held to all your ways. From them I have not sworn. I call on you, O God, for you will answer me. O turn your ear towards my prayer, and hear my earnest plea.

Display your steadfast love, and save with your right hand all those who flee for help to you when foes against them stand. In shadow of your wings hide me in times of strife.

[4 : 52] And as the apple of your eye preserve and guard my life. Psalm 17, verses 3 to 8. On page 18. Though you examine me.

Though you examine me. Though you examine me.

And though my heart and mind. And though you test me in the night.

Yet nothing you will find. I said I will not sin.

In anything I say. From those who practice violence.

[5 : 59] I love yet far away. From every evil path.

I do work I'm preserved. My feet have held to all you wish.

I call on you, O God.

For you will answer me. O turn your ear towards my prayer, and hear my earnest plea.

I sayin' Vijay. O God. In this place, your steadfast love, I'm safe with your right hand.

[7 : 21] All those who plead for help to you and close against the sun.

In shadow of your wings, I be in times of strife, and as the apple of your eye preserve and guard my life.

Thank you. Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in Paul's letter to the Philippians, and chapter 4.

I want us to consider these well-known words in verses 6 and 7. 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.

[8 : 48] When we read of Paul encouraging us to rejoice, and when we read about Paul speaking about contentment, and of how the Lord is meeting all his needs, you would almost imagine, if we didn't know about the apostle, that he was kind of living in the lap of luxury, that life was very easy for him, because he's talking about rejoicing, he's talking about peace, he's talking about contentment, things that we normally associate with our lives when everything is going smoothly, and everything is going very well.

But we know differently, because at this moment, the apostle Paul is writing from the prison, and being in a Roman prison was no picnic.

And Paul, of course, was suffering. He had gone through so many harrowing experiences in the service for the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's what makes this epistle and these writings so powerful for us, because it's one thing for a patient to say to us, now you've got to be content, you've got to learn contentment, you've got to be able to rejoice in the Lord, you should really be knowing his peace.

You might say to yourself, it's all very well for somebody saying that to me, whose life is going just so well, and everything's fitting into place. It's easy. But when you meet somebody who's going through the very opposite, that life is tough, that they're facing dangers and troubles, they're actually imprisoned, could be, waiting death.

Of course, we know that Paul had two imprisonments. One was a final imprisonment when he was executed, but there was another where he had more liberty and freedom, and he was able to get visitors, but still in prison.

[10 : 51] So that's why it's really worth listening to this man, because he is telling us, it's possible, even in the most difficult, harrowing situations, to know peace, to know and experience contentment, and to be able to rejoice in the Lord.

Now, when Paul tells us to rejoice, we've said this before, he's not telling us just to rejoice. It's not the sort of the philosophy of be happy, or always to look on the bright side of life, or any of that kind of thing.

Paul is specific about the rejoicing, and he says, we're to rejoice in the Lord. And of course, that's different, where there's a particular focus. And Paul was somebody who had every reason to rejoice in the Lord.

Paul was somebody who had been saved by God's grace. And Paul couldn't stop rejoicing in Jesus, because remember there was a day, Paul, if you said to Paul, or the old Saul, is there anybody in this world you hate?

You'd say, yes there is. I hate, you know the one name I hate? I hate the name of Jesus. And I also hate everybody who follows Jesus. And that's why he made it, his life's aim, was to hurt the church, and to imprison, and even put to death the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[12 : 14] And it was while he was engaged in that activity, that the Lord met him. And broke Saul, and subdued Saul, and Saul of course became this great ambassador for Jesus Christ.

So Saul, who's now Paul, he couldn't stop rejoicing in what the Lord had done for him. The Lord had turned him, not just turned him round from going to Damascus, but turned his heart round completely.

And so there was this tremendous sense of rejoicing. He was aware that all his sins, past, present, and future, were covered in Jesus Christ.

And that gave Paul tremendous liberty, because you've got to remember, Paul, Paul states that, he said, you know, I'm the chief of sinners. Now that's something we all sometimes say, sometimes when we have an overwhelming sense of our own sin and failure, you know, say, I am, and you mean it, I'm the chief of, I'm the worst of sinners.

But when Paul said it, he meant it because he, he had actually been guilty of hate, everything about him was given to persecuting the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 34] And that's why he says, you know, I was a chief of sinners. I was a very, very worst. His hands were red with the blood of the Lord's people.

And that must have, that must have weighed upon Paul in his life to have killed people, to have ordered the killing of people, to be part of the killing of men and women, because they loved the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Paul knew that Jesus had forgiven him everything. And so he was able to rejoice. Jesus was meeting his every need. He tells us that.

Jesus was strengthening him in the face of his own weakness. Even although he was suffering and he was bound, he's rejoicing because God is actually working his imprisonment for good because people are being saved.

He tells us that in this epistle. That even although it would look like his voice is being silenced and his presence and impact is being removed, it's not.

[14 : 45] God is working. It's so that now that Paul is in prison, people even there have been saved. And that God is working as he tells us everything for good. So the apostle had many reasons to rejoice.

But then he goes on to tell us and he says, do not be anxious about anything. And in a sense, Paul is really reiterating the words of Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount because Jesus also told us not to be anxious.

Now when Paul says, don't be anxious about anything, I don't think that for one moment that the apostle is saying to us, nor did Jesus really mean that, that at no point ever within our life are we ever to worry about anything.

I think that that would be impossible. We live in a world that is broken and it is sad and there are many things that come into our lives that do cause worry.

Say for instance, supposing I was a soldier, you were a soldier and you're going into battle. There isn't the slightest chance but that there's bound to be, there's bound to be a form of anxiety.

[15 : 57] You can't help it because you don't know the outcome. There are lots of things but what it's talking about here is this undue worry, this anxiety where we're caught up with things that first of all we shouldn't be worrying about.

We have no idea how things are going to work out. So often when we look back on our lives we are worried needlessly about so many things. Isn't that true?

Things we worried would happen that never happened. Now that's why I'm saying it doesn't mean we are never ever ever to worry. I don't think anybody could go through life without ever having anxiety about something or worried.

But it's this just being caught up it's got the idea of being cut apart cut asunder by worry and it's a very negative a very negative thing where we're cut asunder by an ongoing concern and worry.

Now I know that different people have different dispositions and characters and some people are prone to worry some aren't. Some people need to be very serious before they begin to worry.

[17 : 15] Other people are worrying from the moment they wake first thing in the morning till they go to bed at night it's worry worry worry that's in nature. But here this is talking it's a general principle that the apostle is saying but he doesn't just say to us look don't be anxious he tells us why we shouldn't be anxious don't be anxious about anything but he says in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

When the apostle says everything that's exactly what he means everything everything there is nothing too little to bring before God and I think you and I are very aware that sometimes this isn't what happens all the time but some of the big issues that happen within our lives they were once little issues or little problems but they grew into big problems and part of our problem is that we don't take the little problems to the Lord because we think we can sort them out ourselves very often that is true in life that we think I can deal with this I'll sort this I'll sort that but it's sometimes only as things get sort of bigger and more problematic that we begin then maybe to turn to the Lord no we should go right away in everything because as we say often the big things revolve around the little things not always but that's often the case sometimes we have this idea that the

Lord won't be concerned about this little thing the Lord is concerned about everything we you see we don't understand the Lord size is not something the Lord operates by something that's really big that the Lord is only concerned about big things the Lord is the one who has made everything the Lord who made the elephant and the rhino he also made the sparrow and the bee the Lord who made the little daisies and the ground is the Lord who made the mountain rangers and the sea see he's concerned everything so that at one level we're not talking about the little and the big and that the Lord won't be bothered about the little things he is concerned about everything he is the one who made us from the dust to the ground in the most marvelous way possible when you consider all the different systems within us the nervous system and the skeletal system and the muscular system and the cardiovascular and reproductive all the different systems that are within the human body and see the absolute complexity of the whole thing and everything working together in the most extraordinary way it's

God who made it all he brought it all together so we've always got to remember that this whole world this whole universe it all belongs to him because he brought it into being and he's concerned about everything every single thing so as we say there's nothing that is too small to bring before the Lord and we are to bring before him our spiritual worries our spiritual problems our temporal problems you know nothing as we say is too small if you have little children you're not going to turn them away you know you and I as adults we look at life differently to little children and sometimes for them little things can be quite worrying and if they come to you with little things that worry them you don't go away and say oh when you grow up you'll see that you listen to them their worries become your concerns and it's the same with the Lord

Jesus he's never ever ever going to turn away any child of his who comes and it doesn't matter with what but he is concerned in this world it tells us so often he was moved with compassion he felt our pain in his heart he was involved with us we're told that the father in heaven he pities us just as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him so in everything we are to come to the Lord with everything and about everything even the little things even when you've lost something you've lost your pen now you may say to yourself I'd never go to the Lord about my pen but you put what to go with everything see this is faith every movement out of ourselves to the Lord is faith whenever we go to him with anything and you know the

[22 : 31] Lord loves to see us coming again and again and again and again that's one of the great differences between the Lord and ourselves if somebody comes to you again and again and again and again with something you can no matter how much you might like that person you'd reach a point you say oh not again give me a break but the Lord never operates like that ever ever he delights at the frequency of our coming to him and so when it talks here about in everything by prayer and supplication prayer and supplication there is there is in many ways there's a similarity but there's also a difference prayer is where we might term in the more general sense of where anything anything that we say God word where we might just tell the Lord we love him we might be asking for help to do something we might be asking for direction about something lots of these things but supplication goes to a deeper level supplication brings an intensity into things

Jesus in the garden when he was praying in Gethsemane it talks about their prayer and supplication Elijah on Carmel when he was praying for rain remember how he was praying and praying and praying and praying supplication is earnest it's intense it's specific it is where we're really focused upon what we're praying for and focused upon the Lord so we're told here that in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God so we're told there's also to be thanksgiving now again that is a vital part of all our prayer we had our thanksgiving service on Thursday and it's a very important part of what we are as

Christians is thanking the Lord but we see our prayer is always to be clothed with thanksgiving and you may say to yourself I find it hard you might be in a situation today and you say I find it hard to bring thanksgiving into my prayer because I'm going through a really really difficult time now while that might be true you still need to bring thanksgiving because I think we said this we've said it we've said it before and we've I'm sure quite a number of time it seems as if the heart of God responds to the thanksgiving and the praise of his people and I think one of the great examples not that long ago we were looking at the prophet Jonah Jonah prayed from the depths literally there haven't been too many people I'm sure who have been praying from the belly of a great fish or a whale but Jonah did and as

Jonah is praying they were very aware of where he's praying from this is what he says the waters have closed in over me to take my life the deep surrounds me weeds are wrapped around my head you would say humanly speaking that's an impossible situation Jonah you are in trouble but the point we're making here is if there is any passion you would say had a reason to leave thanksgiving out of it it would be Jonah how can he can you imagine the claustrophobic horror and the slime and the heat of being in the prison of a whale's belly and yet from there Jonah offers thanksgiving to the Lord because that's what it says he goes on to say despite all that and then he says but he says

I with a voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you because salvation belongs to the Lord isn't that wonderful and the very next verse tells us this and the Lord spoke to the fish and vomited Jonah out upon a dry land see how God responds to the praise and thanksgiving of his people and so it is essential that we give thanks to the Lord what do we thank him for well first and foremost thank him for the opportunity of prayer do we thank the Lord for that opportunity every day any hour 24 7 prayer is available to us imagine today if the only time that prayer was permissible was when we come to God's house to worship like this publicly that the only opportunity that we would have to bring our needs our requests our everything before God would be during our service times but no the Lord has opened a door for us and let us also remember the cost involved in our coming to

[28 : 07] God in prayer it is because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done this was from the very beginning remember we've always highlighted that the only way of access to God is in and through Jesus Christ in the Old Testament that was shown through the sacrificial system but of course that was always looking to Jesus and of course now we're looking back the Old Testament church look to the Jesus who would come we now look back to the Jesus who has come but it is through what Jesus has done that we have this opportunity this access to come to the Lord in prayer so this we have so much to thank the Lord for and again even as we look back we we can thank the Lord for so many answers to prayer now we know the Lord hasn't answered every prayer but he has answered some of our prayers some of our prayers that he hasn't answered remain a mystery to us but you know there are sometimes the Lord hasn't answered our prayer and we're actually able to thank him

I look back on my life and I thank the Lord that he didn't give me everything I asked for because sometimes we don't know what to ask for as we should just in the same way as a little child might ask for things that are dangerous or things that wouldn't do them any good so it is with us that's sometimes what we do and the Lord in his wisdom will sometimes say no not going to give you that at the time we can't understand why but afterwards sometimes we realize why and we're able to thank him again if our faith is vibrant and we're basing our prayer upon the word of God we should be able even to thank him in anticipation of what he's going to do because we're told that if we pray according to his will he hears us and if he hears us that he will answer and give us the petitions that we ask so thanksgiving has to be an essential integral part of prayer but then we see the result of it all and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus the God of peace who is at peace with himself is the God who conveys his peace into our heart when Jesus left the disciples remember the great statement he made he said I'm going away but you know what I'm going to leave you he says my peace I give unto you not as the world gives give I unto you and so this is a great legacy that the Lord has left the church and this peace acts like a sentry because that's the language we have here the peace of God which that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds so this this is dealing remember we're saying don't be anxious here is this is this is what we see with regard to the anxiety if we bring everything before the

Lord with thanksgiving the Lord will bring his peace to guard our minds and our hearts and you see straight away how this deals with the anxiety which is part and partial of life this is what the Lord is saying my peace will stand like a sentry at the door of your heart and at the door of your mind I'm going to keep you and it's an absolutely it's a wonderful promise I think one of the great examples of that we were looking recently at Daniel but Daniel chapter 6 we were looking at this not that long ago and we find that this is the very thing about about Daniel when Daniel knew remember there was this where they weren't allowed to ask anything of God or man except for the king for 30 days we find that Daniel did as he always he went to his room when Daniel knew that the document had been signed he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward

Jerusalem he got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he had done previously but it also tells us as we read through he talks about the prayer and supplication Daniel fitted the bill of this Daniel is an Old Testament illustration of what Paul is talking about and Daniel was taken from his room and he was taken and he was put into the den of lions and Daniel's mind and heart was kept at peace Daniel probably had a better night with the lions than Darius had on the throne that is the result of what the Lord does when we bring everything to him in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving it passes understanding passes surpasses understanding you cannot explain it you cannot tell it there are things that as the old expressions better felt than tell and this is one of them you cannot tell somebody you cannot explain to somebody what this peace is but it's real because it's come into your heart it's God given you cannot work it up yourself you can't meditate your mind into it you cannot try and blank everything you can go through all sorts of things but this is God given and he promises that he will do this but we have to bring everything and bring it in such a way that we leave it with him because we're not very good at that either we're very good at bringing something to the Lord and saying

[34 : 28] Lord you'll have to deal with this and I'm going to take it back by the way remember it's always saying cast your burden upon the Lord commit your way to the Lord in other words give it to him and leave it with him but far too often we take it back to ourselves may we have the faith then to believe this word and to live this word so that we will be in the habit of bringing everything spiritual and temporal everything about our home our work our lack of work whether it's school or wherever all the different situations that we're in in life bring everything to the Lord in prayer in supplication with and ask ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in prayer even in the little things but don't forget the thanksgiving and mean it let us pray Lord our God we give thanks for the wonder of your word and there are times that we look at it and sometimes say oh this is this really is too much for me but grant us the grace to lay hold upon these truths and to live live upon them

Lord bless us we pray bless us as a congregation bless all our homes and our families pray for those who are ill we ask Lord for healing and for help for restoration we give thanks Lord you are the great physician and so we commit into your care those who are unwell pray Lord for those whose hearts are sore and those who are anxious today oh Lord we pray to bring them your peace watch over us bless a cup of tea coffee in the hall after and take away from us all our sin in Jesus name we ask it Amen we're going to conclude singing in Psalm 85 the 85th Psalm Psalm number 85 this is a Scottish Psalter and we're going to it's on page 340 at verse 8

Psalm 85 verse 8 on page 340 I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return to foolishness to them that fear him surely near is his salvation that glory in our land may have a habitation truth met with mercy righteousness and peace kissed mutually truth springs from earth and righteousness looks down from heaven high yea what is good the Lord will give our land shall yield increase justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face Psalm 85 from verse 8 I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his hope he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return turn to foolishness to them not fear him surely near is his salvation of glory in her her her habitation to men with mercy righteousness and peace in mutually earthly différentes who ■■■■■■ from earth and righteousness liar and AMYuell

Hail Indigenous good83■■■■■ ■■■ and shall yield in peace.

Just this new set of sinnesses shall go before His face.

[39 : 36] Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.