

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

~ READ TEXT ~

AS YOU SETTLE IN...

- Turn to the book of (Philippians 4:6-9).

SO NOTE TAKERS...

- I've titled today's message...
 - “Chasing Peace”

(Read 4:6-9)

~ INTRO ~

LABOR DAY IS TOMORROW...

- Hopefully you get some time off to rest & relax.
 - A holiday built around taking a break from work.

WE'VE BEEN IN A REALLY BUSY SEASON AS A CHURCH...

- There's been a lot going on & a lot of changes we're growing thru...
 - I've found myself praying – asking God for peace...

I THINK WHAT I'VE MEANT BY THAT IS...

- I've been wanting things to settle down...
 - Or looking forward when some big task is completed.

THE LORD HAS BEEN SHOWING ME SOMETHING SPECIAL...

- I was thinking my circumstances needed to change...
 - Before I could experience peace.
- My thinking has been...
 - When I finish this – I'll have peace
 - When this season slows down – I'll have peace
 - When I get some time off – I'll have peace
 - When there's less to do – I'll have peace
- There will always be the next thing...
 - And there will always be something else that needs to get done.
 - In the Christian life the reward for a job well done...
 - Is more work!

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

- If peace is waiting for me on the other side of...
 - Everything that we need to accomplish...
 - We'll spend our entire lives...
 - “Chasing peace!”

JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES...

John 14:27 (NLT) “I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give...”

- This was one of the last things Jesus said to them...
 - Right before he was going to be arrested and crucified...
 - Things were going to become incredibly...
 - Hard and confusing for them...
 - But Jesus said they could have peace.

THIS TELLS ME THE PEACE JESUS GIVES...

- Cannot depend upon everything around me going the way I like or want...
 - That's what the world offers!
 - Remove the problem
 - Eliminate the stress
 - Get enough money
 - Get enough control
 - Take the vacation
 - Finish the work
 - Get married (or divorced)
 - Make everyone cooperate

JESUS OFFERS A DIFFERENT KIND OF PEACE...

- Peace that can exist while the circumstances are still unstable...
 - Which brings us to (Philippians 4:6-9)

~ CONTEXT ~

PAUL IS WRITING THIS LETTER...

- While he's in prison...
 - His circumstances were greatly unsettled...

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

- But he writes the greatest epistle on joy & peace!

MAYBE I HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR THE WRONG THING...

- “Give me circumstances that will allow me to have peace”...
 - “How are you using these circumstances to draw me closer to you?”

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?!?

- Because God uses our anxiety as an invitation to bring us out of self-reliance...
 - And into a deeper communion with Himself.
 - By Praying / Thinking / Doing

~ IDEA # 1 – “The Promise of Peace” (v. 6-7) ~

(v.6)

PAUL STARTS OFF WITH A BOLD STATEMENT...

- I could understand he told us to “worry less”...
 - Or only about the really big & important things...
 - But he says to be anxious for **nothing**

BUT HE DOESN'T LEAVE US THERE...

- He teaches us that we should take the worry & anxiety somewhere...
 - To the throne of God.
 - Nothing = anxiety
 - Everything = prayer

PRAYER SEEMS TO BE THE LAST THING WE DO...

- When something begins to make us anxious...
 - We figure out a plan...
 - We ask others for insight
 - We study & research...
 - THEN we pray.

BUT SCRIPTURE REVEALS TO US...

#1 – God cares about what I worry about

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

” Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” (1 Peter 5:7) NLT

#2 – God invites me to come

“Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”” (Matthew 11:28) NLT

#3 – God hears me when I pray

“And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.” (1 John 5:14-15) NLT

#4 – Prayer changes me

“Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart’s desires.” (Psalm 37:4) NLT

#5 – Simplicity of prayer

*“... Tell God **what you need**, and **thank him** for all he has done.” Philippians 4:6 (NLT)*

THIS IS A SIMPLE WAY TO THINK OF PRAYER...

- We can be honest with God about our needs...
 - Thanksgiving forces us to remember what He’s done already.
 - His past faithfulness is evidence of his future faithfulness

(v.7)

PAUL SHARES THE PROMISE WE RECEIVE AS WE WALK THIS OUT...

- Peace of God that will guard our hearts & minds.
 - “Guard” = military language
 - Peace in the midst of unchanged circumstances!

~ IDEA #2 – “Think About Your Thoughts” (v. 8) ~

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

NOW PAUL MOVES FROM PRAYER TO THE MIND...

- And gives us a filter for our thinking...
 - Because we can't always control what enters our mind...
 - But we can control what we allow to stay there

A FEW YEARS AGO MY FAMILY WAS TRAVELING...

- Before we went thru security I coached my kids on the process.
 - But my son gets flagged and pulled to the side...
 - Because of a lone water bottle at the bottom of his backpack.

HE HAD UNINTENTIONALLY BROUGHT SOMETHING PROHIBITED...

- But TSA had an intentional “filter” so certain things wouldn't be allowed...
 - Anything that came to that checkpoint would have to be examined...

THIS CONCEPT IS TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE...

- (2 Cor 10:5) NKJV

“... bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”

- (Romans 12:2) NLT

*“... God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”
(Rom 12:2 NLT)*

THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE...

- What we think determines what we believe...
 - And what we believe determines how we act.
 - And our thinking becomes the filter for our life.
 - Instead of filtering our thinking.

THE FILTER:

#1 – Truth

- What's real as God defines it: facts & His promises
 - Not our assumptions or possibilities...
 - “Is this actually true, or just what I'm afraid might be true?”

#2 – Noble

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

- Worthy of respect. Weighty, dignified, serious.
 - The opposite of cheap, petty, or beneath me.
 - “Is this thought respectful to me or others?”

#3 – Just

- Righteous. What's right in God's eyes, what lines up with His standard
 - “Is this thought right before God?”

#4 – Pure

- Morally clean, holy, undefiled
 - “Does this thought move me toward holiness or away from it?”

#5 – Lovely

- Pleasing, **agreeable**, winsome, attractive.
- The kind of thing that draws people and calls forth love.
- Beautiful rather than corrosive.
 - “Is this thought beautiful and life-giving, or ugly and bitter?”

#6 – Good report

- Of good reputation. The kind of thing that's fitting to speak well of.
 - *Is this thought worthy or commendable* (think of reporting it to others)?

#7 – Virtue & praiseworthy

- Morally excellent and worthy of praise.
 - “Does this reflect excellence & give God something to be praised for?”

A SIMPLE WAY TO THINK ABOUT THIS...

- The **first four** test against God's standard
 - “Is this right?”
- The **last three** test against beauty & admiration
 - “Is this good?”

LET'S MAKE AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION...

- This isn't just a positive thinking technique that Paul is giving...
 - Nor is he saying that our thoughts create reality.

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

- Our thoughts profoundly influence how we...
 - Experience & respond to reality.

HERE’S AN EXAMPLE:

- When something hurts...
 - Positive thinking says – *“This does not hurt”*
 - Biblical thinking says – *“This hurts, but God hasn’t abandoned me”*
- Biblical thinking anchors reality in the character of God...
 - So what we consume matters...
 - And the voices we listen to influence...
 - What we meditate on directs our steps...
 - So bring *“every thought into captivity!”*

~IDEA #3 – “Do What You Know (v.9) ~

PAUL PROGRESSES FROM PRAYING INSTEAD OF WORRYING...

- Filtering our thinking through God’s word...
 - To making it a reality in our life – *“Do it!”*

LAST WEEK WE MOVED INTO THE OFFICES NEXT DOOR...

- I have never really liked using white boards – I use technology.
 - But since we moved in I really see the value of a whiteboard.
- I took time to write out a few things that I need to work on...
 - Things that are being planned
 - That I have timelines for...
 - Radio production, etc.
- It’s one thing to make a plan and put details on the whiteboard...
 - But it’s something quite different to execute those plans!

THE SAME IS TRUE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS...

- We tend to place so much emphasis on the process...
 - Learning / reading / listening ...
 - But eventually truth has to be lived out.

THE DANGER FOR US AS CHRISTIANS...

- We can know a lot about the bible...

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

- And mistake knowing truth for walking in truth.
- I know I need to pray...
 - And I still carry the weight myself.
- I know I should forgive...
 - But I walk in bitterness holding grudges.

AS WE COME TO GOD IN PRAYER...

- And we submit our thinking to His truth...
 - That truth is meant to shape how we actually live.
- Prayer & thinking can stop at an inward experience – “I feel better”
 - But the intention is deeper fellowship with Christ...
 - Which produces outward obedience in my life.

PAUL WAS LIVING THIS OUT...

- I’m sure he wanted out of that jail cell...
 - But he understood even there that he belonged to Christ...
 - He could experience God’s peace knowing...
 - “*The prisoner of Christ*” (Eph. 3:1) NKJV
- His circumstances did not define who was in control...
 - Rome might have been holding him...
 - But Paul understood his life belonged to Jesus

WALKING IN OBEDIENCE THROUGH OUR CIRCUMSTANCES...

- Is not the way to earn God’s presence or peace...
 - It’s the lived expression of dependence on Him...
 - “*I trust you...*”

THIS BRINGS THE WHOLE PASSAGE TOGETHER...

- In (v. 7) we have the promise of “*the peace of God*” ...
 - In (v.9) we have the promise of “*the God of peace*”.
 - We begin by asking God for peace...
 - And he draws us into deeper fellowship with Himself.
- Sometimes the circumstances never change...
 - But we change because we are learning...

Philippians 4:6-9
“Chasing Peace”

- To walk with “*the God of peace*”

~ IN CLOSING (Communion) ~

AS WE TRANSITION INTO COMMUNION...

- Take a moment to draw near to the God of peace...
 - Bring Him what you're carrying...
 - Bring your thoughts back to what is true...
 - And let's remember Jesus.