

The Peace of Knowing...one shot

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One Shot / Philippians 4:4–9

One thing to immediately note, before we look at our passage for today, it was written from prison. Not cush, minimum security, enjoy the breeze prison, but first century Roman, if someone doesn't feed you you don't eat prison.

I tell you that to change your perspective on the passage we will look at, because on first read it sometimes sounds trite and beyond our faith. It's not. It is not beyond God to give us what this passage tells us is already ours for the taking.

(Read [Philippians](#) 4:4-9)

Paul writing to the church that has been concerned for him, is concerned for them. He wants them to be reassured and sound in their faith and in their position. So as he closes his letter, he reminds them of where his security comes from and all the benefits they have as followers of Jesus.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Philippians 4:4–7 speaks primarily to **those occasions in life when peace is lacking**. They are the times when troublesome circumstances interrupt the normal flow of events

First, he tells them to rejoice (v4)

Why are they do rejoice? Because no matter what is going on they are in the Lord. And when we are in Jesus we have joy.

Joy is not dependent on circumstances whether good or bad. It is dependent on Jesus. He gives us joy and when the walls are closing in and all seems lost, He alone can give us a reason to lift up our heads and face the battle with joy.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

First, Paul commanded the Philippians to rejoice. He repeated the command immediately, thereby emphasizing its importance. Their joy was to be in the Lord, and it was to be unchanging. **The circumstances of Paul's life reminded him of the joy available in the Lord, and he wished that joy for them as well.** Paul knew that no situation is beyond the Lord's help. Christians can always rejoice in that, if nothing else

Then he goes on and gives us a further instruction. We are to be "reasonable." Now there is a better translation of this word. It is "gentleness." No matter the situation we should seek to be gentle.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Paul exhorted them to gentleness. No single word translates *epi-eikes* well, and commentators consistently insist that the word contains an element of selflessness. The gentle person does not insist on his rights. "It is that considerate courtesy and respect for the integrity of others which prompts a man not to be forever standing on his rights; and it is preeminently the character of Jesus

Far too often when stress rises, gentleness disappears. We are on edge and feel like we are losing control. The last things we want to be us gentle, yet that is who Jesus was at the moment of His greatest stress- (with the thief on the cross- Luke 23:39-43)

Part of the reason we struggle to be gentle in these seasons is we lose sight of who has control- and it is not us. So we should seek to pursue the Lord and lean into His gentleness with us, so we can display that to others.

In fact, go on to verse following v6. Not only are we capable of being gentle, but God can, and will, aid us in the midst of our anxiety.

Now some people have taken this verse in a gross manner- saying it means we do not need mental health treatment or to seek the aid of counselors or psychiatrists. It does not say that, you should note. **But what it does say is that when anxiety rises, we should take comfort in the nearness of Jesus.**

He is not unaware of our circumstances. He is not unfamiliar with our minds or our jobs or our families or our health. He KNOWS, because He is at hand! That means He is right there with us in the midst of these circumstances. We have not only not been left alone, we have come to this place with our great companion and Comforter. And He will remain there with us.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Jesus spoke about anxiety in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:25–34), where he stated the most common causes of anxiety. They are: physical attributes (v. 27); clothing (v. 28); food and drink (v. 31); and the future (v. 34). Even in contemporary life with its complexities, the same simple concerns cause anxiety.

So what we should do, it TALK to HIM! Pray...list your fears, your wants, your needs, your requests...and be thankful that God HEARS them!

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)The center of the verse is the significant part: Prayer is to be offered “with thanksgiving.” **The attitude of gratitude accompanies all true approaches to the Father**

He will not give us anything that will harm us even if we ask for it. He may well say NO for reasons passing our understanding, but **He will not leave us ALONE!**

Now look at verse 7- what comes from all of this?

Peace.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

The answer to anxiety is the peace of God. Paul made three statements about this peace. **First**, it is divine peace. He did not envision a situation where circumstances changed or external needs were met. This peace was a characteristic of God which invaded the Christian

And it is not a peace that makes sense. It is a peace that defies circumstances. It defies all rational sense. It is the peace of God. And it guards us.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Second, it “transcends all understanding.” “Transcends” translates the word hyperechousa (“excellent”), which is found in 2:3; 3:8, and here in a compound form. Paul contrasted knowledge and peace at one point: **Peace excels over knowledge. No doubt he had in mind situations where knowledge is insufficient.** Sometimes it cannot explain, and sometimes explanations do not help. Peace, however, is always appropriate and meets the need of the heart

Where are we guarded? 2 places:

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Finally, we are guarded. **“Guard” is a military term, implying that peace stands on duty to keep out anything that brings care and anxiety.** For these reasons, prayerful people are peaceful people.

- our hearts- we are led to worship God in the midst of chaos. He will not be supplanted by another idol to take His place.
- our minds- our intellect and thinking will be guarded for the sake of our lives. We will not be held captive by thinking that will take us away from Jesus.

This all comes from a relationship with Jesus. Apart from Him none of this happens and it is why you need Jesus, and we need to tell others about Him!

This peace takes root in a mind that is changed by the presence of Jesus. When Jesus comes into our lives, He remakes us- not just by removing our sin- but by reforming our minds and patterns of thought.

Look at Verses 8-9

There are 8 items Paul calls out here that should become our foci.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

This speaks to the need of rearranging life and thought through discipline so that the God of peace can freely work

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Paul addressed the thought life first. He identified seven qualities which should characterize Christians.

“True,” in the ethical sense as used here, means “truthfulness, dependability.”

“Noble” translates a rare word which has a broad meaning. Used primarily by Paul in the Pastoral Epistles, it has the idea of “worthy of respect, honor, noble.

“Right” is a translation of the Greek *dikaiosynē*, normally translated “just” (KJV). It implies giving to God and people a justness that is worthy of them.

“Pure” translates a word meaning “pure” or “holy” in relation to God.

“Lovely” is found only here in the New Testament and has a fundamental meaning of “that which calls forth love”

“Admirable” occurs only here in the New Testament, and it means whatever is “praiseworthy, attractive,” therefore likely not to offend.

“Excellent” (*aretē*) means morally excellent.

Finally, “praiseworthy” means worthy of praising God.

Notice it is saying these are the things we should focus our minds on in the midst of anxiety- **we turn our minds not to the evil or chaos of the current situation, but to the good things that God has done in us and around us**- we change our FOCUS and that quiets our minds- and it does so b/c God is in control and we can see that in His goodness.

For so many of us, myself very much included, **we let circumstances dictate our thoughts rather than the Spirit**. And that steals our peace!

God wants to redirect our thoughts- and when you consider those characteristics, you realize that they all flow from Him and His way. **God is directing us, when peace is lacking, to refocus on the God who transcends the chaos...who brings order and who has our best interests at heart.**

And look at the last promise, when our minds becomes refocused, our practices will follow...and peace will arrive!

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

Paul combined the mental and ethical concerns of his Jewish background with Christian thought. For him, knowledge always led to responsible Christian living

Not peace we have created by changing our circumstances, but peace we have received, because God has found us in the midst of the crisis and given us peace.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (3) Exhortation to Joy and Peace (4:4–9)

God's peace especially resides in those who have ordered their lives in accordance with God's will. This includes proper and disciplined thoughts and good Christian living. Thus the two sets of instructions on peace complement each other. When anxiety appears, the cure is prayer. When the life is disorderly, the cure is mental and practical discipline.