

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9 (TNIV)

<sup>6</sup> Do not be **anxious** about *anything*,  
but in **every** situation,  
by **prayer** and **petition**,  
with **thanksgiving**,  
present your requests to God.

<sup>7</sup> And **the peace of God**,  
which transcends all understanding,  
**will guard your hearts and your minds**  
**in Christ Jesus.**

— PART 4 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

“Paul deliberately conjoins the ‘peace of God’ [v. 7] with the exhortation to pray in trusting submission with thanksgiving [v. 6], and thus offers **GOD’S ALTERNATIVE TO ANXIETY**. *As they submit their situation to God in prayer, with thanksgiving, what they may expect from God is that his ‘peace’ will ‘guard’ their hearts and minds as they remain ‘in Christ Jesus.’*”

GORDON D. FEE, Paul’s Letter to the Philippians (NICNT)

“**And the peace of God**” — doesn’t it just make sense that “**the peace of God**” comes from “**the God of peace**”?!! [v. 9: “*And the God of peace will be with you.*”]

It is called the peace **of God** because “**It is ‘grounded in his presence’** [M.R. VINCENT]. The phrase [designates] **that peace which God himself possesses or has**, that is, **‘THE SERENITY IN WHICH HE LIVES’**. ‘God himself is not beset with anxieties’ [F.W. BEARE]. G.B. Caird calls it **‘THE TRANQUILITY OF HIS OWN ETERNAL BEING.’**

At the same time, it refers to **the peace that he bestows or gives** . . . “**and is the result of believing prayer.**”

PETER T. O’BRIEN, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (NIGTC)

“**which transcends all understanding**” — “This could mean ‘beyond all human comprehension,’ which in one sense is certainly true. **More likely Paul intends that God’s peace ‘totally transcends the merely human, unbelieving mind,’ which is full of anxiety because it cannot think higher than itself.** Because the God to whom we pray and offer thanksgiving, whose ways are higher than ours, is also to-

tally trustworthy, our prayer is accompanied by his peace. And that, not because he answers according to our wishes, but because **his peace totally transcends our merely human way of perceiving the world.**

**Peace comes because PRAYER IS AN EXPRESSION OF TRUST, and God's people do not need to have it all figured out in order to trust him!"**

GORDON D. FEE, Paul's Letter to the Philippians (NICNT)

**"will guard your hearts and your minds"** — That great theologian STING once claimed something similar — he said *"...I've built this fortress around your heart"* — but unfortunately went on to acknowledge that to do so he had also *"encircled you in trenches and barbed wire"* . . . to the point that *"I had to stop in my tracks for fear of walking on the mines I'd laid."* That doesn't sound like the kind of "guarding your heart" that any of us need or want?

The brilliant New Testament scholar GORDON FEE is a better guide here. He notes that the word for "guard" was "used **literally** by Paul of the ethnarch Aretas in 2 Cor. 11:32, who **set a guard at the city gates. . . . This is a MILITARY metaphor, where a garrison, such as the one always stationed in Philippi, 'guards the Roman pax' . . .**

**In the present context 'God's peace' will be his 'garrison' around their 'hearts' so that they do not fall into 'anxiety.' It will also guard their 'thoughts.** Since God's peace surpasses merely human understanding in any case, **it will protect the mind from those very thoughts that lead to fear and distress and that keep one from trusting prayer."**

GORDON D. FEE, Paul's Letter to the Philippians (NICNT)

**"in Christ Jesus"** — **"As with so much else in this letter, the location of such 'protection' is 'in Christ Jesus.' IT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST, in whom they trust and in whom they rejoice, that is the key to all of these imperatives and this affirming indicative.** Thus this is (literally and theologically) the final word in this series of exhortations. **EVERYTHING that makes for life in the present and the future has to do with their being 'in Christ Jesus.' "**

GORDON D. FEE, Paul's Letter to the Philippians (NICNT)

**But more on this little phrase tomorrow!**

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We confess: **"ABBA FATHER, we are so filled with anxiety, worry and fear.**

**But we cry out to you, 'THE GOD OF PEACE' —  
and ask you to pour out 'THE PEACE OF GOD'  
into our nervous and agitated hearts and minds!"**

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May **"the serenity in which God lives"** be poured out on you today,

Pastor Doug

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at [info@bethanyonline.net](mailto:info@bethanyonline.net)

P.P.S. Keep checking this page — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for more encouragement.