

Today's devotional was written by Anneke de Jong, a member of Visalia CRC.

Tuesday July 21, 2026

God Gives Us His Peace

As you enter your time with God today, pause for a moment of silence before beginning with this prayer from Psalm 85:

Show me your unfailing love, LORD, and grant me your salvation. May I listen closely to what you say and may I hear your promise of peace to me, your faithful servant. Amen

For the next three days, we are going to meditate on Philippians 4:4-9. This passage, with its promise of “peace that transcends all understanding,” gets at the very heart of the Christian life. Take a moment to read it aloud:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

I have a grandson who's just the cutest thing in the world! He's full of spunk and energy, joy and life. He has never met a stranger and will happily go to anyone. But the minute he loses sight of the adult in the room, he panics. Even though I might be standing right there in the kitchen, if he can't see me, he drops his toys, starts to cry, and comes running to look for me.

I wonder how often we are like my grandson? Sociologists say we have become an “anxious generation,” with an elevated sense of insecurity and uneasiness about the future. Many people today live in a constant state of fear. Christians are not immune to this lack of peace. And I can't help but wonder if we have forgotten that we are not alone.

Philippians 4:4-9 begins with the assurance that “*the Lord is near*” and ends with the promise that “*the God of peace will be with you.*” The God of peace is right here with us.

Theologians use the term ***immanence*** to describe this attribute of God. “Because he rules over creation, God is present throughout the whole creation, especially to his people in a personal and covenantal way.”

We see this most clearly when God came to live among us in Jesus Christ - Immanuel - God with us. And then again when he ascended to heaven. Jesus promised his disciples that He would be with them always. He would literally send the Holy Spirit to dwell in them. The Lord is as near to us as He can be - He is dwelling in us through the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Not only that, the time of Jesus’ return is near. James reminds his readers to be “*Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming... Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.*” (James 3:7&8) It may feel like it's taking a long time for Jesus to return. After all, it's been two thousand years since his ascension. But whether Jesus returns next year or in another thousand years, in the grand scheme of eternity, the Lord’s coming is near.

When we focus on the presence of God near us—his immanence—we remember that we have nothing to fear. God is with us in each and every situation. He is the God of peace, and He has everything under his sovereign control, leaving us free to live in the safety and security of His presence.

As the old hymn Great is Thy Faithfulness proclaims,
*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

So rejoice in the Lord—He is with us, now and always. Shalom.

Reflection Question:

How does the reality of God’s immanence change the way you see your circumstances?