

# The God of Peace Be With You

## Anthony Kim

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Well, go ahead and please turn with me to Philippians chapter 4. Philippians chapter 4 and we will be in verses 8 and 9 for this morning. Go ahead and please turn with me to chapter 4 beginning in verse 8. If you would please stand for out of respect of God's word as I read and you follow along in your Bible. Philippians chapter 4 beginning verse 8.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good report. If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, do. And the God of peace shall be with you. You may be seated.

The God who shapes our minds wants to stay with us. He wants to reside in us. Think on these things. And then the last part of that passage in verse nine, the God of peace shall be with you. That is where we are going. Before we get to that end, I want us to think at this moment where we find ourselves always in a kind of battle between this world and the world to come.

It feels like what Proverbs 25 verse 28 says. This is what it says. A city broken down without walls. A city broken down without walls. Where any wandering thought or any chaotic anxiety or anxious thought can wander in and out of our minds because of the walls being on the ground.

You see, this is a picture of us. It is not talking about an actual city. It is imaging our minds and what we allow in and what we allow out in our words. And so what this is is that in our minds we can be very much vulnerable as a city without walls exposed to number one our enemy right allowing the enemy to come in and cause all types of chaos with anxious thoughts and things that do not provide peace.

It is someone that has a city without walls. A person that has no self-control is defenseless against temptation and ultimately poor decisions in your life. And so what we are going to talk about is how to protect your mind from being defenseless.

Because one thing that we see in scripture is this word self-control. We see it in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 26 one aspect of the fruit of the spirit. Self-control is a defensive wall. It is a city with walls. It is a mind with protection.

You see, protecting one's life is crucial. God cares about how you live your life. He also cares about your very emotions, whether up or down, based on different circumstances. He cares about your emotions. We are going to see that. But he cares for your spiritual health.

He cares for your spiritual health. You may not be able to dissect it and see what the spiritual health looks like but words of scripture will show what it means because we wonder why our lives feel that it is falling apart. You ever feel that way? You ever feel like a city without walls and you are just falling apart because all sorts of things are just causing havoc in your life and you feel like you are falling apart and when you have no peace and it seems difficult to find rest right amongst chaos and the answer lies in the sanctuary of your mind. Do you believe your mind is a sanctuary? If you think of that imagery, it is a place that is peaceful. I often enjoy places like going in the mountains and there is just sanctuaries amongst the forest. There is just peace and tranquility. Is that how your mind is?

The relevance of this passage is found in the fact that our spiritual lives are not based on the frequent changes of our emotions. Nor is our life to be based on forces from the outside entering in and causing all sorts of chaos. See, God wants to renovate your mind. He wants to do a thorough inspection. And how does he inspect our mind? We are going to see it in this passage.

Further to this, why does God place such emphasis on our thoughts? Because he knows that our thought life is the starting place of our character and our destiny into the future. You see, if a thought gets into your mind and it is a good thought and it is from God, it creates eternal value. But think of the same thing but reversed with a bad thought and what that leads to is eternal destruction. It forms in your character into eternal destruction.

So this is extremely important. What is in your mind? You see, he does not merely want to provide us with a temporary fix for our worries. He desires to establish a permanent relationship. That is where we see the God of peace in verse 9. He wants to permanently reside in you. The God of peace.

Proverbs 13:20 says this, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. This verse emphasizes that surrounding yourselves with wise, godly people, which by the way ultimately is God himself who provides that wisdom,

shapes our character, brings wisdom, and protects you from the harmful consequences of those who you associate with.

You see, further into this passage in Philippians 4, we are going to see that this is not a human effort by no means. This is not achieved by human effort, but it is the work of the grace of God. We need to depend on God, even depend on God for the thoughts that we have. You see, it is not us trying to think correctly. There is nothing in us to do that. It is about God's word becoming the landlord of your thought life. Who is the permanent residency in your life? He wants to be the landlord of your thought life. He wants to be the authority in your thought life. Expelling all darkness and replacing it with the light of Christ.

If you look at Colossians 3:1 and 2 explains it this way. If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on the things on the earth. What this passage is referring to is that your vertical relationship takes priority over your horizontal relationships. That is what happens in a believer's life.

And we saw in the last sermon the importance of guarding or fortifying our hearts. Remember that where God shuts the things that are not good ultimately for our lives. Remember those anxious thoughts. He is the one that protects us from those anxious thoughts. That word guard. And then here in this passage, we are going to see is that the gates are actually opened. He is not saying to fortify in this part. He is saying to open allowing the things of God what he desires to enter in the thoughts that he wants you to think about.

The connection here is also from a sermon I preached two weeks ago. We also saw that the Lord gave us a command to rejoice always in the Lord because you know why you cannot rejoice in other people's lives always or in things. The only one that can find true rejoicing always is in the Lord.

We hear so much in the world, a mental health crisis. A surge of anxiety, depression, and suicidal inclination. Those are three killers right now. And what does the world tell you? Be in isolation. Thank God. God's people do not stay in isolation. Because he wants to prevent these anxious thoughts that lead to suicidal ideation. And the world says that we have not returned back to the pre-pandemic levels. But you see, that is not the solution. There is no solution found in the world. The solution is found in the church of God. It is always been and it always will be.

This is where God's presence takes away all those anxious thoughts. And we are thankful for what God has designed us to be the cure to anxious thoughts. So what a cure we are going to find here also in the passage today, there is a cure. Furthermore, as Christians,

we ought to be the most joy filled. We are to be the most peace filled and have the most healthy mindset of all people. We are to be the most joy filled, the most peace filled, and the most healthy mindset of all people.

So the question is, where is the gap if you are not experiencing that this morning? Because that is what God wants for you. That is how he designed you. That is how he designed this church and all other healthy churches that puts Christ above everything else as the head. He wants to speak through me to you with his word. Will you listen?

You see what Paul is saying here is extremely important. Philippians 4:8-9 is a conclusion of Paul's exhortations on Christian stability. So, if you want stability, just go back to verses 1-7. That is what stability looks like. And what is stability? It is that part where it says we stand fast in the Lord. How do we stand? We advance together the gospel. That is how we stand. We do not stand in place.

He is saying the God of peace promises to be present to those whose minds and lives are being shaped by the truth of the gospel. Because what is the essence of the gospel? We are no longer enslaved to sin. It no longer has control in our lives. But there is a new nature. And what is that new nature? Christ authority now resides in us. So he is the authority. He has the power to help you overcome sin.

God is the one actively doing the renewing and empowering in the believer in Christ. God wants to shape your mindset. You see that in the text where it says, Think on these things. And then he wants to empower your life that it is not just simply in your mind but then it takes control those thoughts in your life. It actually manifests in your life. So he says in those things if you think upon them you will be able to do. He will empower you to do them not by your own strength but by Christ strength. And the amazing promise that we see is that we do not just get the peace of God as something that is from the outside in. That is what verse 7 is. The peace of God helping us in our anxious thoughts. But in verse 9. He wants to be the God of peace in our lives. It is not just from the outside in, it is from the inside out. From both, a dynamic relationship.

It is never a one-way road. And we see that God is the same in that respect as well. This is what fellowship means. Fellowship means in communion. It is not a one-way conversation. It is a bidirectional conversation. And prayer and reading of his word. Praying and reading of the word. Reading the word is like breathing in and then praying is breathing out. That is the spiritual life of a believer.

He helps correct in our lives anxiety driven thinking. That is what we saw in verses six to seven. And then he also takes order in disordered desires. Verses two and three, we saw the danger of thinking too high of yourselves. The main thing is to get to the goal, which is to have the mind of Christ.

The idea is this. Who is going to race to the bottom. That is what a leader is, a servant leader, a Christlike leader in the church.

You see the misconception that spiritual transformation comes through a religious reform or reformation, meaning just trying to better yourselves, never works out. We cannot survive in spiritual isolation.

Now that is what God does in correcting our mind. How does he defend our mind? You see, the necessity of Christlike thinking is the foundation of Christian living. Christlike thinking is the foundation of Christian living. The necessity of our minds being anchored into the reality of Christ and his character is a value that is to be visible as a local church.

Every member of this local church is a representation of the gospel. That is why we take membership seriously. That is why we take this very seriously because you are a body in this local church and as Christ is the head we are the body and we are to represent the gospel.

So we go from right thinking in verse 8 to right living in verse 9 which results when we do that is the God of peace being with you. It is a promise. So we must then really take these words to the utmost seriousness that God would form these thoughts and the right living and then that he would reside with us so that it will be him representing us and shaping our lives to what he has for us.

You see the theme of Philippians is choosing a mindset. That you have a choice as a believer. You have two natures. And God has given you a choice. You be empowered by him and do the things of Christ or he will disempower you and you will continue to stay in your sin. And he will discipline you in your sin if you are truly God's people.

This is the root what it means to be rooted in Christ. God himself is offering to reshape your mind and walk with you in peace if you will receive the mind of Christ that he gives and the profound sense of relief that comes with that. He is to take control the authority in your mind and in your life and that by doing that he guarantees that his presence will be with you moving with you not to exhaustion but rather, he is taking you to a joyful rest in surrender.

When you are fighting against God, there will never be peace. But when you go to him, when you surrender to him in every area of your life, he will give you peace. He will give you peace that surpasses all understanding in Christ Jesus. As a Christian, we first surrendered our lives to him in our salvation. But do we surrender ourselves continually as Lord as the authority in our lives? Because surrendering to God is a good thing.

So let God govern your mind. Let God govern your life and your peace that you once had if you had it once before but not now is that when you depend upon God, he will make sure your mind is a sanctuary once again.

Now, we are going to move into some aspects that I want us to get from these verses. The first is to see how God filters our minds. It is seen in verse eight where God calls his people to a mind shaped by him. He lists eight categories. These are categories. It goes from true to honest to just to pure, lovely, good report, virtue and praise. This is not a list of virtues to produce. It is simply the portrait of Christ. We are beholding Christ in the way he thinks. We are going deep into the mind of Christ and these are the things that the mind of Christ thought about while he was here on earth. It is a portrait of Christ to behold.

God's ultimate desire for you is not to merely offer you temporary relief, which is the peace of God, but to give you himself in an ongoing relationship, the God of peace.

The truth that we are to see here is starting with the verse that starts with finally. It is concluding the instructions of the mind of Christ. He has been describing all the way from chapter 2 and this is the conclusion that God forms his people to have the mind of Christ where Philippians 2:5 says let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

God is the author of all truth. And why this matters is that because your thoughts shape your desires, your desires shape your decisions, and your decisions shape your life. There is a natural progression.

Without God's filtering of your mind, you are allowing poison into your mental diet. Have you ever thought about not just physical diet, but mental diet? What you allow to be put into your mind? Do you prioritize God over things? Do you put comfort above God? Do you put money above God? Do you put your control over God's control? Do you put relationships on this earth above God?

Good things that become ultimate things such as career, family, or material possessions will always lead to your destruction. James 4:8 says this, Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. This word double-minded means worldliness. If you have worldly thoughts, you are to purify your hearts.

Even the good things should never be the ultimate things. And so existing in this life requires close communion with the Father.

God does not leave our minds as a city broken down without walls. Instead, he provides a grid, a grid that is eight categories of the virtues of Christ that our thoughts must pass

through. God anchors our minds in his word. That is how he anchors us. Only his word because his word is a mirror that reveals his glory. 2 Corinthians 3:18 that we are to pass from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord. And that means that change is gradual. It is gradual and it is moving forward.

Now we are going to look at Christ in these eight categories. These qualities of Christ reflect the character of Christ and it is a description of Jesus himself. Our minds are naturally drawn to brokenness. If you just allow your mind to just go on its own, you will go into thoughts of brokenness. You will go into the garbage of this world and God must intervene. He must drive out the worldliness by feeding our minds with the character of Christ.

True: Christ is the truth. John 14:6 says, Jesus saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the father except by me.

Honest or honorable: Christ is worthy of our reverence. We reverence his word above everyone else.

Just: We are aligned to God's standards. Christ is the just one. He always aligned to God's standard. He helps us to align to God's standard.

Pure: Christ purifies the heart. The only pure individual to ever walk on this earth.

Lovely: Christ is the beauty of holiness. He is the holy one. There is beauty and purity. There is loveliness and beauty.

Good report: Christ is worthy of all of our praise. We are not to worship anyone else. We are to worship him in our praise.

Virtue: Christ is of all moral excellence. He always does what is right.

Praise: He is our object of worship.

The truth that hangs on our minds with all these characteristics of Christ is that the Lord Jesus is the incarnation of these truths. He is a manifestation of all these truths that Paul lists. Christ is not filling your mind with the world, but he is filling it with his thoughts. And so you will never be in a spiritual desert. You will always be filled with his goodness and his virtues.

And as we do this, we are to constantly gaze upon Christ in the scriptures and we are constantly to worship him in spirit and in truth. And we are to fellowship with him in the Holy Spirit. That is what God does. He changes us into the same image that 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, which is beholding the Lord.

Proverbs 23:7 says this, For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. Thoughts mold actions. A person's inner thoughts and the motivation of the heart defines your character and it shapes your ultimate reality in this life. For Christians, character and shaping of our reality is God's enablement. Philippians 2:13 says, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. It is the idea submission is a good thing. When you submit to him, that is how you resist the devil.

As your mind is shaped no longer by the fear of man, by impure thoughts and bitterness and lies, your life will now follow a totally different direction. And it is what we dwell on that determines our eternal destiny. God does not just tell us to stop bad thoughts. God says you are to think upon these things. That is the way to expel the ungodly thoughts that you would dwell richly in God's word and so you can discern his will by his word.

The whole point is not to make you feel empty. He wants to fill himself in your life.

Human reformation fails. Jesus Christ himself said in Matthew 12:43-45, The house that is swept clean and left empty, what happens if God does not take residence in our minds? The world's anxiety will return sevenfold.

Only God's sovereign work can sustain our lives. He must take control of our lives.

Now we are going to move to verse nine. The right thinking leads to right living. Paul says those things do. Do literally means practice. It is an ongoing practice. You have to practice these ways of thinking every day of your life. Prayer came first before asking to do these thoughts because we need to ask God to supply our need to fill these thoughts in our minds. We need him to fill us with these thoughts. So we pray to him first and then by casting our anxieties to him because he cares for us. Then the word can come into our mind.

If you are here and you have not cast your anxieties upon him, it does not matter how much you read this word, it is not going to go in. You got to cast it all out because he cares for you. He wants to carry that burden. Christ carried the first burden upon our lives when he took care of all of our sin upon the cross. Do we believe that he can take care of all of our anxiety?

God empowers you to do the things that you prayed for. When you pray, you start able to think things of Christ and you are able to do the things of Christ. That is an answer to prayer.

Live out what God has already put in you. You already have Christ in you, the Holy Spirit in you. Are you allowing that new nature to be growing in your life? That is what it means to be sanctified in him.

God uses his church as a pillar and support of truth. 1 Timothy 3:15. We are to live these truths out not by isolation but by gathering together in the body of Christ. Hebrews 3:13. But exhort one another daily while it is called today lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24-25. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to do good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as a manner of some is, but exhorting, encouraging one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching.

The older you get, the more you need to be in the church. God is transforming us in this world. He does not leave us isolated. He intentionally places us in a community.

Paul says what you have learned, received, heard, and seen. You see, he is telling them remember the church in Philippi. Remember what you learned from me. Remember what you received from me, what you heard and seen. Go and practice the same things that I did.

That is what every church leader should always keep in mind. The example of Paul and then as we lead, people follow. We hope that those followers become leaders.

As parents, how are we leading our kids? Set the role model. Set the example.

We are doing this by the discipleship groups. As you lead in your discipleship groups, think upon what Paul says here. They are watching you. They are listening to you. They are receiving your words and they are following what you do. The buck stops with me. That is what a good father does. That is what a good mother does. That is what a good church leader does.

The God of peace be with you. There is a progression from the peace of God to the God of peace from verse 7 to verse 9. He does not want us just to be good with the resources God gives to us, which is the peace. But he wants us to be in relationship with him as the God of peace.

God's saying do not cherish that thing more than being with me. God gives himself as the reward of a God-shaped mind, a God empowered life. The presence of the God of peace is your reward. The believer's greatest inheritance in this life. To have the God of peace residing in you.

Peace is not a feeling. It is a person, the God of peace. Real peace is not the absence of trouble. Paul was in prison. The Philippian church were being persecuted. But the presence of God dispels all the things that are happening around you. And he puts peace in your inner life that surpasses all understanding in Christ Jesus. And rest in the presence of God who walks with you, who never leaves you nor forsakes you.

Yield to God's gracious work in your life. Have an act of obedience. Step forward. Knowing that God will be with you every step of the path that God has for you. Trusting that God will empower you to practice, keep on doing what you have learned.

How joyful it is when you go out that door and you do what you actually learned by the power of God in Christ Jesus. His presence in your daily life. No matter your circumstances, his promise is secure in his presence.

Make him the priority of your life more than everything else. Jesus said, I am not only the truth, but I am the life. You want to have real life that God has meant and designed you to live. It is found in Christ and the way he thought and how he lived.

I hope this internalizes with everyone here, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that you will just continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And for those that do not know Christ, you need to be in Christ first, for all these things to be real in your life. And I ask if you want to speak with me, I will be made available. Even if it is for prayer, I would love to pray with you.

Thank you, Father, for the excellency that we find in Christ. Lord, we thank you that you transformed us from the very beginning upon our salvation of putting to death our sins and giving us new life in Christ. Thank you that we have the Holy Spirit residing in us and the word of God richly dwelling in us as well. I pray, Father, that you would help my brothers and sisters to truly cast all of their anxiety to you for you care for them. And as they do, I pray also that they would continually meditate on the characters of Christ. And as they do, Lord, I know that you will guarantee them to live it out and to have your presence. You are the God of peace. And Father, that is what I am asking for my brothers and sisters this morning. Help them not only to listen, but to do by your empowerment, by your strength. I pray for those that are lost that you would work upon their hearts as well. That they are never going to live in peace. They will never find peace outside of Christ. Please, Father, help them to know that they must have peace with God through Christ Jesus. This is the only way. Help them, Lord. Point them to Christ by your spirit and by your word. And I pray that they will be saved. We thank you for all the glorious things that you do here this morning as well as this afternoon, evening in Jesus name. Amen.