

Stop Anxiety: Rejoice in the Lord

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Date: 06 April 2014

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[0:00] Well, turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians chapter 4 this morning. Down in Warsaw, we finished up a series in this letter earlier this year. And this morning I want to bring you some of the material that we covered in that series.

We'll be looking at Philippians 4, verses 4 through 9 over the course of the whole morning. I hope to cover 4 through 7 in Sunday school and then verses 8 and 9 during the morning worship together. And so notice those verses with me, Philippians 4, beginning at verse 4, and I'll read through verse 9. This is God's Word. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice.

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

[1:22] What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. The commands that we've just read are very closely related to each other.

And I hope we'll see today that they all go together, but we could give an entire Sunday school class or sermon just to rejoicing, or to the nearness of the Lord, or to gentleness, or to anxiety, or to thinking honorable thoughts, or to thanksgiving, and to peace, and to imitating Paul's good example.

But again, we're going to try to divide them up into two messages and cover verses 4 through 7 now in Sunday school, and the rest in the morning worship. And what I want to note at the very outset here is that these things weren't just for the Philippians.

Now, that may be obvious. We know that all of Scripture is profitable for teaching, for instruction, for rebuke, and for training in righteousness. But the thing that I want to notice this morning is that our setting, our context, is not so different from that of the Philippians, from the saints at the church in Philippi.

That church was facing opposition. I don't have time to show you all of this, but that church was facing opposition from governing authorities. It was facing the threat of false teaching.

[2:44] And because of selfishness, facing the threat of division. And what do we have in our day? Well, we have opposition from those in authority.

We have false teaching. And we're selfish, aren't we? And so we're facing the possibility, because of our selfishness, the possibility that we could have division.

I don't think that's an eminent threat necessarily here that I know of. But with that selfishness that dwells within, those things are certainly threats. And some of them are realities in our day.

And what I want to see this morning is how the attitude that God commands here is radically different when compared to the attitude of many Christians today faced with similar circumstances. As our religious liberty is rolled back. As immorality runs rampant and without shame.

[3:44] As elected officials make terrible decisions and false teaching abounds. Many Christians freak out. They resort to hand-wringing and woe-is-me sorts of attitudes.

And it's never been this bad before. And what are we going to do? The sky is falling. But in this letter, Paul shows that in difficult days, God uses the very things the enemies intend to slow or stop his kingdom from coming.

He takes those enemies of the kingdom and their tactics, and he uses those very things to advance his kingdom. In ways that wouldn't have been possible without that opposition.

Members of the Roman guard, members of Caesar's household, are hearing the gospel because Paul is in prison. He's chained to a Roman soldier, likely under some form of house arrest.

The gospel is spreading in ways that it couldn't have if he wasn't under arrest. God uses the things that are meant to oppose the gospel to promote it. Things like the crucifixion of Christ.

[4:50] Meant to stop Christ and his influence. But it only accomplished the purpose of God. I think I preached that here on another Sunday when I was able to be here from Philippians 1, verses 12 through 18.

So when we find ourselves in truly difficult times, and I don't mean to suggest that things are great in our day and age. They aren't. But I do mean to suggest that difficulties don't mean that we need to run around like Chicken Little, shouting, The sky is falling.

The sky is falling. It is not. God still reigns. His people still remain. And we press on to know him more and to shine his light in the darkness. And so, come what may, here are God's directions to those living in difficult days.

The Philippians were in difficult times, just like we are. And so the directions that he gives to them are especially relevant for us as they were for them. And here are his commands.

And you'll notice these things are the opposite of our tendencies in such circumstances. Rejoice always. Okay?

[5:58] Be forbearing and gentle. Jesus is near, not far off. Don't be anxious, but pray with thanksgiving. Enjoy the peace of God that comes when you do that.

Fix your minds on and do worthwhile, commendable things. Remember what you have learned and the good example that you've seen. In other words, Philippians, in difficult days, don't despair.

God is at work. Or members and friends of Grace Fellowship Church in difficult times. Rejoice.

Don't worry. Pray. So, during Sunday school, we're going to try to get rejoice, be gentle, the Lord is near, don't worry, and pray.

Obviously, we're not going to be able to get a lot of time to all of those, and we'll see how far we get. But that's the goal. So, we start with rejoice. And given Paul's circumstances, you might expect his letter to be full of grumbling and complaining.

Paul's chained to a Roman soldier, remember? He wants to be out preaching the gospel, but he's locked up. You might expect a letter more like this, Dear Philippians, and maybe this is more like something we would write.

[7:05] Dear Philippians, I hope you're well. I'm not really. Thanks for the stuff that you sent with Epaphroditus, but could you please send some more? And please pray that I'll be set free soon.

The Roman soldiers that are chained to me don't have very good hygiene. With love from Rome, Paul. But that's not the letter we get, is it?

It's not that way. Paul says, I've learned to be content with all things. Wow. Wow. If Paul can say that, surely we can.

With his plans thwarted, and God's plans advancing, he's full of joy. And he wants them to be as well. Now, rejoice isn't a command to feel happy all the time.

It takes into account certain realities. Rejoicing takes into account certain realities about God and delights in them, no matter what contrary circumstances are there, to derail that delight.

[8:08] And that's why the other part of the command is crucial. Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord. It's rooted in him. While the storms of life rage all around and we face difficulty and suffering, the Lord changes not.

He is near. He's the Savior of sinners. He's risen and reigning. He's coming again. He is the one before whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess. He is God himself. The same yesterday, today, and forever.

And so our feelings may fluctuate and change. But he does not. And we may rightly have grief and sorrow. This isn't stoicism that he's calling us to.

This is Paul who says earlier in the letter that if Epaphroditus had died, he would have great sorrow. Right? It's not saying you can't mourn and weep and be sad and lament when you see wickedness and when things are going poorly.

But it is to say that God doesn't change and that we are to rejoice in him. It's not a call to ignore our circumstances or pretend like they don't exist or bother us.

[9:15] Listen to this and see if you think if Paul was familiar with the prophet Habakkuk. Habakkuk 3, 17-19. Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food.

The flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. All right? There's nothing. Your bank account is empty. Okay? That language doesn't necessarily compute with us.

I don't care if the fig tree doesn't blossom. Well, eventually you do because in our day, the grocery store shelves are empty. And you've got no money to buy anything with anyway. Even in those circumstances, Habakkuk says, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

What does Paul tell us to do? Rejoice in the Lord. Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

God the Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on my high places. We think rejoice in the Lord always, but we can't because of our circumstances.

[10:24] Habakkuk says, I will rejoice even in the midst of those circumstances. And that's what Paul says. And when that's our perspective, that it's in the Lord, the always part doesn't seem quite so impossible.

You say, yes, but we're losing our religious liberty and our freedoms and wickedness is running rampant and everyone in every religion is tolerated except Christianity. Okay. Fair enough. But, remember Paul.

He's chained to a Roman soldier. I'd say his religious liberty and freedom were a bit more restricted than ours. But, and read Romans 1.

People were really bad sinners back then too. And do you remember when he was in prison with Silas in Philippi in prison? Their feet were in stocks. Right? The Philippians know this story because the Philippian jailer was there.

He's part of that early Philippian church, I think. In prison, their feet are in the stocks. And in Acts 16.25, we read about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.

[11:30] The prisoners were listening to them. What an example. When you're in prison, would you be, if you were there, would you be singing, praying to God? And so when Paul says, various places in this letter, to follow his example, remember his example of rejoicing in trial and imitate that.

When we read this, we should wonder why some Christians and even ourselves at times are so negative. It shouldn't be that way. May we not be among those who complain and despair, but rather find in our Lord abundant reason for rejoicing.

Now, you can tell I'm sort of in preaching mode. Sorry. Sunday school. I'm taking a sermon and converting it to Sunday school material, but I might pause after each of these and ask if there's questions or comments.

All right? So with rejoicing, anything, any thoughts that that stirs up in you or any comments or questions you have before we move on to the next thing? Okay.

Well, now you know that you might have the opportunity, so you can be thinking as we go. You might have the opportunity. All right. Be gentle is next. Number five. Let your reason...

[12:41] Verse five. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. That command in the ESV. Let your reasonable... I'm using the English Standard Version. Your reasonableness be known to everyone.

The New American Standard has forbearing spirit. The NIV and New King James have gentleness. The King James has moderation. And when you get that many different translations, you begin to see that the word is a little bit more difficult to translate or to define or to capture in one corresponding English word.

And as I read the different commentaries and resources, the gist of it seems to be a willingness to bear with ill treatment, to not demand one's rights when being wronged, to not insist on your every right and to do that without complaining.

I'll read you one definition that I found, that I read that I thought was helpful. A humble, patient, steadfastness, which is able to submit to injustice, disgrace, and maltreatment, without hatred or malice, trusting God in spite of it all.

All right? Let that be known to everyone. It's a rich word that we've got here. And so in a church with other sinners, think about where this is going to work out.

[13:59] Let it be known to everyone. And let's break that down into two categories, the church and the world. In a church with other sinners, you're sinners, I'm a sinner, at times our rights will be stepped on.

Will we respond with gentleness and forbearance or with harsh and angry words and impatience? In a world that hates Christianity, all right, think about the world.

In a world that hates Christianity, we will be wronged. And a vicious response would damage our witness. Will we have gentleness to respond appropriately?

Colossians 3.15, after telling them to put on compassion and kindness and to forgive, and above all these to put on love, he says, and let the peace of Christ rule in your heart, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful.

Is that peace of Christ, is it ruling in your heart? Is it evident to everyone? When turmoil rages around you, when people wrong you directly and personally, is it obvious?

[15:05] Is your gentleness, your forbearance, evident to everyone? When someone is providing you with very poor customer service, I'm not the only one that happens to, right?

Is your response any different than your pagan neighbor's response to that same poor customer service? Is your gentleness evident in that situation?

Is your response to the referee or the umpire's bad call any different than the profane man sitting next to you at the game? Does your response to being sinned against by a brother or sister show that the peace of Christ is ruling in your hearts?

Is it evident to anyone? Any thoughts or questions on that before we move on? Jim. Pastor, I got to think when you're talking about suffering, you know, being ready to suffer for the cause, I have to stop and think the Lord suffered for telling the truth and He was right and when we call His name, do we expect any different treatment, especially from the world?

He said, if they persecuted me, they'll persecute you. And we see a truth. That's right. That's right. Roger. Could you repeat that definition of be gentle, humble, patient, and I love it?

[16:30] Well, you're going to lose again. I'll give it to you once and then you can copy it afterwards if you like it. A humble, it's so hard to go slow though. A humble, patient, steadfastness which is able to submit to injustice, disgrace, and maltreatment without hatred or malice, trusting God in spite of it all.

Maybe I'll email it to you. You'll have to remind me though. All right, so rejoice always, let your gentleness be evident to all.

Third, the Lord is near. Two possible meanings here. The Lord is at hand, near with respect to time. That's how the ESV translates it. The Lord is at hand.

Or near as in proximity. He is close by. And the word is used both ways in the Bible and it's used both ways. We use it both ways. We say, we don't talk quite this way but you're trying to get your kids out the door for church in the morning and say, church is at hand.

The time is near. I know, you don't ever say church is at hand. So anyway, church, you don't say it's near either but that's the concept. The word is used that way. And you can also say, calm down, we're almost there.

[17:50] Church is near. In my van anyway, you need to get yourselves under control. Church is near. We're almost there. It's physically close. We're about there.

Alright, that's the word. It can be with respect to time or space. Distance. And so with respect to time, is it that here? Jesus coming is not far off.

And that's certainly a possible interpretation given that Paul has just talked about waiting for the Savior to come from heaven in verse 20 of chapter 3. But our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord is near. He is at hand. But it could also mean that He's near to His people in proximity, close to them, dwelling in them by His Spirit.

Here's the meaning. Here the meaning would be something like Psalm 34 verse 18. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Ever experience that?

[18:48] Brokenhearted and you find that the Lord is near. Psalm 145 verse 18. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. So both temporal and physical nearness.

The other possibility is that Paul leaves it ambiguous because both are true. Most usages in Scripture, it's clear from the context which it is and it's not clear here. You wonder if Paul doesn't have both in mind that there's a double comfort here for the believer that He's coming again soon

and He's very close to us.

So work that out with me a little bit. Let's think about time first. How is Jesus returning soon an encouragement to those who are being wronged? Bearing with it gently.

How is it a help to those who are suffering with anxiety which we're going to talk about in a minute.

How is the soon return of Christ a help to us? That's right.

If we're suffering injustice now, we know that Jesus is coming again and when He does, He will make every wrong right. That's comforting to know that the Lord is near.

[19 : 53] That helps my gentleness and forbearance be known to all if I know that Jesus is going to right every wrong when He comes again soon. Jim. Go along with that, Pastor. It's comforting to know that we've got a hope in something that does not change and does not lie.

As James said, it's not like a shifting challenge. It changes not. Amen. It's good. Knowing that we change. Anything else about the eminence of Christ's return that He's coming again that's comforting to the believer?

Okay. No more sorrow. When He comes again, there won't be any more circumstances that cause us anxiety. And so when He says be anxious for nothing, there will be nothing to be anxious for when Jesus comes again.

Yes. No more sorrow. I don't know who said that, but you're quite right. Steve. When we think about Christ's second coming and put our mind in the eternal perspective that makes our anxieties, that calms us down and makes it less.

Hmm. Hmm. Amen. Good. This could be a motivator, too, to those who are not living according to these commands. The judge is coming.

[21 : 11] And so He's just exhorted, we didn't read it, but He's exhorted Euodia and Syntyche to agree together in the Lord. They're having some kind of disagreement. Those things seem pretty foolish when we remember that the judge is coming soon.

Right? How is Jesus' physical proximity, or physical, because He's not near to us bodily, but how is His nearness to us? He dwells in us by His Spirit.

That's pretty close. How is His nearness to us a great comfort? Well, as you walk through that trial, that anxiety-producing circumstance, you don't do it alone.

He is with you. He will not leave or forsake you. He knows how you must bear up under injustice and walks with you through the trial. He knows the anxiety-producing circumstances of life and doesn't leave you to face them alone.

So, if both are in view here, His soon return and His nearness, then there's double comfort for the Christian. You might say, it's been a long time since Paul wrote that, and that's true from our perspective, but you know that God's timing and ours are different.

[22 : 22] And our time on this earth is comparatively short. When He comes, He'll right all wrongs. The Lord is near, and He's coming soon. Praise Him. It has a lot to do with our being anxious for nothing, which comes next.

And since I gave you an opportunity, we're not going to pause here. We're going to play a little plow ahead. Don't worry, but pray, is the next command in verse 6.

Be anxious for nothing, or do not be anxious about anything, but in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. You hear echoes of Jesus teaching in Matthew 6 about not worrying, but rather trusting God's faithful provision.

But the command might be a little shocking. Be anxious about nothing. Worry about nothing. Yeah, but Paul, you don't understand my situation. Wait a minute. Remember Paul's situation.

He was in prison. You're in a soft, cushy pew this morning. Right? So we've already got a leg up on him. And don't forget that the Lord is near.

[23 : 26] That's key. And what follows helps too. Paul doesn't, just like I have tended to want to do, just beat us over the head saying, don't worry, it's a sin. Stop it. He gives us some tools in our toolbox to know how to fight against worry and to find peace.

And dear people, I don't, I'm not coming at this as one who's got it all figured out. I worry. I do battle with anxiety. So let me just give you what Paul gives you here.

And don't think that I'm above you in any way in these things. If we're to worry about nothing, the equally stark and universal command shows us how in everything.

Let your requests be known to God. Worry about nothing, pray in everything. And notice it's not don't worry, be happy. It's a lot harder than that. It's don't worry, pray.

And when should we pray? Well, in every circumstance. When things are going well, pray. When things are going poorly, pray. When you're healthy, when you're sick, when your family is strong and stable or when your family relationships seem to be crumbling, pray.

[24:34] When your church is unified and thriving, when your church is fighting and crumbling, pray. When you are witnessing to an unbeliever, pray. When you don't want to witness, pray. When you're confronted with a dilemma or when the decision is easy, pray.

When your bank account is full or when you're broke, pray. When your children obey or when they rebel, pray. When your spouse shows you love or when they are cold towards you, pray. When your candidate is elected, pray.

And when your candidate is defeated, pray. And when you are peaceful and when you are in a panic, pray. When reading scripture, pray. And when God seems distant, pray. Distant, pray. When you're confident, pray. And when you're fearful, pray. You get the idea, pray in all circumstances, in everything. There's no exceptions there. And what should we pray?

Well, Paul talks about prayer and supplication or petition and requests. Different words, very similar in meaning. I think we can at least take away that we should be specific.

[25:31] Bring those requests. requests. We're often willing to just use one word when we pray. Lord, bless my family. Bless us. And then we move on and we've prayed, but have we really prayed?

We've gotten particular about our situation. Don't be afraid to lay out the details before God. Of course, He already knows, but I love that we're to make our requests known to Him.

It's to express our dependence upon Him. God wants to hear from us our needs. To ask Him for the help that we simply can't live without. 1 Peter 5, 7, casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

Psalms 55, 22, cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you. He will never permit the righteous to be moved. So it's easy, right? We just need to pray. But if you've ever tried to pray, you know it's harder than that.

You know it's not easy. It's interesting that temptation is the opposite of the command. We're tempted to be anxious about everything and pray about nothing. It's to be the other way.

[26:44] Knowing that doesn't mean that we'll do it or that it will come easily. Satan wants you to be anxious and fearful and to look away from God. Why is God allowing this? Instead of to Him, God help me.

Don't give in. Fight the fight. You need no, look no further than Gethsemane to see the great difficulty of prayer. They slept when they should have been praying and then they were overcome with anxiety when they should have stood firm.

Should we be surprised? No. Well, should we be surprised in our lives when we're overcome with anxiety and we look back and we think, well, I haven't prayed. It's at least part of the recipe for dealing with anxiety is prayer.

How do we pray with thanksgiving? And again, so not just requests, but don't forget the thanksgiving part and be specific as we are to be with our prayers. Don't just say, thank you for your blessings.

Go back over the specific request and specifically thank God for the answers or the lack of answers or answers that you didn't want. Thank him for those because he knows better than you and me.

[27:57] Thank him specifically. Thank him for things that you didn't pray for that he's done anyway. Thank him for the things that we should never grow tired of thanking him for. Things that you know, things that are realities every day in your life that no matter the circumstances, nothing can take them away from you.

Thank him for salvation. Thank him for Jesus. Thank him for our riches in Christ for that eternal inheritance, for the indwelling of the Spirit. Paul Martin said this, I saw on Facebook or Twitter or somewhere.

It became evident to me that he was working through Philippians 4. And he said, thank him in advance for the answers to your prayers, even if the answer is not the one you wanted.

Knowing, again, that he knows better than we do. Thank him. Help me out here a little bit. How is Thanksgiving an antidote to anxiety? How can a thankful heart help you battle anxiety?

Billy? When you repeat back the promises that have been fulfilled, it gives you calmness. Yeah. Amen. Good. What else? Tom? It takes our minds off ourselves and puts them on the Lord.

[29:06] Excellent. Good. Dale? When our anxiety a lot of times is because of unknown. We don't know what's going to happen and we always think the worst.

Whereas thankfulness is something that we are thankful for something that's already occurred or we know will happen. Amen. Yeah. Anxiety is unknown. Ed Welch has a really great book on dealing with fear and anxiety.

It's called Running Scared. and he talks about that fear of the unknown and he says we're really pretty lousy prophets. How many of your worst fears have come to pass? You see the worst possible scenario.

It doesn't usually turn out that way but every time we imagine the worst and we forget what a lousy forecast. We're like weathermen. You know? And some weathermen.

And we're really bad at that but Thanksgiving you're right. It makes us think about things that have happened or that will because God has promised them. There was another hand. Jim. I just brought that up after I got things about times that there's times that the Lord brings about things that I never even brought to him and when we give him thanks for these things we remember what he's done for us in the past and he hasn't changed.

[30:18] He still hears and he still blesses. Amen. Remembering those things that he has done. And we're facing the very same or very similar circumstances to what we faced in the past.

I've been anxious about preaching here. How many hundreds of times have I preached? I stood at this podium and in that pulpit I still get worried.

Has the Lord helped me every other time? We forget but thankfulness brings it to mind. Rex. I think being thankful for you to honor yourself with all your writing and depend on somebody else.

Amen. Amen. Good. Dependence on the Lord. Thanksgiving expresses that. Roger. Roger. I used to have a sign on my wall in my office. It's more of a secular saying but it's still true that when you worry your worry does nothing about what's going to happen tomorrow.

All it does is steal your strength for today. And what it is from our perspective it's very it's related to doubt and to lack of faith. It's saying to God when I worry I'm saying to God I don't believe who you are who you are and I don't believe you can do anything and I don't believe in care.

[31:30] Whereas when you take your entire focus on what God has done so far but you just instead of looking forward you look backwards and you say look at all his faithfulnesses and all the ways he's come through for me how can I doubt him now?

That's a secular saying but it's based on biblical truth. Jesus says don't worry about tomorrow. Each day's got enough trouble of its own. Amen.

Good. Leads to gentleness which is something that we've already considered this morning. Right. Good. Good.

When you're thankful for those things that don't change and that can't be taken away from you your salvation Christ what he's accomplished then you also begin to realize that there's no circumstance or situation that's too difficult or too painful or too impossible for him.

What then shall we say to these things if God is for us who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all. You're thanking God for Jesus and if he's given us that he's given us his son how will he not also with him graciously give us all this?

[32:41] I have a son that doesn't sleep well at night sometimes or has trouble falling asleep and he struggles with fear and one of the things that we encourage him to do on a regular basis is to count his blessings to pray and thank God for those blessings instead of counting sheep at our house we count blessings or we try to and to think about those things to help battle that anxiety and to thank God for them and the attached promise then is peace the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus now understand Paul's writing to saints in Philippi these are people that have been saved by God's grace saved from God's wrath against their sin and them and that peace of salvation that we have with God knowing our sins forgiven that's the foundation for all of our peace without that we don't know the tranquility of spirit the lack of anxiety that seems to be in view here so make no mistake

God produces both the kind of peace with God and that sense of peace that awareness of tranquility he produces it all Paul often opens his letters with a blessing that his readers would experience the peace of God and here we find how we can enjoy it rejoicing humble forbearance remembering that God is near not being anxious in prayer with thanksgiving we must pray if we would enjoy the freedom from fear and worry and we must be in Christ trusting him alone for

salvation if we're to have any kind of genuine lasting peace in the midst of a world that is full of all sorts of reasons to not have peace all sorts of reasons to be anxious so peace comes from God it doesn't come from fat bank accounts or government programs it's beyond our ability to understand and comprehend have you ever had anxiety all around there's people freaking out everywhere and you've got a peace that's beyond your understanding if you experience that I think we should experience more of it

I should experience more of it he says this peace is like a guard it guards your hearts and your minds it's like it's a military word keep watch hold prisoner as Paul was experiencing as he writes and I wonder what's holding your heart captive right now is it anxiety or is it peace what are you captive to what's guarding your heart many are slaves to fear and anxiety and worry and you see what God's word does here it gives us a wonderful weapon against anxiety and the circumstances that often produce it thankful prayer and it gives us a wonderful guard over our hearts and minds the peace of God and if we don't know much of this peace it's possible that we haven't known much of specific ongoing prayer with thanksgiving in all circumstances it's possible we're forgetting Christ in whom we enjoy this peace it's the peace of God in Christ Jesus and so you see just a glimpse this morning again it's not exhaustive

I'd refer you to Ed Welch's book called Running Scared but you see a glimpse of how we can begin to deal with our anxiety and how our circumstances what we begin to see here our circumstances instead of being a source of anxiety can and should actually be a lever to push us towards Christ who is near we see our freedom our religious freedom being restricted and we see immorality and we have sickness and insomnia and rebellious children and unknown future and we start to worry all of those things should be pushing us towards Christ they should be sending us back to the throne of grace back to him to pray about it instead of running around what are we going to do a lever to push us towards Christ who is near to have thoughts of the nearness of Christ to thank him and to pray to him is anxiety dominating your life let me ask you two questions one are you praying about it with thanksgiving he said yep

I prayed about it but have you really have you spent serious specific detailed thankful and repeated time in prayer with God I'm thankful to my mom who reminded me of this verse when I went through some extraordinarily dark days and I realized in some ways that I hadn't really been praying I had prayed but I was struggling to know what to do and I wasn't praying really praying I pray but I wasn't praying are you really praying and second do you view Christ as near I don't want to just beat you over the head today with a command to pray remember the peace that guards us is in Christ and he is near you see the comfort there peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus and Paul has just said he is near the Jesus in whom we find our peace is near and if you failed to do one of the most obvious but one of the most difficult things to do in dealing with your anxieties which is to pray let me remind you of Christ his blood covers your sin and your failure even here remember Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane that's prayer that's the kind of work we need to be engaged in and that means

[38:27] Jesus who is near knows exactly what you need he knows how to pray in the hour of need he knows how to help you and so look to him for strength to pray look to him for forgiveness when you fail and you'll find in him all that you need in all your circumstances do you have any questions or comments about anything that we've talked today in just a minute Roger I'm going to ask you to close us in prayer if you'd be willing but let me see if there's any any further comments or questions that that stirs up in you Jim well I just want to thank the Lord for you bringing this message to us Pastor because so you know and I'm sure you know this if you're not alone in the exact I have to stop and ask myself this question why am I going through this we're not seeing what he's done in the past we're forgetful like the Israelites were like the disciples the pride of sin wells up in us Satan's knocking on the door when we stop and give thanks we kick the door in his face

Roger just a thought that came to my mind many times whether it's me or others we tend to become more fearful when the thing that we fear gets closer to us and that becomes to take the major portion of our thinking when really the bigger thing the Lord who is also near is bigger than anything there so that we can formulate a new way of thinking toward those things understanding God who is bigger than these things is close as well amen amen good anything else okay if you'd lead us in prayers we close father this morning we would give you thanks for who you are for none of these promises would deliver us from your anxiety and fears if you weren't based upon yourself and who you are your faith and your power your love your passion and on and on you go also and then

father that you revealed those things to us in your word so that we could know you and therefore be able to really face the struggles in this life in a way that would be based on the truth of who you are that would lead us to rest peacefulness thankfulness
Thank you.