

Worthy Of Praise

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Preacher: Aaron Hoak

[0:00] Well, we're glad to welcome Pastor Aaron Hoke and his family with us today. For those of you who don't know, Aaron was a pastor here, and I just have in my notes for blank years.

Eight years. Okay. Well, we're glad to welcome you back. Aaron is currently pastoring over in Warsaw at Grace Baptist Church. So come, brethren, speak the word to us.

Well, please turn in your Bibles this morning to Philippians chapter 4. We were in Bremen for about eight years. I guess the first year and a chunk of the second year I wasn't actually ordained as a pastor of Grace Fellowship Church.

And I'm thankful for the opportunity to be back here today with you all, with the opportunity to open God's word with you. I'm thankful for the connection that continues to exist between our churches. We're glad to have Pastor Jason preaching for us this morning. It's nice when various ones of you visit. Some of the pianists come down and help us out sometimes.

[1:04] We're thankful for that. Our brother Jim gets down pretty regularly. And we've got our fellowship lunch next Sunday, too. So there's no evening service, so you know. Yes, sir.

Jim usually comes on Sunday night when you have fellowship lunch. And we're having it the same day, which means no evening service. So but it's good to be here today. And we want to turn our thoughts again to Philippians chapter 4, as we did in the Sunday school hour, this time verses 8 and 9, following up on what we saw in verses 4 through 7.

But as we do, let me ask this morning, what has dominated your thoughts lately? What are you thinking about? We just sang together, test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

And our thoughts will be tested today by God's grace as we look to his word. What have you been thinking about? Maybe you're thinking about what to fix for dinner when you get home. Maybe you've been thinking about what to spend your tax return on or what to do without the tax return that you thought you were getting, but you're not.

Or will you get your tax return done on time? Perhaps your thoughts revolve around your next tweet or Facebook post and how many people will like it or favorite it or retweet it.

[2:25] Maybe you're thinking, how long is it till spring break? If you're thinking that, you missed it. It's here. It's starting. It's right now. For Bremen, at least, in Warsaw, too. Maybe your thoughts are consumed with the fear of an unknown future.

Or perhaps excited anticipation of the future. Maybe all that you can think about right now is wedding planning. Maybe your thoughts are consumed with Jesus. That would be a good thing. Perhaps the ugly feud with your neighbor or the broken relationship with your spouse or loved one and all the hateful thoughts that you have about them. Perhaps illicit sexual fantasy.

Maybe political despair when you survey our national landscape. Or maybe unbounded hope as you contemplate the power of God and his will to do good for his people.

Maybe you're thinking of joy at an anticipation of the second coming of Christ. Or perhaps you try to think as little as possible because you don't like the thoughts that come when you do.

[3:34] You'd rather not think about your soul. You'd rather not think about eternity. And so you try not to think of those things. You fill your mind with anything but things that are serious. I ask about your thoughts because our passage this morning has something to say about them.

It turns out that God is not just concerned with what we say and what we do, but he's concerned with what we think. What goes on in our minds that no one else knows.

And that's important because our thoughts will influence our actions. And that's what we'll see today in verses 8 and 9. And as we read, we'll read verses 4 through 9 like we did in Sunday school.

And I want you to notice what the context says about prayer and thanksgiving and the peace of God. And think about those things closely, especially if you weren't in that Sunday school class. And if you weren't, you can ask your mom and dad or someone else what we talked about there. But what we talked about then has a bearing on what we're about to consider now. So notice with me Philippians 4, verses 4 through 9.

[4:38] This is the word of God. 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.

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you. Well, maybe you don't think that our thought life is worth this kind of careful attention.

And so I want you to hear a warning from a wise commentator. His last name is Motier. Or Motier. I don't even know how to pronounce it, but he's wise. And he says, Just as a carnal mind is the surest passport to the downward path.

[5:58] Carnal mind, downward path. So a mind drilled in the things of which God approves is the steadiest way into practical holiness.

In other words, what you think affects the way you act. And so our thoughts do deserve careful attention. So may God use our time in his word this morning to help us in our thoughts and thus in our deeds.

So from verses 8 and 9, we want to think about good thoughts and actions, a good example, and then a good God. And we'll spend most of our time with number one.

Good thoughts and actions or deeds. And as we dive in this morning, if we want to fulfill the call of verses 8 and 9, we must heed the call of the verses that precede them. I keep saying this.

Don't forget Sunday school. If we fail to pray about everything and worry about nothing and give thanks and enjoy the incomprehensible peace of God, guarding our minds.

[7:02] Isn't that interesting? The peace of God, verse 7, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

If we neglect all of those things, then our minds will easily fill with thoughts which run contrary to the categories we see here today.

If we're not praying, if we're not being anxious for nothing, then we won't have that peace of God guarding our minds in Christ. And if we don't have that, then it will be really hard to think these thoughts. Because our minds won't be guarded by the peace of God.

All of these things. And if we're then, it's a nice cycle. If we're not thinking on what is pure and just and right and holy and true and so on, then our minds will easily be given over.

Or when we are thinking on those things, it will be easier to pray. Easier to think on God and give thanks. And the peace of God will be more close to us. All of this hangs together.

[8:02] Sinclair Ferguson says, A mind full of these, verse 8, A mind full of these will leave little room for anxiety producing, peace disrupting, and joy destroying thoughts.

So the joy that's described throughout Philippians won't come without a robust prayer life, thanksgiving, the peace of God, and, as we'll see, a careful thought life. It all goes together, all of these verses do.

And it's in these careful thoughts and actions that we'll find the God of peace with us to give us the peace of God in less than peaceful times. Did you notice that? The promise at the end of verse 9, The God of peace will be with you.

You think that has anything to do with the peace of God that's talked about up in verse 7? Yes. And remember, this God is near. So, verses 8 and 9.

Good thoughts and good deeds. The command that comes to us in verse 8 is to think. Now, the command comes at the end of the verse, but I want to note it right at the beginning, so as we consider the various traits, we'll know what we're supposed to be doing with truth and honor and justice and purity.

[9:11] We're to think about them. We are to give careful thought and consideration to them. We're to ponder them and take them into account. We're to think about them.

And as the next verse will show, it's not just empty thought. It's thought with respect to the implications for how we should live. We're to practice these things. So, just what is it that we are to be thinking about?

What are we to give our minds to? Well, whatever is marked by these traits. You see that word whatever repeated multiple times.

It may not be that way in the NIV. I've got the ESV. But whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable.

Anything marked by truth and honor and righteousness or rightness. And in this list of traits, of things we should be thinking about, Bible translations differ at different points on which English word to communicate the original Greek.

[10:11] And I'll try to indicate some of those alternatives as we go. But first we're to think about whatever is true. We're to think about what is true.

Not what is false. Not the lie. But the truth. Whether it's lies about God and his creation, which cause you to think less of his marvelous worth, which makes it hard to worship when you gather together.

Or lies about your brothers and sisters in Christ spread by gossip, which causes you to think poorly of them. We're not to be absorbed with falsehood, but with truth. Now, of course, we're going to have to think about lies in order to expose them and to discern what is true.

But we're to give our minds to truth. At times, it may be helpful to read source material of false religions like the Koran or the Book of Mormon. But our steady diet should be the truth of God's word.

So that when we see the counterfeit, we recognize it. And you've all heard the illustration of counterfeit money. The people that want to find it study the real thing so that the false is obvious when they see it.

[11:20] And come look at my bookshelf sometime. And if you look closely, you'll find a section with the Book of Mormon, the Koran, the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Books that explain some of what cults and false religions teach.

But the vast majority of my shelves are covered with books that exegete or summarize the truth of God's word. If you want to give your mind to what is true, give your mind to this book.

Study it. Read it. Memorize it. Meditate on the truth. We're to give our minds to what is honorable. What is true, what is honorable.

Or other translations, noble or honest. These are things of a serious or dignified nature.

Respectable things. The word is used to describe deacons and their wives and older men.

It's the opposite of what is base, vulgar, or common. And it doesn't mean that there's no place to think about things that are light and funny and comparatively shallow. The list that Paul gives here, listen carefully, the list that Paul gives here is not exhaustive.

[12:26] He doesn't give us everything here that we can think about, but important things that we should think about. Sometimes we need light or fair. But Paul doesn't mention that.

And we don't typically need exhortation to think about what is light and fluffy. That comes easy to us. We don't need exhortation to think about what is base and vulgar. That comes too easily to us. To think on the honorable and noble is far more challenging. We're to think on what is just or right. That's what we must put our minds to considering.

This word is often used to describe people. Is he righteous or unrighteous? It's used to describe judgments that are handed down. Is it a just judgment or unjust?

What is fair and right? And if we're to think about what is just, then you have to think about God, who is just and righteous. He sets the standard of righteousness and justice.

[13:23] And anything that we see of it in man is a pale reflection of what we see in God. We may need to think about injustice. That which is crooked.

We can't bury our heads in the sand and pretend like we're not thinking about criminals going free and innocent men being wrongly punished. People being wronged or the blight, the injustice of abortion.

We can't hear about girls being sold into slavery for sex and say, oh, that's not honorable and just. I can't think about it. No, it's exactly because we have meditated on what is noble and the justice and

righteousness of God that's to be reflected among men.

It's because we've thought on that, that the injustice of the sex trade and slavery and wrongful sentencing or abortion will be seen to be so heinous. We'll see the injustice of it because we've seen the justice and righteousness of God.

If we've not contemplated the right and the just, the wrong will not appall us and we'll do little about it. We're to think about that which is pure, which is, again, true of God himself.

[14:31] 1 John 3.3, and everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. This is to be free from corruption and sin. This is how the bride of Christ, the church, is to be presented to him.

2 Corinthians 11.2. And if that is the case, then we better be thinking on the pure so that we will live lives that are pure. You might think especially of sexual purity, though that's not all the word is limited to.

Do I need to tell you that so much of TV and movies and blogs and magazines and celebrity gossip and all of the pornography industry are not pure? Sort of goes without saying.

But then don't give your mind to impure garbage. To gaze for hours on pixelated images on your phone or computer or glossy ones in the magazine or in a movie or DVD or Blu-ray or whatever it is, is to fill your mind with the impure.

And we're told to think about that which is pure. What are you filling your mind with? And don't think that it won't have consequences. If you're filling your heart and your mind with impure things, don't be surprised when your marriage is crumbling.

[15:43] Don't be surprised that every woman looks like an object to you instead of a person. Don't be surprised when you don't know how to have a conversation with a woman instead of leering at her.

When you can't enjoy peace and you have fear and worry and doubt, ask yourself what you've been setting your mind on. Remember, this all hangs together. You have anxiety? What we talk about in the verses preceding this one?

What have you been giving your mind over to? What are you thinking about? We're to think about that which is lovely. These are things that are pleasing, worthy of love, not like, well, isn't that lovely?

You ever say something like that? That's not what it means. Truly lovely. It could be a beautiful sunset. The wife of your youth. Your husband. Delight in your children. The fellowship of the saints. Maybe the fruitful garden in your backyard. That can be a lovely thing. The variety of birds that gather around your feeder. Or the resurrection of Christ.

[16:46] And eternal life. That is lovely. Fix your mind on that which is lovely. And then that which is commendable. Or of good repute. Or admirable. Or of good report.

We're to give thought to that which is worthy of praise. Or the admiration and commendation of others around us. Could it be said of your thought life that it is commendable?

Or the things that you think worthy of praise? And then after the six whatevers, we get to what seem to be two summary words that cover them all.

If there is anything excellent or worthy of praise. If there is any excellence. That seems to be something like moral excellence or virtue. And the second word, the word that is used for praise actually.

Or commendation or approval. Only here is it translated praiseworthy. Or worthy of praise. The King James has praise. And it could be, this is interesting, it could be that we're to think about praise.

[17:48] We're to think about worship. Or things that are worthy of praise and worship. These are the things that we're to give our minds to.

Now, I've given a few examples as we've gone along. But let's briefly get a little bit practical here.

Let's talk about our diet of information. What are you taking in? What are you consuming?

What is flowing into your mind? On a daily basis, what is your diet? What is your diet? Not your food diet that we're talking about today. But your information diet look like.

And just like your food diet affects your health. If all you eat is junk food. You're not going to be healthy. Your diet. Things you take in affects your health. What you take into your mind affects your spiritual health.

So what is your diet? Is it characterized by these things? Could someone look at your thought life and say, he thinks about what is true. Honorable. Just.

[18:45] Pure. Lovely. Commendable. Excellent. Praiseworthy. What about your media diet? I went to a conference last year and David Murray, who's a professor up in Grand Rapids at Puritan Reform Seminary.

He had some excellent thoughts about our diet. What we take in. He's preaching on this passage. What's your media diet? Don't take in lies. Listen to those who expose lies.

There are some excellent resources for that. We need to know what's going on in the world around us, but the constant drumbeat of discouragement and bad news doesn't exactly seem to fit with Paul's list here.

There is good news out there, believe it or not. And who needs, do I even need to say this, who needs trashy celebrity news? That's to fill our minds with the base when we need the noble.

So, for example, read World Magazine or listen to their weekday news program and don't watch Access Hollywood. I'm going to tell you, you have to read World Magazine.

[19:51] There's a suggestion of something that might be good and true to read in the media. Look for those who shine the light on the good being done in the world. And again, when you put the nightly news up against the list here, it doesn't cut it very well.

There's so much negative out there that while it may be true, it's not noble or honorable. And while we can't be ignorant of the world in which we live, neither do we need every sordid detail.

Be careful about the news that you take in and the source it comes from. A steady diet of negative will make us negative, dour people. Don't miss the good. And this isn't just the power of positive thinking. I think it's a reflection of what God calls us to think about here.

Things that are good. What's your entertainment diet? There's so much trash out there that is not pure or noble or excellent.

And when we fill our minds with music that's full of explicit lyrics and movies and primetime sitcoms full of explicit sexual reference and video games full of profanity and violence and sex, we're not considering that which is good and right and praiseworthy.

[21:01] You know the wickedness of much of the entertainment that's available. Let me just suggest that you and I both pause to think about these categories before we watch a movie or a TV show, before we buy an album or a song on iTunes and guard our thoughts accordingly.

If you need some good entertainment options, read a good book. Now be careful. There's a lot of trashy books out there, too. Read a good biography.

Read about William Wilberforce. Amazing Grace. And you'll be thinking on what is right and noble. You'll have to think about the slave trade, which is wicked, but it's exposed for what it is in the light of a good God.

Do something together as a family instead of crashing in front of the TV. Now you didn't hear me say you can't watch TV or movies. You didn't hear me say that.

Okay? If you did, you heard the wrong thing. I hope you do hear Scripture saying exercise discernment when you do. What's your ministry diet?

[22:05] Again, David Murray had helpful thoughts here. If all the preaching that you ever listen to or books you ever read are all gloom and doom and judgment and sin and focusing on the evils of false teaching, you're not spending much time thinking about what is right and true and lovely.

Understand we have to deal with false teaching. And the glory of the Savior doesn't seem very glorious apart from the darkness of our sinful state. I understand that. But make sure that you think about the glory of the righteous Savior.

And make sure your ministry diet points you there. There's so many avenues into our minds in these days. You know, Paul lived, you know, in the pre-electronic age.

And this was a concern then. And now, it just floods in from everywhere. And so, what does your podcast list look like?

What blogs do you read? What books do you consume? What is your Facebook or Twitter feed full of? Who are your friends?

[23:12] And what do they talk about? Some of these will point you to things of excellence. And some will drag you down into the gutter. Which will you listen to?

Which will you read? Let me remind you, you don't have to take it all in. It's okay to miss something. You don't have to click on every link that somebody posts on Facebook.

Okay? You don't have to. Just because they put it there doesn't mean you have to look at it. Be selective. And use this list as a benchmark by which to measure what you give your mind over to.

There's so much that we could say here. I think we would all, myself included, do well to evaluate all of the input that's coming into our minds. What we watch. What we listen to. What we read. Who we listen to. And evaluate all of it in light of what we've seen here.

If you'd like some suggestions of news sources or podcasts or blogs that I think are helpful in focusing our thoughts on things of excellence. I'd be glad to share them with you. Just ask. Our thoughts.

[24 : 21] This is where it gets dangerous. Our thoughts don't get much publicity. We can think things and no one ever knows. As long as the volume isn't turned up too loud.

Nobody knows what's coming into the earbuds in your ears. Only you do. And God. If you would be ashamed for others to know your thought life.

And that's true of all of us to some degree. But maybe you've been struck with the wickedness and darkness of what you think and the material that comes in. Don't just walk away today feeling guilty. Run to Christ. And find their forgiveness and freedom. There's deliverance from bondage. Some people get enslaved to these sorts of things. But there's freedom in Christ.

And you come to Him today. And you can find forgiveness of sins. And find that your sins are washed away. And no longer counted against you. And you will find that you have the Holy Spirit of Christ dwelling in you.

[25 : 22] That gives you strength to pursue the fruit of the Spirit. Love. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness.

Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control. Sounds a little bit like our list here. Doesn't it? What comes in will affect what comes out. God. And so we must be careful.

If you're ensnared by your evil thoughts. Talk with your parents. Your pastors. So you can be helped to walk out of the darkness and into the light. There's freedom and joy in coming from darkness to light.

It will be painful. But it is worth it. But then notice with me verse 9. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me.

Practice these things. And the God of peace will be with you. Not just think about them. But practice them. Practice what things? Well the things that they've learned and received and heard and seen in Paul.

[26 : 19] And what are those things? Our English translations obscure it a bit. But verse 9 begins with the words which also you learned.

And so taken together if there is anything of true. Whatever is honorable. Whatever is just. So on. If there's any excellence or anything worthy of praise. Think about these things.

Which also you learned. What did they learn and receive and hear and see from Paul?

Things that are true. Honorable. Just. Pure. Lovely. Commendable. Excellent. And praiseworthy. Those are the things that we are to practice.

The things in verse 8. That we are to think about. Are the things in verse 9. That we are to do. And if we sometimes wonder why our actions are not what they ought to be. We need to take a step further back and think about our thoughts.

[27 : 21] If we're not doing the right things. It's likely due at least in part to the reality that we're not thinking the right things. Your behavior will reflect what you're putting into your mind.

Is it any surprise that people fill their minds with. That people who fill their minds with violence go on to commit violence. People that fill their brains with sexual perversion don't find the thought enough. But go to act it out.

And so too those who dwell on the truth often speak truth. And those who think on the lovely and commendable. Find lovely and commendable deeds to do. And those who contemplate the honorable and just.

Are among those respected in their community for doing the right thing. And so dear friends practice these things. Don't rest content to think about them.

It's not enough to think about and admire others who have done them. We must do them. So there's good thoughts and deeds. Secondly and more briefly there's a good example of this in Paul.

[28 : 21] The themes found several places in Philippians where he exhorts them to follow his example. But these things have been modeled for them by Paul. He strings four verbs together here in verse 9. What you have learned and received and heard and seen and mean.

Those things do. And what they've seen is the list before in verse 8. Well taken together those four verbs seem to encompass his teaching and his example. Right?

What Paul said and what he did. What they had learned and received may refer to what Paul had taught them when he was present at Philippi. Remember Paul founded this church. You read about it in Acts.

He's there. And he had taught them. And so what you have heard from me. What you receive from me. My teaching. Put that into practice. They had heard it before. But here's a good reminder to think about it and to do it.

And what they had heard and seen may be a reference to his example. They saw a good example from him when he was there in Philippi. When he says rejoice in the Lord always. They knew about his singing in prison.

[29:21] He's in prison. And he's singing praise to God. They had seen his good example. Follow it. Says Paul. They've heard about him as well.

They may have heard about his imprisonment in Rome. They certainly had heard about it. Or other reports about his example. And they're to follow that example. But either way, his teaching and his example are in view.

They learned these traits from what Paul said. And they saw him in what he did. What a good example for us Paul is. He's got both the walk and the talk. It's no good if we've just got one or the other.

It's not anything new that you're hearing this morning. But it's sad when one who teaches one thing lives quite another way. When the preacher of morality is living in immorality.

Or the one who speaks truth is actually ensnared in lies. When one's example doesn't match his words, it undermines the message. Not so with Paul.

[30:16] They had heard it from him and they had seen it in him. And if you've got the good behavior but no words to explain it, then the people think you're just really a good person. But the reality is you need the gospel teaching of Paul to go along with his remarkable life.

Otherwise, Paul gets the credit for being a really special guy. And the reality is that he has a really special Savior. A special Savior who made him the way he is and gives him everything that he has. And so you've got to have the words and the deeds. And who but a Christ-transformed, Christ-empowered man could teach and live this way as a model for the Philippians and for us? No one. Only one indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. Only one miraculously and completely forgiven. because of the work of Christ could teach and live this way.

And that's our only hope. If you think that you can think and do the things that we've talked about today in your own strength, you're a fool.

[31:19] If you go out of here going, He's right, I need to think better thoughts. Alright, I'm going to think better thoughts. I'm going to fill my mind with better things. You go out of here in your own strength, thinking that you can just change a few things and be okay.

Then you won't go out of here the better for having heard the preaching of God's Word. You need a realization and a recognition that apart from God and His grace and Christ dwelling in you by His Spirit, you can do nothing.

Your thought life, your deeds, none of it will improve. Apart from the work of Christ in here. So you go from here, you beg God for grace and strength.

You thank Him for His Spirit that dwells in you and say, Give me strength to fight against the evil and to embrace that which is good and pure. Do leave here with a determination to think better thoughts, but not in your own strength.

Only by God's grace and in His strength. Dependence on Him. And so we need the good God.

Good thoughts and actions. Good example. And good God. The God of peace will be with you.

[32:28] It's a sweet promise, isn't it? I will be their God. And they will be my people. I will never leave them or forsake them. The God of peace is always with us.

You think these thoughts, these things, He'll never leave you. He is the one that enabled Paul to be that good example. He is the one that will give us grace to have good thoughts and deeds.

And will never leave us. You see the connection between the peace of God that passes understanding, guarding our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus in verse 7, and the God of peace always being with us.

So we noted at the beginning, this all hangs together. The Lord is near. And so as we think on those things that are true and lovely and excellent and praiseworthy, we'll find the God of peace is with us. And it will be easier to be anxious for nothing and pray about everything with thanksgiving. And we'll find more of the incomprehensible peace of God guarding our hearts and minds.

[33 : 31] And minds that are guarded by the peace of God are fertile ground for noble, honorable, pure thoughts, and on and on. This is the opposite of a vicious cycle. This is a really good cycle. You're thinking pure thoughts.

The God of peace is with you. That helps you fight off anxiety and makes you want to pray to the God who is near, thanking Him for all of His blessings. And the peace of God guards your heart and your mind. And you're able to think thoughts that are good and right and pure.

And the God of peace is with you. Do you see? Do you see how these go together? Mottier, that commentator with the last name, he puts it this way.

The presence of God can become a creedal formula rather than a living reality. You ever do that? God is with me. I know that. We know it. A creedal formula rather than a living reality.

Theoretically, we know that He is with us. Experimentally, we forget Him. And lacking a vivid sense of His presence, we fall into sin and slackness, which would surely not mar our lives if we were sharply conscious of the Lord alongside.

[34 : 40] Hence, we have a real need to know that the God of peace is with us. Do you know that? Do you think on it? He's with you, child of God.

He's our Emmanuel, our God with us. Now, this task is no easy one, but fear not. The God of peace is not weak.

His arm is not too short to save or to sustain those that He has saved. And so may we, by His grace, think His thoughts after Him and be commendable people in His sight and in the sight of a watching world.

May the God of peace receive praise among us as He dwells in us by His Spirit, enabling us to live lives that bring glory to His name. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word, which is true.

We pray that we would give our minds to the truth. And we pray that you would give us grace, going from here, to depend upon our Savior Jesus, who dwells in us by His Spirit.

[35 : 55] We are not sufficient for these things. And so we look to you to give us grace to think aright, to be careful what we take into our minds, to be careful what we do, and to remember that you, the God of peace, are with us.

We thank you for the peace of God that you supply us, peace that passes understanding. We pray that we, by, again, by your strength, would do what you call us to in this passage, that we might enjoy further and greater measures of that peace, knowing that you are near.

Draw near to those that are yet in darkness, yet in their sin, and work in their hearts to save them, we pray. Do all of this for Jesus' sake, that He might receive the glory. We ask it in His name. Amen.

O peace be to the brothers, in love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, with love incorruptible. Amen.