

**Pastor Paul Bawden  
Grace Evangelical Church  
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"Am I Living A Life Of Peace?"  
Philippians 4:1-9**

I heard Franklin Graham this week talking about the happenings in our world.

In his remarks, he mentioned the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:4-7, where Jesus taught that at the end of the age, before His return, there would be wars and rumors of wars. . . . nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom . . . . there would be famines and earthquakes."

One of the commentators who heard this seemed a bit puzzled, and said to the effect that he hoped he could talk with Jesus if such would happen. As I interpreted what the commentator was seeing, it didn't seem to me that he understood exactly what Franklin Graham was talking about.

Certainly the events in our world should cause all of us to look up for our redemption draws nigh.

**But war, for instance, has been around a long time.** The first war was actually between God and Lucifer, the son of the morning, who rebelled against God and wanted to take over heaven and be god himself. God ejected him and his angelic followers (know as demons today) out of heaven. Then Satan came to earth and tempted Adam and Eve. They yielded to Satan's temptation, and ever since that time Satan has been at war with God, as he stirs up the hatred in men's hearts to fight against Him and each other, as the case of Cain and Abel so vividly demonstrates.

War, then, has been a part of human civilization since man's sin against God in the garden of Eden.

**In fact, the Society of International Law in London has stated that during the last 4,000 years there have been only 268 years of peace in spite of good peace treaties. In the last 3 centuries there have been 286 wars on the continent of Europe alone.**

Obviously with the current events in the Middle East today along with the Iraq and Afghanistan military offenses, there is the ultimate need for peace in our world.

Peace is not only needed on the international scene between nations, but peace is also needed in individual lives in relationships. I was listening to a man talking to a counselor this week in a call in program on a local radio station, and this gentleman was describing the breakdown in relationships among those in his family.

**Indeed, PEACE is at a premium today in our world.**

**That's why our text today in Philippians is so relevant. Times today, in one sense, have not changed from the days of the New Testament. Human nature is still the same.**

As Paul was in prison in Rome around A.D. 61, he had received a financial gift from the Philippian believers by the hand of Epaphroditus. This gift is one of the reasons Paul wrote the book of Philippians to thank them for the gift they had sent. The arrival of Epaphroditus also brought news to Paul about the spiritual growth and development of the believers in the church at Philippi. Paul discovered from conversation with Epaphroditus that in the midst of their spiritual growth, there was also some conflicts taking place among individuals.

So what does Paul do. He doesn't beat around the bush, but puts it like this.

"I urge Eudio and Syntyche to live in harmony (be considerate – of the same mind) with the Lord (Philippians 4:2).

Paul is urging these ladies to be at peace with each other in their relationships – to forgive each other and live in harmony in the Lord.

Then in Philippians 4:6-8, Paul tells each believer in Christ how to have peace in their individual lives.

I ask then, "What is peace anyway?"

### **I. A description of the word, peace.**

The word that is used for peace in the New Testament is "eipene." The name "Irene" comes from the word, peace.

**Peace in the Greek means tranquility, unity, concord – agreement, yes, harmony.**

The Old Testament word for peace is "shalom."

### **II. The source of true and lasting Peace.**

Two options for discovering personal peace.

#### **1. Man's limited reason.**

##### **(1) Man's continuous search for peace.**

Man has searched for peace for centuries. Since he is created in the image of God, which is denied in the popular arena today, he continues to think that money, fame, pleasure, and power will give him peace. Various religious practices are carried out by different groups. Some even have a biblical flavor. Then others try different drugs today. All in the search of peace with one's self, and peace with some god that he has created for his own benefit.

##### **(2) Man's Dilemma in that process.**

What man doesn't understand, in his pursuit of personal peace is, as he starts with himself, he always ends with himself. Man lives in a time box. Until man realizes he is finite and not able to find true lasting peace in himself, he will continue to blindly look for personal peace and not find it.

In his finiteness of pursuing peace on his own, man also misses the reality that he is also a spiritual being needing help from someone like himself yet greater than he is. Yes, he needs the God-man.

Which brings us to the second option for discovering personal peace.

#### **2. The biblical God's unlimited eternal revelation.**

##### **(1) The Lord's words.**

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you, Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid" (John 14:22).

"These things have I spoken unto you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Jesus is declaring here unequivocally that He is the source of true peace.

"My peace I give to you." "So that in ME you may have peace."

##### **(2) The outworking of Christ's words.**

###### **\*\*A biblical Example.**

Were these just pious platitudes that the Lord was speaking while on earth? Were these just nice words to read in the Bible? Then put the Bible down and go one's own way?

The Apostle Paul, as Saul, on the road to Damascus discovered that these were not just pious words. For on that road, as Paul was going to Damascus to apprehend Christians, the Lord Jesus Christ met Saul, and through faith in Him, Christ changed Saul's life from being an enemy of God to being a friend of God. His name was changed from Saul to Paul.

### **Saul met the Source of True Peace – Yes the Prince of Peace.**

That's why Saul, now Paul, speaking on Mars Hill (in Athens) to the Greek philosophers (around A.D.50) told them that there was a day God had fixed in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

Paul, of course, was referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnation, the God-man, who came and died on the cross to pay the penalty for breaking God's law which is death. He was buried and rose again bodily the third day. Paul was referring to HIM who had changed him from an enemy of God to being reconciled to God – so he could be called a son of God.

When writing to the Corinthian believers some 5 years later from Ephesus, Paul told them that He preached Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called (those who have accepted Christ as personal Savior) both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

### **\*\*The biblical teaching.**

Why was the God-man Jesus Christ crucified?

Man is a sinner (Romans 3:23) who doesn't seek after God on his own (Romans 3:11) In fact, he is an enemy of God outside of Christ (Romans 5:10), but because of God's love for him, while we were sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Since man, as God's creation, has a spiritual problem, he is a sinner, not at peace with God, and can't change that condition on his own. He needs God to deal with his spiritual problem, to provide him peace with His Creator.

Man not able to make peace with his Creator in himself, the biblical God steps in and provides him the peace he needs by sending His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to pay the penalty for his breaking God's law, so he can be at peace with God as well as others.

**Such is all summarized in what we are about to celebrate, Good Friday and Easter. Friday's here but Sunday is coming. It's the cross and the open tomb.**

**Every time we see an empty cross, we should think of the eternal peace Jesus Christ has one for us – vertically with Himself, and horizontally with others of like faith.**

### **Look with me at Ephesians 2:11-18**

Paul is telling the Ephesians that the death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ has brought Gentiles the privilege to be at peace with God through faith in Christ (who is PEACE) – so too for the Jews who accept Christ as personal Savior.

Now both Jews and Gentile who accept Christ as personal Savior no longer have a wall between them, rather they are both reconciled to God in one body, the church, through the cross of Christ and both have access to the same Father.

**Christ, the source of peace, has made this happen for both Jews and Gentiles who have accepted Christ as Savior. He came and preached peace to you who were far away (Gentiles), and peace to those who were near (Jews) – Ephesians 2:17.**

But such did not happen for us without the greatest battle fought in history.

### **\*\*The greatest battle fought in the history of mankind.**

I am referring to what took place before old Golgotha's hill, what took place on old Golgotha's hill, and what happened after old Golgotha's hill. For the before, the present, and the after, brought all of the Old Testament

together, the present action of the eternal God in time, but the entire future of what God would do for the world and mankind hung in the balance at that critical time in history.

In the garden, Jesus kept praying to His heavenly Father that this cup of death would pass from Him. He sweat as it were great drops of blood. I believe Satan was doing his best to somehow keep Christ from going to the cross. This was his last chance to stop the Savior from defeating him, for Satan knows what the Bible says. That's why he can twist it so well.

Here is Jesus, the innocent God-man, the eternal Father's Son, being treated as an evil criminal, accused falsely, beaten almost to pulp, nails driven into his hands and feet as he was hung on that old rugged cross. There he suffered indescribable anguish and pain as He told His heavenly Father to forgive them for they didn't know what they were doing.

At the same time Christ was urging His heavenly Father to forgive them, Jesus was being made sin for us who knew no sin. He was being roasted as were in the furnace of God's judgment, being made sin for us who knew no sin. All the sin and evil of the world were placed on Him. All the rebellion of man was placed on the Lord Jesus Christ, so peace could come to mankind. No wonder He exclaimed, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

Jesus died, but it was an active death. He told His heavenly Father that He committed His Spirit into His hands. His death was different from every other death in human history. He chose to die. He didn't have to die personally, for He was innocent, sinless. He chose to die, as our substitute, to be our sin bearer, so we who were enemies of God could become his friends.

The third day, the Lord conquered the grave bodily to demonstrate that man could now be declared righteous, justified through faith in Him. He was raised on account of our justification (Romans 4:25). The bodily resurrection of Christ is the proof that Christ has won for the believer in Him His forgiveness and eternal life – to be declared righteous before God.

**Indeed, God has won the greatest battle, the greatest war, sin's penalty has been paid for, the old nature has been defeated, Satan has been defeated, and death has been defeated.**

Was does that mean for you and me?

### **III. The experience of Christ's peace personally.**

#### **1. God offers His lasting peace to mankind (Ephesians 2:14; II Corinthians 5:19; I John 2:2; I Timothy 4:10).**

**That's why Paul told us in Ephesians 2:14 – For He Himself (referring to Christ who brought us to God by His blood) is our PEACE.**

Why is Christ demeaned today in the public arena? Why is the cross of Christ not accepted to day? Why is Christ cursed today. Why do the cults and world religions deny that Jesus is the God-man and has brought forgiveness of sin and eternal life to our world?

Satan is now doing his best to keep people's eyes blinded so that they will not realize that Jesus Christ is the peace they need to have peace with their Creator.

**\*\*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself – (II Corinthians 5:19) -That is making it potentially possible for any to believe in Christ as personal Savior.**

**\*\*Christ is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2). Propitiation means that God's wrath has been satisfied. He now can offer His peace to individuals.**

**\*\*Christ is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe (I Timothy 4:10) – that is potential Savior, but only actual Savior to those who place their faith in Him for forgiveness and eternal life.**

**As I mentioned, whenever you see a empty cross, think about the peace God has provided for all individuals of the world.**

**The empty cross tells us that God is offering his peace to individuals who are enemies of God, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It's up to us to accept Christ's peace.**

**These words come to mind, "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide, in the strife for truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side; Some great cause, some great decision, offering each the bloom or blight, and the choice goes by forever, twixt that darkness and that light."**

**"Though the cause of evil prosper, yet the truth alone is strong; Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong, yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."**

**That's why. . . . .**

**2. The individual's war with God is over (Romans 5:10, 5:1).**

**(1) The individual who is an enemy of God can now be at peace with God.**

**All outside of Christ, are enemies of God, need reconciling to God in actual experience. For if while were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10).**

That reconciliation to God comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

**Romans 5:1 puts it this way.**

**Therefore being justified (declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

That means no longer God's enemy. By accepting Christ as personal Savior, the believer is now in God's family forever.

The day a person accepts Christ as personal Savior, the believer is now a son or daughter of God. Some, I know, like my Dad, do not know the actual day or time, but they know that they are in God's family because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

**God in the empty cross is saying I want to be at peace with you, but you need to accept my Peace, my Son, the Lord Jesus Christ in order to experience my eternal Peace, my eternal Son living in you spiritually.**

**The believer in Jesus Christ can go to sleep at night knowing he or she is at peace with God. The believer can bank on the promise of God in Psalm 121 that God neither slumbers or sleeps but watches over His own continually.**

**In 1555, Nicholas Ridley was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. On the night before Ridley's execution, his brother offered to remain with him in the prison chamber to be of assistance and comfort. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need. So can we!**

**(2) The believer in Christ can live in peace with other believers (Philippians 4:1-3).**

**Why did Paul continually urge Euodia and Syntyche to live (it is in the present tense) continually in harmony and in one accord?**

**First**, each of them is vertically attached to Christ. They have made their peace with God through faith in Christ – spiritually they are sisters in Christ. They both have access to the same Father as Paul told the Ephesians in chapter 2. They both possess the mind of Christ Paul talked about in Philippians 2. In fact the root word for harmony here is the word for mind in Philippians 2. Their names are written in the Book of life

**Secondly**, if they are not at peace with each other, they are not in fellowship with the Lord, they are not a peace practically with the Lord as well.

**Thirdly**, to be at peace with God and with each other, they need to ask each other's forgiveness, and then ask the Lord's forgiveness. Christ taught that if one is bringing his offering to the altar and has something against his brother, he needs to go get things right with his brother before bringing his offering to the altar (Matthew 6:23-24).

**The empty cross is again the emblem not just of having peace with God vertically but peace with other believers horizontally.**

God cannot bless believers in Christ who are at odds with one another. God cannot bless a church where there are wrong attitudes toward others. Peace with God means that there is peace with other believers. When that peace with God is interrupted by sinful attitudes and words, forgiveness must be sought and granted. Peace with God and each other must be restored. Live in harmony with each other is God's command for each of us as we seek to follow our Lord to glorify Him.

**The believer in Christ is to be a peacemaker. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God (Matthew 5:9) - having the same title as Jesus Christ .**

**(3) The believer can experience daily Christ's peace in his or her life (Philippians 4:4-9)**

**God's peace activated in the life of the believer through obedience to the Holy Spirit . . .**

**1. Produces God's joy in the believer's life (4:4).**

The word, "rejoice" is a present command, so the believer should rejoice in the Lord at all times. Why? He is at peace with God, and can be at peace with other believers in Christ.

**2. Causes the believer to be gentle/patient with others (4:5).**

Paul exhorts the Philippians to display a gentle (reasonable, patient) spirit, perhaps toward those who are not in harmony with one another. The believer knows that God is in control and he doesn't have to try to push his agenda but seeks in a gentle spirit to carry out God's will in bringing harmony in relationships. One needs to display a gentle and patient spirit because the Lord is near, or could come any time.

**3. Replaces anxiousness with prayer (4:6-8).**

These are classic verses, easy to talk about, but harder to put into practice because we are still in the old nature on this side of heaven. But the verses tell us how prayer can help us experience God's inner peace in our lives.

**(1) The negative (4:6a)**

Be anxious for nothing, or don't be anxious about anything.

The word, anxious is a command in the present tense, so the Scripture is saying the believer who is at peace with God, having the peace of God, Jesus Christ living in one's life, should not be anxious about anything.

So what does the word anxious mean? It has the idea of having one's thoughts occupied with. Or to expend careful thought. It is something that is really causing you undue concern, and is weighing down your life. There are normal concerns that we all have, and rightly so. Paul said that the concern of the churches was his daily.

But this is referring to those normal concerns that become abnormal concerns, that really cause us to lose our focus of living for the Lord.

Does this mean we should only take those kind of concerns to the Lord?

Note the rest of Philippians 4:6ff

## **(2) Positive (4:6b-7)**

### **\*\*Be a praying person (4b-6)**

**"But" strong contrast.**

**"In everything" (so we can bring everything to God in prayer, but particularly the undue concerns we have in our lives.**

**"by prayer" – more general prayer – used of prayer to God.**

**"by supplication" – more specific prayer.**

**"with thanksgiving" – remember who God is and past blessings, distinguished from seeking the future.**

**"let your requests (which fill up the prayers of supplication) along with thanksgiving to God), be made known (present imperative passive) – be continually made known to God.**

### **Now the results come for bringing one's concerns to the Lord.**

**"The peace of God which passes all comprehension (supernatural stuff that excels – is over the top), will guard (garrison- military term – protect giving a settling and security) your heart(inner being) and minds (thinking) in Christ Jesus."**

Taking one's concern to the Lord acknowledges that He is in control and will work our His best for you and the situation. Peter tells us to cast or roll our burden on the Lord because He cares for us. Yes, it matters to HIM about you (cf. Psalm 55:22).

It's easy to sing the song with the words, take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Ethel Waters added, "And don't bring it back."

**The believer bringing his or her burdens to the Lord will experience God's over the top peace. But the key is to leave one's concern or concerns with the Lord.**

### **4. Produces Christ's thoughts in the believer's life (4:8).**

**Whatever is true,**

**Whatever is honorable –worthy of respect,**

**Whatever is right,**

**Whatever is pure,**

**Whatever is lovely – winsome**

**Whatever is of good report – or commendable**

**If there is any excellence (of good quality, uprightness), and if anything worthy of praise,**

**Continually (present command) ponder, think, yes and then speak such things.**

**The challenge is for each of us who has experienced the peace of God in our lives through faith in Jesus Christ is to display His thoughts in the power of the Holy Spirit. Just think how our world would change if people in our world dwelt only on that which is described here, which is really a picture of Jesus Christ in action. Jesus, the Prince of Peace brings His wholesome thoughts and actions to our lives, resulting in peace of mind in our lives as follower of Christ.**

**I understand that Duke University did a study once on "peace of mind." It was not a study based upon the Bible but there are certainly biblical truths therein. In fact, I put Scripture verses by each factor that was found to contribute greatly to emotional and mental stability. The study found 8 factors that contribute to a person's peace emotionally and mentally.**

1. The absence of suspicion and resentment. Nursing a grudge was a major factor in unhappiness (Ephesians 4:32).

2. Not living in the past. An unwholesome preoccupation with old mistakes and failures leads to depression (Philippians 3:13-14).
3. Not wasting time and energy fighting conditions you cannot change. Cooperate with life, instead of trying to run away from it (Ephesians 5:16).
4. Force yourself to stay involved with the living world. Resist the temptation to withdraw and become reclusive during periods of emotional stress (Acts 1:8).
5. Refuse to indulge in self-pity when life hands you a raw deal. Accept the fact that nobody gets through life without some sorrow and misfortune. (Luke 9:23).
6. Cultivate the old-fashioned virtues—love, humor, compassion and loyalty (Philippians 4:8).
7. Do not expect too much of yourself. When there is too wide a gap between self-expectation and your ability to meet the goals you have set, feelings of inadequacy are inevitable (Ephesians 1:6; Romans 8:31).
8. Find something bigger than yourself to believe in. Self-centered egotistical people score lowest in any test for measuring happiness (Hebrews 11:6).

**God has provided His eternal peace for each individual who will accept His PEACE, Jesus Christ as personal Savior. The Lord provides the ingredients for that to happen in the believer's life. But some day, Jesus Christ will bring His peace to the world.**

#### **IV. Christ's peace will one day be brought to the entire world.**

##### **1. Christ will come to earth.**

One day after the rapture of the church and at the end of the 7 year tribulation time, Christ will come to earth as depicted in Zechariah 14, Matthew 24, and Revelation 19. He will put down all evil and rebellion against Him (Revelation 19).

##### **2. Christ will establish His 1000 year reign of peace on earth as depicted in Revelation 20.**

There will be world-wide peace at that time, as Jesus rules from Jerusalem, the capitol of the world.

It will be glorious reign of Christ on earth. Believers in Christ will reign there with Christ. Satan will be bound during this time. At the end of the 1000 year reign, Satan will be released from bondage, and will go out to deceive those who were not living for Christ in their hearts even though living in the 1000 year reign of Christ. God will step in and put down the rebellion against Him. The Devil and his cohorts along with the Antichrist and his lieutenant will be cast into the lake of fire. The great white throne judgment will take place, and those whose names are not found in the Lamb's book of life will also be thrown into the lake of fire.

God will bring into existence his new heaven and earth where His peace and righteousness will be experienced forever by those who have loved and served Him.

#### **V. The challenge for all of us.**

**What's the challenge for us today from the word regarding God's peace to us in Jesus Christ through faith in HIM? [Look at Philippians 4:9.](#)**

**"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice (continually put into practice – into the shoe leather of your lives – It's a command in the present tense), these things and the God of peace will be with you."**

**Peace with God through faith in Christ brings His peace into our lives, so that we can live in peace with others individually, those in our families, and those in our church family.**

**The empty cross and open tomb is the reminder that God's peace is to be the experience in our lives as we live for Jesus each day.**

**And believers in Jesus Christ have something to talk about that's lasting – that Jesus provides a person His peace with God through the gospel of PEACE.**

**Remembering in the process, that the peace that Jesus gives us is not the absence of trouble. Rather it is the confidence that He is there with us in our challenges to give us His peace as we rely on Him, and in those challenges take them to Him and leave them there.**

**May we live in the Lord's peace this week with Him and with others to the glory of God.**