

Philippians 4:8–9

“Preaching to Ourselves from the God of the Peace”

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How can we grow in our felt experience of God’s peace? Pastor leads his family in yesterday’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Philippians 4:8–9 prepares us for the evening sermon on the coming Lord’s Day. In these two verses of holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us how to make good use of His Word for controlling our internal, mental conversations. By meditating upon and doing what the Lord teaches us, we know His fellowship and live life as a joyous, reasonable, peace-full walking with Him.

Friday, July 30, 2021 • Read Philippians 4:8–9

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle call them in v8? What eight types of things does he mention? What does he tell them to do with these things? What things does he now mention in v9—in what four ways have they come to know these things? For what purpose do they have such knowledge? What/who will be with them to bring this about?

The end of v9, “and the God of peace will be with you,” points back to that peace of God in v7 and the nearness of God at the end of v5. So the apostle has not yet changed the subject. He is presenting to us those habits of thought by which the Lord displaces anxiety and gives us peace and joy.

At what do we aim with our thoughts? That will make a big difference in how much we struggle with anxiety. The word translated “meditate” in v8 most often has the sense of considering, or reasoning, or even reckoning/accounting. Here, then is a list of the kinds of things that are to be continually brought to bear upon our minds: whatever are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report—anything virtuous, and praiseworthy.

The first two words have to do with the genuine and lasting character of things. True: real. Noble: substantial, significant. The second two have to do with their moral quality. Just: according to God’s law. Pure: without blemish or corruption. The next two have to do with the godly’s perception of them. Lovely: that which is endearing. Commendable: that which sounds pleasant. But this list isn’t exhaustive, as the last portion makes clear: *anything* that is virtuous or praiseworthy.

So, we know what our thoughts should be filled with, but how do we get there? After all, our hearts are deceitful. But the apostle isn’t finished yet. All those “things” in v8 are “the things” at the beginning of v9. God has graciously maintained to us our reason, our conscience, and the principles of His law which remain upon our hearts; yet, we are still sinners and must have our judgments subjected to the Word of God. We are not abandoned to ourselves but rather given the apostolic teaching: “the things which you learned and received and heard and saw” in the apostle. The Lord Jesus, by His Spirit, has preserved for us in the writings of His apostles and prophets a comprehensive and perfectly reliable guide to anything virtuous or praiseworthy.

Our minds are the battlefield on which is waged the contest between biblical joy and worldly anxiety. The Lord Jesus taught a parable about this. In Luke 8:14–15, he talks about the competition between the heart controlled by the “cares, riches, and pleasures of life” and the “noble and good heart” that is controlled by the Word. If we wish to escape the clutches of the anxieties of this life, then we need to reject worldly riches and pleasures and instead take what the Scripture teaches as the guideline for what to keep our minds full of.

With Scripture as the guide, the “noble and good heart” is not merely theoretical but practical. v9 says, “these things... DO!” While the Christian life rests entirely upon what Christ has done, it is still a “doing” life, and the Bible is to be for us a doing book. As Luke 8:15 says, those who hear the Word with a noble and good heart “keep it and bear fruit with patience.”

How is the battle for your mind going? Upon what do you spend the bulk of your thoughts? How are you availing yourself of the Scriptures to shape this?

Suggested songs: ARP32B “Instruction, I Will Give to You” or TPH173 “Almighty God, Your Word”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Philippians 4 verses 8 and 9. These are God's words. Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just whatever things are pure. Whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report.

If there's any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me these do. And the God of peace. Will be with you. So far the reading of God's inspired and then report. Well, one of the means by which we come to know the nearness of the Lord and come to rejoice in the Lord is prayer.

We had in verses 4 and 5 rejoice in the Lord always and again I would say for joys and let your gentleness or your reasonableness be known to all men for the Lord is here. The Lord is aimed. But then be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

So the way we have joy towards the Lord and reasonableness supports men is by anxiety being banished by this prayer that has at least the four biblical career characteristics that we heard about in verse six and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds.

Your Christ Jesus. So God has given us peace with Jesus Christ and prayers and means by which he works out in us the experience of that, peace. Well prayer is one means but in verses eight to nine we find that preaching is another means. He's going to conclude verse nine with the God of the beasts will be with you.

How is it that the peace of God takes up this fortified position around our hearts that we heard about in verse seven? Is the peace of God like a person that guards us know. The God of the peace is a person. And so, it's important that the article is there in verse 9 the word thought is there in verse 9 because that's telling us God himself who guards your heart with his peace.

He is with you. He is the Lord Jesus. He has Father Son and Holy Spirit, but he makes us and makes himself known to us especially in the Sun the Lord is at hand. And so the God of peace is with us and how what is another means that the God of the peace is with us not just by the kind of prayer in verse 6, but the kind of preaching in the first half of verse 9 with the kind of response on our part of verse 8.

So the apostle. The apostle has taught the and so they have learned and he has commanded them and so they have received and he has preached to them and so they have heard and he has modeled for them and said they have seen what it looks like to be someone who trusts in Jesus Christ who belongs to God through Jesus Christ.

Who knows the love of God and this that God has given his son and that Jesus has laid down his life for us to know the love of God and to love him because he first loved us and to keep his commandments because we love him. And so we know God to be the God of the peace the one who is made peace with us in Jesus Christ and so this is what he has taught that they have learned what he has commanded and they have received what he's preached to may have heard what he is modeled and they've seen how to live as a Christian.

And so he says that which I taught you and commanded you and preached to you and modeled for you or the things that are true and noble and dust and pure love. Ly in a good report and virtuous and praiseworthy and you are to do two things with what you learn from the Bible and especially what you learn in the word as a means of grace the word read but especially the word preached what are the two things you're supposed to do meditate and do.

So he says meditate on these things the end of verse eight and he says these things do in verse nine meditate. Does not mean to empty your mind and hum some droning sound or chance on repetitive phrase or sing at infant item at nauseum some Christian contemporary work, of course.

Meditate talks about that in our conversation in your head, you might have heard and in fact you did hear just before the teaching time and the question time that the Hebrew word from meditate and the Old Testament is to mutter to yourself and what's happening when your muttering to yourself, it's if you're actually like doing it out loud it's because you've got that inner conversation in your head that you're trying to take over or maybe absent-mindedly is spilling over but in this case you'd be trying to take it over.

Didn't just have unplanned unprofitable conversations with yourself. That's one of the things that we try to work on with others isn't it trying to be profitable to others in our conversation with them out of love for them and here he's saying in your inner conversation and the thoughts in your head by god's work that you have read and been taught about and been commanded from it have had preached to you by God's word take over the internal conversations in your egg.

It's like what the the psalmist is doing in Psalm 42 and 43, isn't it he's cast down he's discouraged why aren't out of discouraged open God for I shall yet praise him he's telling himself the gospel and he's telling himself how to apply the gospel and he's trying to he's taking over his internal conversation

by his office.

Some of you struggle with anxiety some of you perhaps have had a conflict with others in which you've gone over and over and over again in your head what you would like to say to them yeah how to respond to particular things that it's not wrong to practice responding in a godly manner to someone in your head but but our thoughts are to be full of the things from God's word and then they're not just it's not just intellectual exercise meditate on these things and diversity, but it's a practical exercise what The reason we're taking over the thoughts in our head because from our thoughts our feelings come from our thoughts our choices come from our thoughts our actions come so the inner conversation in your head is very important.

And taking all that you have received from God's work to control the inner conversation in your head is very important. Now what does he tell us about God's word, do you see he doesn't just say yeah the things that you learn receiving heard and saw and me meditate on them and do them.

He tells us many of their characteristics God in his mercy knows that we need help with our motivation and so he tells us many wonderful things about the word of God that the apostle has talked and preached to command it and modelled so that we will see how good is the word of God and we'll be more motivated to have these be the things that control our thoughts.

So, he tells us first two things about the genuine and blasting character of the things that the words teach us there are true and they are noble. That is that they are real. They are true. There's so much that is is not true. There's not reliable but what God learned says is true.

It's reliable. It's real. And there's so much that is light and worthless and unimportant and will vanish but God's word is noble but significant substantial. So it's not a waste of your mental time and it won't deceive you. It's true it won't deceive you it's noble. It's not a waste.

The second two things that he says just and, Pure have to do with the moral the goodness and rightness. That's what just means according to God's law right and then pure without blemish or corruption according to the extent of God's standard the bar is set at perfection blemishlessness purity that's got standard is holiness the word is what teaches you what holiness looks like what purity looks like so that you may.

Have it according to God's law according to God's rule to the extent that God requires just to pure. So, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are totally things are pure. The next two are lovely and of good reports. And this is especially lovely to God.

And of good reports to God. And so the things that God wants to as it were seen in us and the things that God commends in us that which God wishes to hear from us as well. And said the response of God that which you can expect God will respond to you with blessing.

That which we see in Jesus. Jesus is all together lovely. Jesus is the one of whom God announces from heaven. This is my beloved son with him. I am well pleased and we rejoice don't we that when you believe in Jesus instead of God seeing all of the wickedness that you have done and giving his verdict guilty.

When he sees you in Jesus when you believe in Jesus and Jesus is counted as yours and all that is is yours. He says if you in Jesus, he is my beloved child with him. I am well pleased and so that is what is lovely in the eyes of God and that is what God gives a good report and so.

Not only is that what's counted for us but now we whom God has loved we want to do that which God considers lovely we want to do that which has a good report with God and it starts with taking over that inner conversation in your head with what God counts as lovely and whatever and commence what he blesses.

And then finally if there is any virtue if there is anything praise worth and so these ever whatever then he takes these more general words of virtue, which is just anything good and pray for you which is similar to good report but a little broader and he says this list is not exhaustive these are some of the good qualities of what God has given us in the Bible and as you see more and more of the goodness of God's word in the Bible remember.

That that's what's supposed to be controlling your mind and controlling your actions your mind is a battlefield it's a battlefield where there's a war between biblical joy. And worldly joy. And biblical confidence and anxiety you're going to rejoice in the Lord or you're going to rejoice in things that appeal to the flesh the kinds of things that the world loves are you going to have confidence in the Lord knowing that the Lord is a hand and therefore be able to be gentle and reasonable with others or are you going to be full of anxiety and therefore flashing out at others that you lash out the most that others when you are the most stressed?

Well there's this battlefield that's why in the parable of the soils earlier in Luke Jesus talked about the good seed of the word and what were the thorns that threatened to choke it. The cares or the pleasures

of this world and so he says don't have the pleasures of this world rejoice in the Lord don't be anxious about the cares of this world be confident in the Lord and how does that happen how does what is the plant that is strong enough that the thorns die instead of the plant being choked up it's the good seed of the word?

And so the word that you have heard taught and commanded and preached and modeled right those are the that's what he says learn received heard and saw we need to water and tell the soil to use the illustrations the illustration from youth variable and chapter eight meditate upon. Control the inner conversation in your head with the Bible.

Do you have two things every week that you can use to help you immediately. One is the verse that we're memorizing. That's a good thing to have to run over and over in your mind not only will it save you some embarrassment to give you some pleasure all the words day when you can repeat your verse but it will help you obey this instruction from the book from the Lord to control to meditate on these things.

To control that inner conversation of your mind with the Word of God. The other thing you are memorizing the shorter catechism which takes many truths from the Bible and condenses it into very short, very small bites, very short phrases and sentences and you can control the conversation of your mind with this things.

And then what you hear in family worship and if in your private worship you go back over what we went over in family. Worship the night before and you read it for yourself and you take that as a special time asking God to help you follow what you heard and the family were took times.

Use your booklet and immediately be able to remember much of what you heard the the previous day. That will help you also and you can be thinking about that turning it over in your mind controlling that inner conversation much reaching and teaching the Lord's Day and then, The Holy Spirit will also be bringing to mind things from His work.

If you've heard throughout your life be sensitive to that respond to God with submission Satan himself may be a fool as he was with our Lord Jesus and tried to quote some scriptures to you but you always bring the whole Bible to bear like Lord Jesus did and make sure you are not excusing sin with Scripture which we are tempted to do to ourselves sometimes.

If something you want to do in the flesh, and so you start thinking of Bible verses that you can use to excuse yourself. You know like the righteous lie people do. You don't use the Bible that way to try to excuse what you want to do. Take what you have been taught and what has been commanded you and what the Lord has sent apostles and now pastors and all this to preach to you and what is modeled for you by the godly from the Bible not the Bible to interpret the Bible and be the judge Control your Conversation so that you can live according to the Word of God and this is the second means by which.

Of God of the peace is with us. He's his prayer to make us to experience his peace more and more and now in this week's portion we hear that he uses preaching to do the same. Let's pray and ask him that he would keep doing that in us.

Our Father in heaven and we thank you that you have given us this portion of your word to be in together as a family. Pray for my children to view a dude for them. According to what we have read heard here. Oh God be very fast granted that they would exceed their father and their mother in this that from a young age your word and it's truths and all of these virtuous and praiseworthy things that we've heard about it that your word would control their thoughts that you the God of the peace would be with them by means of your word, they would know what it is to have your Holy Spirit carrying on to them holy conversation.

By the truths of your work that they turn over and over again in their minds I pray Lord that as they grow in this habit the skill by the by your spirits gracious work for you. It also sustained them in especially living according to that improved inner conversation. Well God helped those of my children who are more given to anxiety.

That you being with them as the God of the peace by means of the word would help them grow them. I pray and taking control of the inner conversation of their minds by all of the good in your word and especially that Christ is already our righteousness. And we already have peace with you in Him since we have peace with you that your spirit would spread out into every corner of their hearts.

Your love the knowledge and experience of your love that we would be able to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God together. Make us a family who not only have these conversations internally each one of us in our own mind and heart but make that to control and shape what comes out of our.

Mouths so that we have these conversations with one another that our entire family life would be like a godly conference in which we are constantly building one another up in the word that we have learned when it was taught and received when it was commanded and heard when it was preached and seen when it was modeled.

And helped me over and help Heather. That we would do these things for our children even as you have put us in the home with them and entrusted them to our care that they might learn and receive and hear and see. From their mom and dad all day every day.

God we are very weak we feel that we have hardly begun to do any of these things in our lives we thank you for the grace in which you have brought us thus far, but we pray for your glory for our own souls and especially for the children you ought to be able to fall over nine men their life that godly parents.

That you would make us more and more those godly parents who can give such instructions. Help us by your spirit we ask and now as we rise make us to live according to the word that we have heard from we asking Jesus name. Amen.