

Supernatural Peace

Scripture: John 14:27

Code: 43-77

We come now to the Word of God and we return to the 14th chapter of the gospel of John: John, chapter 14. As we've been going through the gospel of John, we've taken paragraphs pretty much along the way. But this morning I want to deal with just one verse, one verse that is a very wonderful verse, a very important one. It's John, chapter 14 and verse 27, John 14:27.

We've worked our way all the way up to this verse and I couldn't get past it, it's just so rich. John 14:27 says, "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."

Peace appears twice in that brief verse. It's a popular word; it's an almost impossible reality. It is a constant pursuit. I give credit to people for chasing it. But it seems as though the world has been unable to find it, and that is, in fact, true.

Turmoil is in us, near us, around us, and beyond us, dominating the fallen world. There is an absence of personal peace, family peace, local peace, national peace, international peace. The Durants, in writing their history, said that by their calculations, in the last 3,500 years, there has been less than 300 years that could be called peaceful in the world. On a national level, this is a very troubled society. There are many ways to demonstrate that, but that would in some ways be redundant since you're all aware of it.

Maybe something you didn't know is that two million Americans are in prison. That's the highest incarceration rate on the planet; and we're supposed to have everything in this country. We're now facing, it seems, street riots on a routine basis, execution-type killings, and the threat of terrorism in our neighborhoods. At the same time, family disintegration is pandemic. Children are born illegitimately without a married mother and father, divorce is everywhere. And where divorce doesn't take place, marriages are still full of conflict, hostility. And at the bottom of that list is personal peace.

This is a very troubled world, even at the level of human hearts; a lot of talk about peace. There are always people trying to find peace: peace in the cities, peace in the communities, peace in the family, peace in relationships, peace in the world. There are always people trying to come up with truces of some kind between conflicting parties. People want that; they want peace in their lives. They want some tranquility in their lives inside of them, and in the most intimate relationships they possess – in families and in communities, and on and on and on – to be free from trouble; to be free from stress; to be free from threats, fear, anxiety, depression, despair, conflict. Everybody seeks that.

People talk about trying to find peace and quiet, or trying to make peace, or law enforcement trying to keep the peace, or global arbitrators trying to establish peace, until we finally rest in peace. People pursue their peace by diversion, by drugs, by recreation, by entertainment, by shopping. On a broader scale, there are those who tell us that peace will only come in communities and cities when there is social change, when there is economic change, when we fix the external things.

People have been saying that since the beginning of human history, and peace has been completely elusive. There is a reason for this and it is this: among those who do not know God in the wicked world, there is no peace, there is no peace.

I read some years ago an assessment of history that asked the question: “How many peace treaties that have been signed have been broken through human history?” Answer: All of them.

Now people settle for a minimalist definition of peace, a moment’s calm, a moment’s tranquility, a brief truce. Historians have defined peace in the world as the lull in the battle when everybody stops to reload. But there is a peace that comes only from God, and that’s the peace that is being presented to us in that verse I read. Let’s look at a biblical definition of this peace. Only God’s Word, only God through His Word, can authoritatively point to real peace.

Now in the Old Testament, there’s a familiar word for peace. It’s the word shalom, and it’s used about 250 times. Very common word among Jewish people. In fact, it is the most normal greeting among Jewish people, and has been for centuries: “Shalom.”

It began to be used as a greeting way back in the book of Judges, way back in 1 Samuel. It has been a part of Jewish culture since the beginning. And when they said to someone, “Peace,” what did they mean? Did they mean, “May you please stop fighting with your wife,” or, “Would you please stop being a problem in the neighborhood or disrupting the synagogue”? What did they mean?

Shalom is a word that is a very large and all-encompassing word, and in essence it means this: a wish for completeness; or a wish for contentment; or a wish for fulfillment, or satisfaction, or blessing; or maybe well-being works; a wish for prosperity on all levels. In other words, it is a desire that all that is good would flow into your life.

And that’s what Jewish people meant, and still mean, when they say shalom. They don’t mean, “I hope you stop fighting with your wife.” They mean, “I wish for you all that is good, all that is blessed, all that brings satisfaction, fulfillment, completeness, and contentment.”

The New Testament counterpart to that word is the word *eirn* from which we get the feminine name Irene. It is the same thing. *Eirn* is a word that literally describes a tranquil state of the soul, a soul at rest, a satisfied soul. That’s the biblical view of peace.

Now outside the Scripture, humanity would settle for far less than that. Humanity would define peace mostly in negative terms: to be without trouble; to be free from conflict; to have no stress. It would be the absence of hostility, the absence of unrest, the absence of conflict. Peace for the world is just the absence of what troubles them. It is being free from things that cause you to be fearful, anxious, depressed.

But that is an insufficient and incomplete definition of peace; however, it is the only peace the world can offer. That has to be their definition because that’s all there is. There’s only the possibility of a lull in the conflict. There’s only a possibility of a kind of superficial, temporary respite from an otherwise troubled existence.

Job said, “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. As inevitably as sparks off a fire go up,

man is born to trouble.” In this world Jesus said you’ll have trouble. It’s the nature of fallen people living in a fallen world and colliding with other fallen people. So we’ve got to kind of condescend a little bit to the world because the only kind of peace that they can ever experience is some temporary absence from conflict, or some temporary escape from conflict.

But that is not how the Bible views peace. The most definitive condensed statement on peace I just read, it’s in chapter 14 of John, and verse 27. The Bible says a lot about peace, and the word for peace is used, as I said, about 250 times in the Old Testament, Hebrew word. The Greek word is very, very frequently used in the New Testament. But when the Bible talks about peace, it is talking about something completely different; and that ought to be obvious to you because when Jesus says, “I’m giving you My peace,” He says, “it’s not the peace the world gives you.”

And what is fascinating to me is that at the very time that our Lord talks about peace and presents this peace as His own peace that He’s granting to His followers, He is at the most dramatic, potentially disturbing, distressing moment in His life. He is leaving the world in hours through the means of execution on a cross, and He knows that, and He knows the details of it. He has lived through them in anticipation by His omniscience a thousand, thousand times. He knows what He faces. He knows He will be not only crucified, it’s not just the physical reality of that, but that He will be separated from His Father and He will be punished for all the sins of all the people through all of human history who will ever believe. He knows what He’s facing.

He also knows that His disciples are profoundly distressed. They had certainly everything they could possibly hope for and more in His presence for three years, and now He is leaving. He has said that to them repeatedly. He’ll say it again in verse 28: “I go away.” And He knows that this is troubling to them. As chapter 14 opens up, He says, “Stop letting your hearts be troubled.” So He is going to give to them a kind of peace which will put an end to their troubled heart.

I remind you that the setting here is Thursday night of Passion Week and the last week of our Lord’s life before His crucifixion. This is Thursday night. They’re celebrating the Passover in an upper room. And starting in chapter 13 and going through 16, our Lord speaks to His disciples in that upper room. And this section is full of promises, full of amazing, astonishing, startling, incomparable promises that our Lord who is leaving is going to give to His own, not only to the disciples, the 11 – Judas has exited by chapter 14 – not only to the 11 true disciples, but to everyone who will believe through what the disciples will write and preach.

So this is His legacy to all of us as well. So in chapter 17 after He’s made all the promises in 13 to 16, He prays to the Father and asks the Father to fulfill all the promises; and He actually says in chapter 17, “Not only for these who are with Me, but for all those who will believe.” So these are promises to all who will believe; and He promises us heaven, and He promises us that He’s preparing a room for us, and that He’ll be back to take us to glory. He promises that He and the Father and the Holy Spirit will all dwell with us.

And then last time we saw that He promises truth, truth. He pledges that the Spirit will come and enable the apostles and the associates to write the New Testament, and the truth will be deposited to His people for all of history. So He’s made some astonishing promises: heaven, resources, whatever you ask for. “Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it. You have all of heaven’s resources at your disposal even though I’m not here. And truth is always going to be available to you through the Word of God, the Scripture, and the illuminating ministry of the Spirit in you. And now the promise: peace,

peace.”

But this is a supernatural peace. It belongs only to those who are Christ's. There are four features of this peace that I want you to see in this one verse, okay, four features of this supernatural, divine peace.

First of all, the nature of this peace, the nature of peace. When we're talking about peace, what are we talking about exactly, specifically? Well let me say very simply, there are two aspects to this: one is objective and one is subjective. What do I mean by that?

An objective peace is that peace which is outside of you. It is not inside of you; it is not experienced by you; it is outside of you. It is a transactional peace. And then that's the objective peace. The subjective peace is that peace that is inside of you and it is experiential, and the second is based on the first.

So when we talk about peace, let's look at verse 27 and see how our Lord gives us the nature of this peace inherent in this statement: "Peace I leave with you." This is a deposit; this is a gift. This is not a command, this is a gift. He is not asking them to find this peace, He is saying, "I'm leaving this peace with you. I'm depositing this peace. You will possess this peace." It is a reality; it is a gift; it is a transaction. Our Lord grants them this peace and to all who will follow them in loving and serving Him.

What are we talking about? What is this peace? Maybe the best way to start explaining it is to have you turn to Romans 5; Romans, chapter 5. And here it jumps out of the page at you right away; chapter 5, verse 1. Based on the work of Christ in the end of chapter 4, Him being delivered over because of our transgressions and raised for our justification, based on His work on the cross, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," okay.

So now we're talking about peace with God. Preposition is very important: peace with God. We are at peace with God, that is why Paul in Ephesians 6:15 calls the gospel, "The gospel of peace," because the gospel brings peace between the sinner and God. That's what justification does. When God declares you just, when He imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, you are declared righteous. You are justified by faith in Christ and by the work that He did on the cross.

On the cross, He paid the penalty for your sin, and that frees God to forgive you and impute the righteousness of Christ to you. That is a declaration; that is a divine decree; that is not an experience. That is not inside of you, it is a transaction that takes place outside of you by a sovereign God.

You are justified by God; that means declared righteous based upon your faith in Jesus Christ; and His righteousness then imputed to you, you stand just before God. Therefore, we have peace with God. Every Christian has peace with God, every Christian.

Now before you are saved, before you come to the knowledge of Christ, the situation is very, very different. To find out how different it is, all you have to do is look at verse 10 of Romans 5: "We were enemies. We were enemies."

There's no peace, no peace. We are alienated from the life of God, cut off from God. We hated God. In a very divine and pure sense, God hated us. He is angry with the wicked every day the Scripture says.

There was the most severe and permanent everlasting alienation between the sinner and God. It ends up for those who don't believe as eternal hell. That's how alienated we are from God. That is the supernatural and final and terminal extent of our alienation: "We were enemies, but we were reconciled to God."

How were we reconciled to God? "Through the death of His Son, through the death of His Son," end of verse 11. So through the Lord Jesus Christ, we have now received the reconciliation. That is the kind of peace we're talking about, first of all, objectively.

Look at 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. Very important portion of Scripture, 2 Corinthians 5, verse 18: "God, who reconciled us to Himself." Verse 19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself by not counting their trespasses against them."

How did God do this? How did He reconcile us? By verse 21: "He made Him, Christ, who knew no sin, sin on our behalf." So He put our sins on Christ, punished Christ. And since our sins were paid for in full, all we have to do is believe and we are reconciled to God. That's the kind of peace we're talking about.

I want to show you one other important text. It's in the 1st chapter of Colossians, Colossians 1:19, "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, in Christ, and through Him, through Christ, to reconcile all things to Himself."

How did He do that? "By having made peace through the blood of His cross. He made peace through the blood of His cross." Another way to say that is in verse 22: "He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." That reconciliation is the peace with God that Romans 5:1 is talking about.

Since the rebellion of Adam and Eve, the whole human race has been born alienated from God. The whole human race has been born enemies of God. The whole human race has been born as a children of wrath under divine judgment. We are the enemies of God by birth, we're born that way; and we're the enemies of God by choice. We are the enemies of God by heritage and we're the enemies of God by action.

Humanity and God are at war. All of us came into the world at war with God. We are part of the world, and James 4:4 says, "Friendship with the world is to be the enemy of God." But the gospel of peace is the message that the enemies can be reconciled, and that peace was made through the blood of the cross.

That is justification. All sin is forgiven; the rebellion has ended. The enemies have become friends; the enemies have even become sons of God. We are welcomed into God's family and God's presence forever. Jesus made peace by taking on our punishment in full, and we are reconciled, and we now have peace with God forever, We have peace with God forever.

Put it another way: forever God is on our side. Forever He will never leave us or forsake us. Forever we will be in the presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Forever we will possess the very life of God, forever. That is an external, eternal reality, never to change. That's objective peace with God.

But that objective peace also provides for us a subjective peace, an internal peace, an experiential peace; a sense of goodness, trust, contentment, tranquility, confidence, well-being; and that is why when we get together, we love to sing, for example *It Is Well with My Soul*. Of all the hymns that we sing, I don't know that you sing any hymn with more eager gusto than you sing that hymn. You just sing it with all your heart, "It is well with my soul." And you are in the moment, you're expressing that, experiencing the subjective peace that comes from the objective reality of being reconciled to God. That's the joy that we have in being believers.

In Romans, chapter 15, there's a verse, verse 13, that says this: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope." That's a prayer. That's a prayer from the apostle who's saying, "I want you to literally be filled with the subjective peace that ought to be the result of your objective reconciliation," Romans 15:13.

Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." You have been made righteous, you've been justified, and the result of that is peace and joy. And the two are really inseparable: if you're at peace, you're in joy.

Now this is not a kind of passive peace; it is not just being willing to endure; it is a lot more than that. It is not some kind of benign reality. It is a triumphant peace. It is an aggressive peace. It is a peace that moves out. It is a conquering peace.

It is a peace that not only protects you from anxiety, and fear, and doubt, and despair; but it is a peace that triumphs over everything with courage, confidence, contentment. It's a triumphant peace, and you should be experiencing all of it. So that's the kind of peace our Lord is saying: "I leave you this peace." First of all, objectively, peace with God; and then subjectively, the peace of God, which is what it's called Philippians 4 as we will see. So that's the kind of peace.

All right, just another feature: the source of peace. Back to verse 27: "My peace I give to you, My peace. Peace I leave you, but it's My peace." That is to say it's divine, it's supernatural. It comes from heaven; it belongs to Christ; it belongs to God. I won't take the time; I won't take the time; but many places in the Bible you will find this statement: "The God of peace, the God of peace."

You'll find it in Romans 15; you'll find it in Romans 16; you'll find it in Philippians 4, 1 Thessalonians 5, Hebrews 13, 2 Corinthians 13, 1 Corinthians 14, et cetera, et cetera. Second Thessalonians 3:16 I will point out to you: "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!" That's his prayer again, that you would enjoy the peace that comes from the Lord of peace.

Well look at verse 27. The peace that He gives is His own peace: "My peace." Another way to see that would be to go to chapter 16, verse 14, where our Lord says, "When I send the Holy Spirit, He will come. He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. He's going to give you what I possess,"

and part of that is His peace. So the peace that we have is not the peace of the world – that's the next statement he's going to make – it's from heaven.

Paul wrote 13 letters, at least. We're not sure if he wrote Hebrews or not, but he wrote 13 for sure. In 12 of those letters he said this: "Grace and –" what " – peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have the God of peace, we have the Lord of peace; and in Galatians 5, we have the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace. Again, this is the essence of the Trinity that dwells in the believer; with the eternal life of the presence of the triune God comes divine peace. It was the same peace: "My peace," He said, that kept Him calm on that Thursday night knowing what was about to happen; knowing that His disciples would scatter, Peter would deny Him; knowing that He would go to the cross, bear sin. It was the same calm really that he exhibited through His whole life when He was treated with mockery, scorn, hostility, hatred, betrayal, all undeserved.

Where did that peace come from? Well, essentially, it came from perfect trust in the Father, perfect trust in the Father. So just mark it down in your mind: peace is connected to trust. It's connected to trust. His trust in the Father was so clear and so consummate and so complete that Hebrews 12:2 says, "He went to the cross for the joy that was set before Him," even though in the going, in the garden, He was sweating blood in the agony.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, Pilate was one disturbed person. Pilate was getting more disturbed and disoriented and more disconnected from any kind of reality the longer he had to cope with Jesus. So finally in frustration, chapter 19 of John, verse 10, Pilate says to Jesus, "You do not speak to me?" He's literally outraged that Jesus doesn't get who he is and how important he is. "You do not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

The calm is stunning. Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above." That's trust. "Whatever you're going to do to Me is what God wants you to do to Me. Whatever's going to happen is God's plan." That's why I'm telling you the peace that He gives is the peace that is built, not only on the external reality of justification, but the internal reality of a God who can be trusted.

This is where the subjective peace begins to really become strong. And so Paul said to the Thessalonians, as I read you, that, "I want to pray that you would be full of peace." That peace isn't created in a vacuum. It doesn't come as a result of manipulating your mind, playing mind games or psychological tricks.

So Jesus says, "Look, I'm giving you My peace, the peace that I possess in the face of Pilate, My executioner, in the face of the cross, in the face of separation from the Father: 'My God, My God. Why have You forsaken Me?' in the face of sin-bearing. This is my peace and it's My peace that I'm giving you." And that should be obvious. If the Trinity lives in us and the Trinity's presence is our eternal life, then we have the possession of those attributes which are God's attributes, including His peace.

It's not available to anybody else; and that's the third point. The nature of peace, the source of

peace, and the transcendence of peace. He says, “Not as the world gives do I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.” This peace from God is not found in the human realm, it transcends all that the world offers of superficial and temporary peace. The world’s pseudo peace – listen – the world’s pseudo peace is the bliss of ignorance. It’s the bliss of ignorance.

One writer said, “The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not. They may be fearless and stupid. But there’s a great difference between a stupefied conscience and a pacified conscience. This is the Devil’s peace. He rocks men in the cradle of security. He cries, ‘Peace, peace,’ when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace a sinner has is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but the ignorance of his danger.” So I say the world’s pseudo peace is the peace of ignorance.

I was visiting Lori Price. Her husband is going to glory, maybe today even. Patricia and I went to be with them yesterday and their precious family. They’ve been in our church for many years; and a sadness in the family to lose this precious father, grandfather, husband.

But we were rejoicing. All of us were rejoicing in the face of this inevitable moment of death. They were all saying how thrilled they were that he was now going to see the Savior. There was such peace. And Lori was saying that they have some hospice folks who’ve been coming in in recent weeks, and one of them wanting to help said, “Well, you know, it’s all going to be good because it’s just going to add another angel to heaven.”

This is a person who regularly deals with dying people, and that’s what you’ve got? That’s it? This is going to add another angel to heaven? Based on what authority do you say that? If that comforts anybody, it makes my point. People are happy to settle on a stupid answer and a false peace.

And I’m not denigrating the dear woman who serves in that way, I’m just saying if you don’t know where the real peace lies, you come up with ignorant responses to the most dire of all events; somebody on the edge of hell in the most severe danger they ever been in, and you can’t come up with some kind of superficial statement out of the air. But why do people do that? Because it works. People will settle for an ignorant answer and a fantasy rather than face a biblical reality.

So we’ve seen the nature of peace, the source of peace. And the third thing to say is that this is a transcendent peace. It’s not the kind of peace that the world talks about with its superficial ignorant fantasy. The Bible emphasizes that the world’s peace is inadequate.

Isaiah 48:22, “‘There is no peace for the wicked,’ says the Lord.” No peace. Isaiah 57:21, “‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.’” Jeremiah 6:14, God excoriates the false prophets who heal the brokenness of His people superficially saying, “‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.” You remember Jesus looking over Jerusalem says, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they’ve been hidden from your eyes.” No peace.

In the end times, 1 Thessalonians 5, unbelievers are going to say, “‘Peace and safety! Peace and safety!’ and destruction is going to come on them suddenly like labor pains on a woman with child, and they will not escape.” You can’t find true peace in ignorance or fantasy, it’s only available in Christ.

People lack peace. That's not an emotional issue; that's not a psychological issue; that's not a circumstantial issue. That is a theological issue; that is a spiritual issue, because only those who know Jesus Christ can have peace with God and the peace of God. And that brings us to a last point.

We've seen the nature of peace, the source, the transcendence. One other important feature: the pursuit of peace. You say, "Wait a minute. What do you mean the pursuit of peace? You just said it's a given. You just said it's a gift. It's not a command. He said, 'I'm giving you peace. I'm leaving you peace, My peace.' What do you mean, the pursuit?"

Well, look at verse 27: "Stop letting your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." Even with all these promises, all these incredible promises of peace, is it not reality, folks, that we live a lot of our lives lacking peace? Do I hear an amen? That's what I thought.

We have to talk about reality here. Is it strange to say you have a promise and then to give a command? No more strange than to say you have a cupboard with all the resources. Why don't you go there and take some out? Or you have a bank account with all the money you need. Why don't you go withdraw some of it?

This is consistent with everything our Lord has promised. There's always appropriation. Look, He promised us, "All the resources of heaven are available, but to access that, you ask in My name." He promises us the truth, the truth, written in Scripture for us. But to access that, you study to show yourself approved unto God. You search the Scripture. You're a diligent student. He promises us the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but we are commanded to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, to be filled with the Spirit. This shouldn't be surprising because the Lord promised salvation and eternal life to His people, but that is appropriated by faith.

Psalm 34:14's command is this: "Seek peace and pursue it. Seek peace and pursue it." By the way, Peter quotes that in 1 Peter 3:11. Isaiah 26:3 reveals that it is those – this is very important: "Who steadfastly trust God, who are kept in peace." Isaiah 32:17 links the experience of peace with a righteous life. Colossians 3:15 says, "Allow the peace of Christ to rule in your hearts, to rule in your hearts." Not something in a corner; it should dominate you.

Paul urged Timothy, "Pursue peace," 2 Timothy 2. Peter wrote 2 Peter 3:14, "Be diligent to be found by Him in peace." James 3: "Righteousness and peace are inseparable." Hebrews 12 speaks of the peaceful fruit of righteousness. So peace in your life is pursued through righteousness, through faith, through prayer.

You know, a good way to see this is to go back to Matthew, chapter 6, just briefly because we only have a few minutes. But Matthew, chapter 6 – you know the passage – verse 25: "For this reason I say to you, stop worrying, stop worrying about your life. Don't worry about your life. Don't worry about what you're going to drink, what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear. Don't worry about that." Then He goes through a whole litany of things: "God takes care of the birds, God takes care of the plants. Worrying doesn't help anything. You can't add a single hour to your life –" verse 27 " – by worrying.

"Why are you worried about your clothing? Look how He clothes the lilies of the field more gloriously

than Solomon. If God takes care of grass and plants, don't you think He's going to take care of you, since they are temporary and you're eternal? This is what the pagans – "verse 32 – seek. Your Father in heaven knows that you have need of all these things." Verse 34: "So don't worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will care of itself. Every day has enough trouble of its own. You don't need to import what hasn't happened."

So what's the positive here? "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness," okay, His righteousness. So when you follow the path of righteousness, peace finds you on the trail, finds you on the road. Don't worry; pursue righteousness and you'll find peace. But one thing: you'll have an affirming and not an accusing conscious. That's another message.

Philippians 4 – one more passage – Philippians 4, verse 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always." That's pretty clear. But He still says, "Again I will say, rejoice! Let your meekness, or your gentle spirit, be known to all men. The Lord is near."

Live in constant joy. Never at any time should you be anything but joyful: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and I'm telling you again, rejoice! Let your meekness be known to everyone. What have you got to worry about? The Lord is near."

Verse 6: "Be anxious for – " what – nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication. Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God – " we already know about peace with God, Romans 5. "The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension – " it's not as the world knows, it's beyond that. "The peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

It's just an amazing thing. Stop being anxious for anything. You will pursue peace, first of all, when you pursue righteousness; secondly, when you pursue thankful prayer, when you come before God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, letting your request be made known to God.

Now this introduces a critical component in peace: faith, faith. You go to God in the midst of all your troubles because you believe in His power and His promise, right, and His provision, and His resources, and His love. We talk about faith: "I need more faith. How do I get more faith?" I'm going to make it real simple for you – write it down: faith is primarily thinking, thinking.

It's not something floating out in space, it's thinking, it's thinking. Thinking about what? God, His person, His attributes, His words, His works, His power, His promises. The more you read about God and think about God, the greater God becomes; and the greater God becomes in your thinking, the greater your faith will be in Him; and the greater your faith, the more eager will be your thankful prayer in the midst of trouble that brings peace.

That's why the Bible talks about having a renewed mind: Romans 12, Ephesians 4:23, Colossians 3:2. It's about how you think. And to make that indelibly clear, go to verse 8 in Philippians 4: "Finally, brethren – " listen, here's the last word on this – " whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute – " and all of that would be true of God – " if there's any excellence and anything worthy of praise, think on these things."

And if you're thinking on those things, you're thinking about God, because all those things are true of

God. God is truthful, God is noble, God is righteous, God is pure, God is gracious, God is worthy of praise. And when you think like that, Paul says, “You’ll do what I’ve done. You’ve seen me do this. Practice these things – ” end of verse 9 “ – and the God of peace will be with you.” You’ll experience this peace.

So how do we pursue peace? Through righteousness, obedience, and through faith. Trust and obey. We go back to those things over and over, don’t we? But the beginning is in your thinking.

Listen to Isaiah 26:3 – I mentioned that I’m going to quote it: “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is fixed on You because he trusts in You.” Perfect peace is the product of perfect trust. Perfect trust is the result of perfect knowledge of God. The more you know about God, the more you trust Him, the more trustworthy He is, obviously, in your mind. The more you trust Him, the more eagerly you go to Him in the midst of your trouble with thankful prayer. And when you go to Him in your trouble with thankful prayer, the peace of God floods your soul beyond comprehension. This is really – this is a staggering promise in verse 27.

It’s not surprising that I couldn’t get past one verse, right? Pretty amazing. And having said just that meager amount, we have come to the end. There are more gifts that Christ promised to us in these passages, but none, none is more overarching than this one: peace with God and the peace of God.

Father, we thank You that we’ve been able to be together this morning, this wonderful place, the sanctuary of Your presence, because You dwell within Your people. We have been blessed in fellowship, we’ve been blessed in music and prayer, and the Word has been a blessing to us, a profound, a profound stream of water coming down from heaven to quench our thirsty souls. We thank You, Lord, for giving us peace with God and the peace of God. May we experience it to the full as we pursue it through righteousness and faith.

I pray, Lord, for all who are here to know, first of all, peace with You through justification, salvation, reconciliation. Lord, bring sinners, even now, to the foot of the cross. Bring sinners to the realization that they live on the brink of eternal danger, and may they run to Christ for salvation and peace.

And saints, Lord, bring them to the place where they have a desire for the fullest of peace that doesn’t come because their circumstances change, but becomes a reality when their knowledge of You increases. Increase our understanding of who You are, our great God, and cause us to walk in the path of righteousness by Your Spirit that we may enjoy Your peace.

We thank You, blessed Christ, for giving us Your peace. What a gift. May we be faithful to honor You in response, we pray in Your great name. Amen.

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