

“The Peace of God”  
(Philippians 4:6-7)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We’ve considered that it’s important we do what we can to meet our needs.
  - a. We can’t just kick back and expect that the Lord’s going to give us everything we need.
  - b. We need to work.
    - (i) For our food and covering.
    - (ii) Even to meet certain spiritual needs.
      - (a) Christ does the work that’s necessary to justify us.
      - (b) But we have to work if we’re to grow in sanctification and gain assurance – we need to use the means of grace, we need to obey.
      - (c) Jesus tells us if we pursue sanctification, He will take care of our needs: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).
2. But we were also cautioned by Paul not to let our *necessary care* slip over into *the sin of anxiety*. Because we still have sin in our hearts, we’re always going to be tempted to worry – to be afraid that our physical, and especially our spiritual, needs won’t be met.
  - a. But the Lord commands us not to worry:
    - (i) Fear can hurt us in so many ways: it can keep us from focusing on God’s promises, it can tempt us to compromise, and it can bring God’s discipline.
    - (ii) Anxiety is really taking the things we should be *entrusting to God* out of His hands to meet our needs on our own.
    - (iii) We can add to this the fact that it doesn’t change anything – Jesus tells us that if by worrying we can’t lengthen our lives by even one hour, then why should we worry anything else (Luke 12:25-26)?
    - (iv) Anxiety can’t help us, but it can hurt us.
  - b. Instead, we need to trust the Lord.
    - (i) We need to study His Word to know what He’s promised.
    - (ii) And we need to believe He is faithful – that He will do everything He’s promised.

B. Preview.

1. This evening, we’re going to consider another blessing that grows out of casting our cares on the Lord: the peace of God, “Be anxious for nothing, 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

comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

- a. Paul tells us elsewhere that this is the peace that comes from obeying the Lord, “And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16).
- b. It’s a peace that will *guard* our hearts and minds in Christ, that *surpasses* all understanding, and so a peace that’s very precious.
- c. Peace is one of the greatest blessings that flow from the Gospel: from our justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ, and our sanctification through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

2. God promises to give us His peace if we will cast all our cares on Him and walk with Him in faith. Tonight, let’s consider two things:
  - a. First, that this peace of God is a great blessing.
  - b. And second, the two senses in which we have peace with God.

## II. Sermon.

- A. First, let’s consider how great a blessing this peace is. It’s greater than any other “peace” we might experience, in at least three ways:
  1. First, because it’s the peace *of God*.
    - a. It’s an objective peace with the sovereign Judge of the universe, the One who holds our future – whether for blessing or curse – in His hands. It’s the peace of knowing that *He’s forgiven us and won’t condemn us*.
    - b. It’s the subjective peace that He gives by His Spirit, something beyond what the world knows. Jesus comforted His disciples on the night of His betrayal with these 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 fearful” (John 14:27).
    - c. God’s peace is *real and true* peace.
  2. Second, it’s a peace that surpasses all understanding.
    - a. Not only does the world not understand it; it’s something even *the saints can’t comprehend*.
      - (i) When the queen of the South heard about Solomon’s wisdom, she couldn’t believe it was true and so she came to see for herself.
      - (ii) But when she saw and heard for herself, she was so overwhelmed that she said the half of it wasn’t told her (1 Kings 10:4-7).
      - (iii) This is the way it is with God’s peace: it’s beyond our understanding, especially when we experience it for ourselves.
    - b. Like God’s love, like God Himself, His peace is *incomprehensible*: we can’t understand its height, depth, length or breadth.
  3. Third, it’s also greater in its ability to guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- a. It's like an indestructible fortress that you can run into and be safe – both from the accusations of *others* and those of *your own heart*.
  - b. The peace of God will *fill your heart* with joy and hope to keep it from crumbling under the worst circumstances.
  - c. And it will *rest your mind* so that it won't be torn by anxious thoughts.
  - d. *This is the peace the Lord will give you if you cast your cares on Him.*
- B. Let's consider, second, the two different kinds of peace the Lord gives us in Christ.
1. The first is *objective* peace or the peace that comes from justification.
    - a. When we came into this world, *we were at war with God and He with us*.
      - (i) David writes, "The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity" (Ps. 5:5).
      - (ii) Paul writes, "For if while *we were enemies* we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10).
    - b. But when the Lord *opened our eyes* by His grace through the Gospel, and *we placed our trust* in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the warfare ended, and we were at peace.
      - (i) We are no longer God's enemies, but His friends.
      - (ii) He's no longer angry with us, but loves us; we no longer hate Him and resist His will, now we love Him and submit to His will.
      - (iii) The war is over, and now we have lasting peace.
      - (iv) *This is the peace God will give us if we cast the care of our souls on Christ.*
  2. But there is a second kind of peace, a *subjective* peace – one we experience – that flows *from justification*: the peace of *sanctification*. It's the work of the Holy Spirit in our souls.
    - a. It's something we sense in our consciences.
      - (i) That Jesus has taken away our guilt and with it our fear.
      - (ii) We no longer feel guilty or condemned (Heb. 10:2).
      - (iii) God, by His Spirit, speaks peace to our conscience by assuring us that we are justified – that God's justice is satisfied for our sins and that we're no longer under the sentence of death – and that God now loves us in Christ, fully and eternally.
    - b. We can also sense it in our affections.
      - (i) Our hearts have changed – they're now free from sin.
      - (ii) Now we're free to desire what God desires.
      - (iii) This is the peace that comes from sanctification: the fact that we are free from sin and now the servants of God and righteousness (Rom. 6:19, 22).
      - (iv) *If we give our lives to Christ's care, this is the peace He will work in us.*
    - c. This doesn't mean there won't still be conflict:

- (i) The flesh will still war against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.
  - (ii) As soon as the Spirit puts our souls in order, the conflict begins.
    - (a) But it is a war between two principles, between two affections.
    - (b) And though these principles will always be at war in our hearts in this world, we will have peace knowing we *don't have to submit* to sin and that sin *cannot condemn* us (Rom. 6:14, 22).
    - (c) If we fight against them, using God's armor, we will overcome them little by little.
    - (d) Even during this warfare we can have peace, as long as *we agree with God* that our lusts are sinful and need to be overcome.
- d. It's also possible to lose this peace for a time, such as David when he was overwhelmed with sin in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, but not entirely.
- (i) God will always *uphold us* to one degree or another so that we will *never despair*. This is the peace God gives as part of our *justification: because that justification will never change*.
  - (ii) The peace we have from sanctification will change according to how well we fight against our sins, how strong or weak God's grace/Spirit is in us, how clearly we see Christ's love for us and the truth of our faith, whether God holds our spiritual enemies back or not according to His holy plan for our wellbeing, or gives us the power to overcome them.
  - (iii) The peace of justification – our right standing before God in Christ – will always be perfect: *we have peace with God in Christ*.
  - (iv) But our subjective peace won't be perfect until we arrive in heaven.
- e. Do you have the peace of knowing your sins are forgiven in Christ this evening?
- (i) If so, then thank the Lord for His mercies.
  - (ii) If not, the only way you will is by placing your whole hope of salvation on the finished work of Christ.
  - (iii) Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.
- f. Do you have the peace of God in your mind and heart this evening?
- (i) Do you sense the Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that your sins are forgiven? Do you see in your life that you're no longer the slave of sin?
  - (ii) Again, if you do, then thank the Lord for His mercies.
  - (iii) But if not, then make sure first that you are trusting Christ to save you.
  - (iv) Second, make sure you are diligently using the means God has given you to receive His gracious help.
  - (v) Finally, make sure you are *casting all your cares on Him*, "and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). Amen.