

Philippians 4:1-9 - God's Antidote For Anxiety

4:1-5 Rejoicing in the Hope of the Gospel of Christ

4:6-7 Rejoicing in the Father's Love & Provision

4:8-9 Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's Sanctification

Introduction

- let no one say that God's plan and timing isn't perfect
- He has arranged this passage of scripture for this time and place
- in the midst of a global pandemic, as we are starting our second lockdown
- as you are watching this at home and I'm preaching in an empty sanctuary
- very appropriate today's passage talks about anxiety & God's way to overcome it
- especially during the current uncertain and challenging times of this pandemic
- we are all dealing with anxiety for various reasons on some level or another
- whether it's due to mental, emotional, physical, relational, social or financial stresses
- worries about school or workplace safety, or just the future in general, we're all affected
- back in May, Stats Canada conducted a survey to gauge Canadian pandemic anxiety
- 24% of participants claimed fair or poor mental health, up from 8% two years ago
- 52% said mental health was worse, 41% of these reported moderate, severe anxiety
- 88% of participants said they felt at least one symptom of anxiety in the prior two weeks
- 43% of those financially affected reported symptoms of moderate to severe anxiety
- 64% of youth (15-24) claimed worse mental health, 41% with moderate, severe anxiety
- this is generally where we are at as Canadians, almost everybody is affected
- anxiety is a feeling of apprehension & worry over impending or expected future threat
- as Christians, God doesn't want us to live in worry and anxiety, has a better plan
- the Holy Spirit through Paul gives some commands, principles and promises to help us
- I feel doubly humbled to preach this message, first to try to do this topic justice
- second to admit that this is an area I have and struggle with and I need to hear this too

4:1-5 Rejoicing in the Hope of the Gospel of Christ

1 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

- go back and set the stage, Paul starts with therefore, what's it there for
- end of last chapter, Paul lays out his motivations and convictions in his own walk
- seeks to know Christ & his sufferings, by any means may attain resurrection
- not attained, but presses on, striving for upward call of Christ, this is the mature attitude
- closes by reminding us that our ultimate hope is in heaven, it is our true home
- we are heavenly citizens, we await Christ to come & give us new heavenly bodies
- and to be with him where there's no more tears, pain, disease, or death
- so then Paul exhorts them & us to stand firm in the assurance of our salvation in Christ
- as believer's by faith in Jesus, we have a hope of a blessed life beyond this world
- we can take it to the bank, we have a deposit in heaven, the Holy Spirit is our guarantee
- when we die, God honours Christ's deposit for us & we gain our eternal heavenly reward
- this is a hope the world does not have, we can rejoice in & are to tell others about it
- Paul uses personal, emotional language, loves and longs for them, his beloved
- he really cares deeply for them, he has really poured his life into them, they love him too
- his joy, not ultimate source but a source of joy for him in this life, growing in faith
- his crown, things we pour our lives into for God's kingdom, part of our rewards in heaven
- has great affection for these people, like a father, echoing the heart of God the Father
- like any father, wants to see his kids succeed, especially wants them to get along

2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- addresses a church housekeeping issue between two of the women in the church
- don't know anything about them, had some sort of disagreement, disrupting the church
- maybe starting to get political as tends to happen, people starting to take sides
- whatever the source, Paul wanted to nip it in the bud, not have it harm the church's unity
- only sort of blemish in the letter to an otherwise very healthy and strong church
- uses strong, emotional language again, entreat (beseech, implore, plead, urge)

- put aside their differences, unwillingness to compromise, which is rooted in pride
- we're not always going to agree with everybody, don't have to, are to agree in the Lord
- as believers what we share in common is greater than opinions & minor disagreements
- we have unity through the Holy Spirit, because we share a relationship with Christ
- as Paul said earlier, we are to have the same mind as Jesus, one of humility & love
- next Paul asks another brother in Christ to help these women in this situation
- again don't know much about him, called true companion
- (Greek- syzygos - sü'-zū-gos), yoke-fellow, co-laborer, colleague, fellow worker
- many scholars believe actual proper name, true yoke-fellow in both name and deed
- this brother along with Paul, these two women, another brother Clement, other workers
- laboured together for the sake of the gospel of Christ, shared camaraderie together
- same word as Phil. 1:27, shared work, strive together for the sake of the gospel
- names are in the book of life, reminder of what is truly the more important thing
- the inheritance they have in heaven, through knowing & being known by our Lord
- Luke 10:17-21, [The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"](#) And he said to them, ["I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."](#)
- [In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."](#)
- Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, heal & do miracles empowered by the Holy Spirit
- they got back just totally on fire for the Lord and excited by the miracles they performed
- Jesus, knowing their hearts & where it would lead, brings them back down
- says he saw Satan the highest & most beautiful angel fall from heaven full of sinful pride
- yes, I've called you & given you authority to minister in my Name, even over the spirits
- but don't boast in that, it's exciting to be used by God, but remember it's His work
- instead rejoice that your names are written in heaven by my blood, by my work
- rejoice in my completed work, that you can access by grace through faith

- and by which you have an eternal, blessed inheritance waiting in heaven
- Jesus then calls them little children because honestly that's how we act sometimes
- seems like Paul had this passage in mind, to help re-focus their hearts on the main thing
- it's awesome privilege to serve God, but we can sometimes pridefully take ownership
- think we are doing it all, can make our identity all about our ministry, what we do
- we are all called to serve the Lord, and do works in response to Christ's love & grace
- Paul & Jesus say don't rejoice in what you do, rejoice in what Christ's already done
- to fervently strive to obey & follow Christ here, and rejoice in our inheritance in heaven
- Paul doubles down on this concept

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

- the theme of joy runs through the whole book of Philippians
- Paul now tells us rejoice, and tells us again, making a point, this is important
- what are we to rejoice in, the Lord, he is the source & object of our joy
- what does it mean to rejoice in the Lord & how do we do it
- first, it's a choice we must make, to rejoice no matter what, seek & ask the Lord
- not superficial happiness up & down based on circumstances, but deep and abiding joy
- comes from knowing & reflecting on the character, works & promises of God in his word
- choosing to focus on him, blessing him for who he is, hallowing his name
- remembering all he's done for us, for salvation & the hope we have waiting in heaven
- trusting he loves us and has a good plan for our lives, just giving him all the glory
- not about ignoring life or our problems, burying our heads or pie in the sky
- having this joy underneath it all to help us weather whatever storms of life come
- normally we tend to magnify our problems & minimize the Lord
- when we magnify the Lord our problems tend to seem smaller
- let me tell you this is not easy, real rubber meets the road Christianity
- when the storms crash in, we're dealing with a loss, a bad diagnosis,
- a broken relationship, a lost job, this can seem so impossible,
- I mentioned I have wrestled with anxiety & depression most of my life
- this has always been a struggle, I could mentally assent, emotions overwhelming
- preparing for the message last couple weeks, really sought to rejoice in the Lord

- rather than dwelling on problems, always tried to remember & praise God in some way
- you know what, I really noticed a huge difference, the joy of the Lord was my strength

5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

- verses 4 & 5 linking verses tie together two parts of the passage, conflict & anxiety
- Paul says what our attitude as believers should be in these situations (really always)
- he says we should be known for our reasonableness or gentleness
- other translations, moderation, consideration, graciousness, forbearance, gentle spirit
- some would see this as weakness, more like meekness, strength under control
- not just gentle with those we like or agree with, to be shown to everyone
- hard normally, especially difficult in trying times, when we have conflict or anxiety
- we can be cranky, become harsh & selfish & lash out at others, anybody identify
- this is not the way we are to be (even though I far too often am)
- the Lord is calling us to a better way, a life of the fruit of rejoicing in him
- a life of someone completely trusting in the Lord to fight their battles
- a life of someone giving their anxiety & stress to God, entrusting their cause to Him
- a life of living for his kingdom, knowing the Lord's coming could be any time
- summary; rejoice in the Lord, his work for us, in us & through us & our hope in Heaven
- to really entrust our lives to the Lord, seek to bear the fruit of joy and gentleness

4:5-7 Rejoicing in the Father's Love & Provision

6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Paul now gives the command to not be anxious, not optional for the Christian
- man as a Christian who struggles with anxiety, this can stress me out and I'd feel guilty
- I'd feel like I'm somehow failing as a Christian if I have anxiety or depression
- lately the Lord's been working in my life & revealing to me
- no it's not that I'm failing, but it's just that I need to grow in that area, opportunity
- God is a holy God, with all his commands he sets the bar high
- like 1 Peter 1:16, "be holy, for I am holy", how's that going?, not to be flippant, reality

- God's commands are good, they show His character and standards
- they are an invitation to the better life that he a loving heavenly father desires for us
- they give us something to aim for and strive for in the marathon that is the Christian life
- all throughout our journey, God's grace is sufficient, his love that keeps us going
- fall, repent, try again, fall, repent, try again, fall, repent, try again
- slowly, maybe we fall less in that area, we're quicker to repent, there's growth, progress
- going through a great series with the youth on book of James by pastor Matt Chandler
- one of his big phrases on the Christian life is "it's about progress not perfection"
- we won't be perfect in this life, but are we progressing closer & closer to Jesus
- see this is a special command, has instructions and a promised blessing
- do not be anxious about some things, maybe a list, no, be anxious for nothing
- God cares about every aspect of our lives, he wants us to completely trust in him
- how do we not be anxious, first, pray, pray, pray, commit everything to God in prayer
- we are to go to god with our needs and requests, he wants us to ask him
- pray with the right attitude, not treat God like a vending machine or Santa Claus
- we are to pray with thanksgiving, for past and future answered prayer
- various tools & aides, one is ACTS, Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication
- the important thing is to bring our needs, requests, cares, anxieties & struggles to God
- to entrust them to his perfect care, then hard part, leave them there, not take them back
- when we do this, God promises to bless us with his peace, not just any peace
- supernatural peace, only comes from him, no logical explanation for it, not worldly
- anybody had that, everything falling apart, cry out, ask the Lord for his help & peace
- boom all of a sudden, everything going wrong, have this peace you can't explain
- not only defy understanding, his peace will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus
- resting in the assurance of knowing our lives are in God's more than capable hands
- gives us his peace which will shield from the fiery arrows of doubt & worry from the devil
- summary; God doesn't want us to live in anxiety, but to trust him in everything
- giving all our cares & requests and praise & thanks to him in prayer
- he will give us his supernatural peace that will be a shield for our hearts & minds

4:8-9 Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's Sanctification

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- the last part of the passage & antidote to anxiety is about what we put in our minds
- it doesn't do much good to guard our minds if we're letting the enemy in the back door
- not doing a diatribe against modern media, telling you what you can & can't watch
- leave that between you and the Lord, question is what are we filling our minds with
- saturated with film, TV, internet, social media, books, magazines, much not edifying
- it's really no wonder why there is so much anxiety & depression, look at what we put in
- computing term, Garbage in-Garbage out, don't put in good data, won't get good result
- verses are a good gauge for us to stop and consider what we are putting in our minds
- are we filling our minds with things that are mostly true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and praiseworthy, if not maybe we need to rethink our habits
- are we being transformed by the renewing of our minds, or being conformed to the world
- I know none of us like to be convicted about what we watch read & listen to
- each of us are in different places of conviction, but are we progressing closer to this
- personally I know there are things I had no problem with 10 years ago, now can't watch
- not anybody telling me, just the Holy Spirit gently convicting & guiding & sanctifying
- sometimes need a list like this, for God's word to shine on our hearts
- reveal our thoughts and attitudes, so God can do his spiritual surgery on us
- this list is God again in his love & care knowing and wanting what's best for us
- not condemnation but an upward call in Christ Jesus
- as Paul follows Christ, says hey follow me over here, this is a better way for you to go
- in conclusion, God doesn't want us to live in anxiety, has an antidote, a better way
- 1). Rejoice in the Lord, Christ's work on the cross & our hope in heaven, focus on that
- 2). Don't live in anxiety, give all to God in prayer, trust him, he'll give his shielding peace
- 3). Watch what we put in our minds, we are to seek what is good, pure & edifying