



Where is Your Faith?

Text: Mark 4: 35-41

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1. Reflect on the past day, week, and month.
 - a. How is your stress level? What have been your stress points when you think through your past day, week, and month?
 - b. In what way has your stress been caused by a lack of or loss of control?
 - c. What is your typical response to stress – Do you “escape”? Bury yourself in work or a hobby? Internalize it? Explode?
 - d. To what degree do you identify with being a “control freak” or one who attempts to control your circumstances/how things will play out?
 - e. Do you believe that you must be in control? What does a sense of control provide you?
 - f. From the message, what did you find most encouraging?
2. Read Philippians 4:6-9. (See Study Deeper for more)
 - a. Do you view stress as optional or inevitable?
 - b. When was the last time you went straight to God in a moment of stress?
 - c. What role does being thankful play in resolving stress in our personal lives?
 - d. What empowers Christ followers to be able to rejoice, even when stressed and in trials?
 - e. How can our peace and joy in the middle of the storm impact those around us?
 - f. Who are believers in your life or that you know of who have experience joy and peace in stress and pain? How did that impact you?
3. Read Jeremiah 17:5-9.
 - a. What does Jeremiah say is inevitable for all who rely on themselves?
 - b. What’s revealed about our hearts?
 - c. On the other hand, what’s promised for the person who trusts the Lord?
 - d. How can God’s response in verse 10 (that He knows our hearts and minds) give us hope?
4. Read 1 Peter 5:6-7. Peter commands us to cast our anxiety on God, because he cares for us.
 - a. How are anxiety and pride related? Conversely, how are humility and peace related?

- b. How does your view of God need to transform for you to be able to more fully cast your anxieties upon him?
- c. How do you put these instructions into practice? Have you ever tried to cast your anxiety on God? If so, how was that experience? Did you receive peace or not? If you did, would you be willing to share the steps you took (practically speaking)?

Challenge: Read Isaiah 43:1-7. How many promises from God can you count in this passage? Take two of these promises and share them with the group. Memorize them and pray through them this week.

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for not despising our weaknesses; and for never showing us disgust and wondering when we're going to finally "get it". Thank you for always being compassionate, forbearing, and patient with us. For there are some days, circumstances, and stories in life that intensify our vulnerability and ramp up our stress. This portion of your Word brings the encouragement we need when we're feeling the most stress.

Father, by your Holy Spirit, please give us the same centering gift you gave John. In our heart of hearts, help us be certain that the throne of heaven is presently occupied by you—our mighty and merciful Abba, Father. Sovereignty is happening all the time. Nothing takes you by surprise and nothing catches you off guard.

You haven't promised us satisfying explanations for everything that happens in life, but you have promised us that you are always at work in all things, for your glory and for our good. Because of your gift of Jesus, to us and for us, we have every reason to trust you completely.

So we cast our cares on you, Father; we bring you our insufficiency, our fears, and our stress. In our restlessness, grant us grace to be still and to know you are God. In our demandingness, grant us peace and freedom, to accept your timetable and your ways. In our waiting, grant us a very real sense of your presence and goodness. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' strong and loving name.

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/scottysmith/2015/01/07/a-prayer-for-times-when-youre-feeling-a-little-or-a-lot-of-stress/>

STUDY DEEPER

Philippians 4:6-9, True Peace in Your Life

Philippians 4:6–9, "Be anxious for nothing, 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 comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

Peace of mind is something that we all want. We all want to be able to rest, to not have to worry, to feel free to enjoy life, family, friends, work, church, hobbies, entertainment, etc. We want to be able to enjoy ourselves and not be burdened down with worries that rob us of vigor, life, and purpose.

Sometimes when we can't find peace of mind, we get depressed. We often get angry and lash out at God or someone else near to you.

What do you do to get peace? I mean real peace in your life. Where do you start? What do you do?

Well, the best place to start is with God.

Turn with me to Philippians 4:6-9.

1. God wants you to have true peace by having you not worry - about anything (act of thinking)

- a. Worry is sin. It means you are not trusting in God.
- b. God says in verse 6, "Do not be anxious about anything." That means don't worry. The word for "anxious" in the Greek here means to be troubled with cares.
- c. He hasn't given you that command without you being able to carry it out. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth your hand" (Mark 3:5) But the man could not -- yet He obeyed and did it!
- d. Because the Holy Spirit is in you, you can live by faith, and not worry... no matter what happens. Because the Spirit empowers you to be faithful, to trust, to yield to the Lord's will.
- e. With the Spirit, you can trust God beyond your ability to know what will happen in your life.
- f. Matthew 6:25,27,31-34 ~ 25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- g. Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety (same word) on him because he cares for you. (NIV)
- h. John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. (NIV)
- i. God doesn't want you to worry because worry means you do not trust God, that you are not taking Him fully at His word. God has been providing for you all along - look at the cross.

2. God wants you to have true peace by praying - about everything. (act of doing)

- a. v. 6 "But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- b. All things in your life are of concern to God. The big and the small: where to move, who to marry, what job to get, even your hobbies, and leisure times.
- c. The peace that God gives you will guard your minds.
- d. The peace that God gives you will strengthen you.
- e. Because of the cross, you have access to the throne of God. Therefore, it says "with thanksgiving," because of the cross, the proof of God's faithfulness
- f. In the presence of God, there is peace.
- g. Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
- h. Psalm 16:11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.
- i. Practice the presence of God - pray! In prayer, you are transformed.
- j. By praying you will intern want to think about holy things. That is why... (next point)

3. God wants you to have true peace by meditating on what is holy. (act of thinking)

- a. Your minds have been set free from slavery to sin. Romans 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; (NIV)
- b. God wants you to fill your heart with what is good. 1.Phil. 4:8, "whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent worthy of praise. Let your mind dwell on these things." (NASB)
- c. God wants you to think, to meditate on truth, purity, and excellence. 1.Psalm 119:78 "...I will meditate on your precepts."
- d. The precepts of God, the Word of God, is truth, purity, and excellence.
- e. Meditate on the Word of God so that you might be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

4. God wants you to have true peace by putting into practice what you have learned. (act of doing)

- a. He wants you to.... trust Him for everything. Philippians 4:6a "Don't be anxious for anything."
- b. Pray to Him for anything. Philippians 4:6b "but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (NIV)

- c. Meditate on what is holy. Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things. (NIV)

Conclusion

These things are written to you so that the God of peace will be with you. Not simply peace... but the God of peace will be with you. Ultimately this is about God dwelling with you. He wants you to be holy, pure, right. Will you trust Him and not worry? Will you pray about everything in your life? Will you meditate on the Word of God? And finally, will you practice, will you do, what God calls you to do?

<https://carm.org/christianity/sermons/philippians-46-9-true-peace-your-life>