

Rejoice in the Lord always! Meditating on Philippians

Never Give Up the Christian Life, Part 2

Philippians 4:5b-9

Faith Church of Linden

By Daniel Patz on November 9, 2025

The following notes are a draft of my sermon. These are not my pulpit notes or a manuscript I use to preach with but something I type up before writing out my “pulpit notes”. I hope they are helpful.

Philippians 4:5b–9 (ESV) *Stand Firm in the Peace of God*

Philippians 4:5b-9 ESV The Lord is at hand; (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. (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.

We return to Paul’s prison letter—written **for the sake of Christ and His Gospel**—to the beloved church in Philippi.

Last week: **“Stand firm thus in the Lord”** (v. 1). **Never give up the Christian life.** We saw three ways to stand firm:

1. **Agree in the Lord** (vv. 2–3)
2. **Rejoice in the Lord** (v. 4)
3. **Be Known in the Lord** (v. 5)

This week: **verses 6–9**. The hinge: **“The Lord is at hand”** (v. 5). He is near—and that nearness changes everything. The Lord is at hand in that we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to become like His glorious body. The Lord is near—He is present, with us, as one who holds us accountable and gives us help.

What ties today’s passage together is **God’s peace**:

- **The peace of God** (v. 7) – an inner contentment supplied by Him.
- **The God of peace** (v. 9) – who walks with His people.

This peace is not fragile optimism. It is **supernatural, unshakable, Christ-anchored**—the fortress that lets you **never give up**.

Theological Foundations of This Passage

Before we look at the three commands, we have some theological truths that are foundational to what we are called to in this passage.

1. **The Lord is near** – always present, never absent; and He **will return** (v. 5).
2. **God is sovereign and merciful** – He rules, and He loves.
3. **The whole world belongs to Him** – so we view everything through His lens (v. 8).
4. **Full obedience flows from the Gospel** – the message Paul **preached, lived, and delivered** (v. 9).

These are not add-ons. They are the **ground** on which we stand firm.

This morning, three more resolves to stand firm—three ways to live in the peace of God:

1. Pray instead of worrying (v. 6)
2. Think on what is true (v. 8)
3. Practice what you have learned (v. 9)

1. Pray Instead of Worrying (v. 6)

Philippians 4:6–7 (ESV) *Do not be anxious about anything, 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 understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Anxiety defined:

“The result of an active imagination of possible dangers that may come... a repetitious cycle of trying—and failing—to secure the future in your own mind.” The fuel? **The internal demand to know in advance that everything will be fine.**

Anxiety is a strangling fear that grips and enslaves us. It is a sin to give-in to anxiety because we are commanded not to be anxious. We are told to stop being anxious and instead cast your cares upon the Lord with constant desperation. This is the life of faith—the walk of child-like trust. When we allow anxiety to prevail and sour our spirits, we say in a sense that God is not big enough to tackle our problems or that he is not

loving enough to care. We say that God is not near to us—but to those who are his children, has He not promised to neither leave them nor forsake them? Anxiety is a condition of the heart; the heart of inadequate faith—unbelief. It is also an attitude that gives rise to other sinful behaviors.

- Anxiety to finances can lead to greed, hoarding, or theft.
- Anxiety about succeeding in a task will often lead to irritability, abruptness and impatience.
- Anxiety about relationships can lead to an indifferent, withdrawn, selfish spirit.
- Anxiety about what others think about you can lead to dishonesty, bitterness, etc.

Anxiety is faithlessness and it bears forth bitter fruit.

Jesus said the same: Matthew 6:25–34 – “*Do not be anxious... Look at the birds... Consider the lilies... Are you not of more value than they?*” Anxiety forgets God’s fatherly care.

Paul’s antidote: Pray - I want to point out from this passage three ways to fight anxiety through prayer.

1. We fight anxiety by going to God with our DESIRES.

“with prayer and supplications... let your requests be known to God...”

○ **Cast your cares upon Him**

Psalms 55:22 (ESV) *Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*

1 Peter 5:7 (ESV) *casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

- When George Mueller was asked how he could be so calm in the middle of a hectic day with so many uncertainties in the orphanage, he answered something like, “I rolled sixty things onto the Lord this morning.”
- **God is not too busy to hear our requests**
- **We need to ask Him for things and we need to pour out our desires to Him**—we declare our total dependence on him
- **Luke 12:30** – If God knows our needs, why do we need to bring them to Him.
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2. We fight anxiety by going to God with EVERYTHING

“but in everything...” - In contrast to being anxious about nothing

The point is to go to him with all cares at all times – everything!

- Grace on Monday – “When I am afraid...”
- We must pray without ceasing - 1 Thess. 5
- Widow and judge parable Luke 18 – persistently
- **We need to breathe the air of prayer: prayer is our lifeblood**
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3. We fight anxiety by going to God with THANKSGIVING

“with prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving...”

- Spurgeon: Prayer perfumed with praise
- **Remember that Paul is in prison here**
- **Illustration:** the grateful vs. the ingrate – there is a difference between someone who is always nagging with an annoying selfishness and one who is grateful
- In everything, give thanks - 1 Thess. 5
- **Why give thanks?**
 - Not because the circumstances always change
 - For salvation
 - Thankful to God for his promises – this leads us to the meditation on his promises; thankfulness is the fruit of faith.
- The way to fight the unbelief of anxiety is to cling to the promises in prayer

We will always be plagued with cares and worries so we always need to be in prayer. When we resign ourselves to this lowly but honored position of constant dependence we find that it is a blessing and not a curse. The plagues of cares and worries become to us the necessary cattle prods nudging us flee to the safe pasture of our caring and wise shepherd. Plagues they no longer appear for they are like faithful friends that drive us to the one who transforms the storm into the peaceful garden of fellowship with Jesus.

Beautiful irony: God knows what you need before you ask (Matt 6:8) — Yet He says, “**Ask Me.**” Why? **He likes to be asked.**

C.S. Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew* (Chapter 13): Digory had just complained that Aslan hadn’t provided food for their journey. Fledge, the winged horse, replied: “**He likes to be asked.**”

- **The Psalms teach us to lament this way**—pour out, trust, give thanks.

Result? The peace of God – an inner, gracious frame of spirit that freely submits and delights in God’s wise, fatherly care (Jeremiah Burroughs). It guards your heart and mind like a sentinel in Christ Jesus.

Resolve: *When worry knocks, let prayer—and thanksgiving—answer the door.*

2. Think on What Is True (v. 8)

Philippians 4:8 (ESV) *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.*

- **Paul doesn't say:** "Stop thinking bad thoughts." He says: "**Fill your mind with what is true.**" You starve the lie by feasting on Christ.
- **Eight filters** – all met in **Jesus**:
 - He is the **Truth** (John 14:6)
 - He is **honorable, just, pure, lovely**
 - He is **excellence and praise incarnate**
- **Jesus modeled this:**

"Look at the birds... consider the lilies..." He trained His disciples to see the world through God's sovereign, merciful eyes.

- **Because the whole world belongs to Him, we think His thoughts after Him.**

That which our mind should dwell on includes God, His Word, and the world – through the lenses of the first two.

Resolve: *Don't fight anxiety with empty space. Fill your mind with Christ—the Truth who sets you free.*

3. Practice What You Have Learned (v. 9)

Philippians 4:9 (ESV) *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

- **Paul is not boasting.** He is **witnessing**: "You've seen the Gospel **lived** in me—now **live it.**"
- **Four channels of truth**:
 1. **Learned** (teaching)
 2. **Received** (tradition)
 3. **Heard** (preaching)
 4. **Seen** (example — Paul in chains, still rejoicing)
- **"Practice"** do habitually, repeatedly. Not a moment. A **life**.
- **This is Christian contentment in action** –

“A sweet, inward, gracious frame of spirit which freely submits to and delights in God’s wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.” — **Jeremiah Burroughs**, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*

- **This is why we can:**
 - **Agree in the Lord** (last week)
 - **Rejoice always**
 - **Pray instead of worry**
 - **Think rightly**
 - **Live the Gospel**

Paul **suffered**—shipwrecks, beatings, prison—yet **practiced peace**. He says: “**Imitate me as I imitate Christ.**”

Promise? The God of peace Himself will be with you. Not just peace *from* God. The **God of peace** — walking with you, in you, through you.

Resolve: *Don’t just hear the Gospel. Live it. Every day. In every trial.*

CONCLUSION: Stand Firm in the Peace of God

Last Week (Part 1)

Agree in the Lord

Rejoice in the Lord

Be Known in the Lord

This Week (Part 2)

Pray instead of worrying

Think on what is true

Practice what you have learned

All six resolves rest on one truth: **The Lord is at hand/The Lord is Near.**

- He is **near** to hear your prayer.
- He is **near** to renew your mind.
- He is **near** to empower your obedience.
- He is **near** to give **contentment** — the theme we’ll unpack **next week**.

Christian contentment is not passive resignation. It is **active trust** in a **sovereign, merciful Father** who says:

Never give up the Christian life—because:

- **The peace of God** guards you.
- **The God of peace** goes with you.
- **The Lord is at hand**—now, and returning.

Do you know this peace? It is not earned. It is **received** — in Christ alone. If you are **in Him**, stand firm. If you are **not**, come today. The door is open. **He likes to be asked.**