



**One of the Great Blessings of the Kingdom:
The Peace of God**
Sept 10, 2017

A REVIEW AND SOME “WHAT IFS” THAT MAKE A POINT:

1. I believe we have been tricked. If we are being brutally honest in self-examination, many of us must admit this: that something precious in our kingdom life is missing.
2. I believe for the last several decades, our enemy has worked hard to steal this precious thing from us: our **Peace**.
3. The apostles and early disciples had a perspective that we need now. Recall that their lives weren't all that easy:
 - Philip: Crucified, Phrygia, A.D. 54
 - Matthew: Beheaded, Ethiopia, A.D. 60
 - Barnabas: Burned to death, Cyprus, A.D. 64
 - Mark: Dragged to death, Cyprus, A.D. 64
 - James (the Less): Clubbed to death, Jerusalem, A.D. 66
 - Paul: Beheaded, Rome, A.D. 66
 - Peter: Crucified, Rome, A.D. 69
 - Andrew: Crucified, Achaia, A.D. 70
 - Thomas: Speared to death, Calamina, A.D. 70
 - Luke: Hanged, Athens, A.D. 93
4. If we are honest, we'd admit that the things that steal our peace and contentment are mostly tied to the **world**. The cares of this world and the desire for the riches of this life can conspire to keep us discontent. (Mark 4:19)
 - What if I get cancer?
 - What if I don't save enough?
 - What if I don't achieve my dream or destiny or purpose?
 - What if they never forgive me?
 - What are they thinking about me?
 - What if the hurricane destroys my house?
 - What if the stock market crashes?
 - What if no one ever recognizes my talents?
 - What if someone finds out about my sin?
 - What if I never buy that vacation home?
 - What if I never marry and have the white picket fence and 2.5 children?
 - What if I'm never treated fairly? What if my persecutors never face justice?
5. Several years ago, I began to wonder if our relentless pursuit of a “**better life**” (usually defined by temporary blessings) causes more frustration than it cures. Why? Because once many are “there” it still doesn't seem to truly satisfy. Despite the tons of books, music, and seminars designed to help the Christian feel more fulfilled, we never seem to be.

So Let's Get Some Help from the Scriptures! Today's Text: Php 4:4-9

INITIAL THOUGHTS ON THESE ENCOURAGING VERSES:

- I really love this letter because the encouragement isn't purely **circumstantial**; Paul's words demonstrate the **eternal** perspective we need!
- He sums up what I call a "Jesus is Enough" mindset with the unforgettable statement early in this letter: **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."** (Php 1:21)
- Paul's "Jesus is Enough" heart is so steadfast, it even shifted his perspective on **loss!** (Php 3:7-11)
- Saints, THIS is the mindset that releases biblical faith and Kingdom **Joy**. THIS is where peace comes from! As long as you hold on to this life, you'll lose it; but if you give up this life for His sake, you'll find it! (Matt 16:24-26)

THE PEACE OF GOD FROM THE TEXT:

(v4) - First, know that Christians are commanded to perpetually rejoice. This of course is wonderful, but nearly impossible without some Kingdom **intentionality**. The believer must **keep** his/her focus on our LORD, what He has done, what He promised, and our future with Him if joy is to be maintained!

(v5) - Second, know that your example is important; others are watching! A key to peace and joy is given in this short verse: "The Lord is at hand." Saints, we must live as if we might enter **eternity** at any moment!

(v6) - From prison, Paul, via the Holy Spirit, commands that believers be not **anxious**. Instead of worry and anxiety (regardless of the situation) we are to pour out our hearts to God in prayer! He even gives us a checklist!

(v7) - Please note that Paul never says God will do everything we prayed for. Perhaps **peace comes from the petitions** themselves?

(v8) - "Here's what to fill your mind and heart with if you want peace" says Paul. *"Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."* (NLT)

(v9) - Finally, please know that the *peace of God* is given to those with **obedient** hearts. Truth: there will be little peace for the **rebellious**.

THE GREAT KINGDOM BLESSING OF PEACE!

I submit this great blessing of the Kingdom is missing from too many hearts, and the enemy loves it. But imagine having the sort of faith and perspective that allows you to have tranquility and serenity in the midst of storms. Imagine holding on to this life a bit more loosely (maybe A LOT more loosely), to possessions like they are temporary, and to injury and slights like they are blessings! Imagine walking and living with more contentment, and experiencing more true joy!

I believe this is part of our **inheritance** from our Master and King, Jesus. He declared:

- **Joh 14:26-27** *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*
- **Joh 16:33** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Amen LORD, and thank You.