

God's Antidote For Anxiety

Philippians 4

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I want you to notice, in verse 6, the key to this whole section. Paul says, "Be anxious for nothing." So my question to you is, "Are you anxious about anything?" Maybe you say, "I'm anxious about everything." Maybe there is nothing that you aren't anxious about or fearful about or worried about. So Paul wants us to know that God is telling us here not to be anxious. And this is what we call an "imperative"; it's a command and not an option. God is actually commanding us, "Don't worry. Don't be anxious."

I looked up the word "anxiety" in the dictionary. The definition is "a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease." And certainly at a time like this, when we're dealing with this coronavirus pandemic, with all the people who are out of work, with the unemployment rate going up, people are worried about how they're going to pay their mortgage or rent, how they're going to buy groceries for their family, there is so much anxiety and fear. But if you are a child of God, if you belong to Jesus Christ and you can say God is your Father in heaven, who you trust, you don't need to be anxious, and you don't need to be worried. God tells us not to worry or be anxious.

But the question is, "How?" How can we come to a place where, like he says in verse 6, we can "be anxious for nothing"? God has an antidote for anxiety. It has four ingredients. As you look at this whole chapter, there are four things that come into our lives that help us to win over worry and anxiety. The first is God's presence, in verses 1-5. Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved." Notice that statement.

Then Paul says, "I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind..."—here's the same phrase again—"...in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. Rejoice in the Lord always." So we have "stand fast in the Lord...be of the same mind in the Lord...rejoice in the Lord," and then in verse 4, we have, "Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."

The key phrase in this entire section is in verse 5: "The Lord is at hand." I believe that means that the Lord is with us, that the Lord is present. Some think Paul is referring to the coming of the Lord, but in the context, it would seem that Paul is using the statement to describe the presence of the Lord. There are some modern translations that rightfully render it that way. The NASB renders it, "The Lord is near." So I believe Paul is talking not about the coming of the Lord but about the nearness of the Lord.

If there is anything we need right now, it is the assurance and the sense of God's presence. I love the song, "I need Thee every hour," because we do need Him every moment of every hour of every day. And we need a sense of His presence.

Robert G. Gromacki said, "The presence or absence of inner peace will be in direct proportion to one's awareness of the presence of Christ." I like that. To the degree that you are aware that God is with you, and you sense His presence, is the degree to which you will experience God's peace and a lack of worry or anxiety.

Now there are three ways that practicing the presence of God will help us. I like that concept of practicing the presence of God. Sometimes we just blast through our days, and we don't really see God in everything; we don't sense God everywhere. We don't hear God speaking to our hearts, and we're not communing with Him. When the Bible says, "Pray without ceasing," it indicates that we're talking to God continually. It doesn't mean the act of prayer; we're not on our knees, folding our hands, closing our eyes and bowing our head, but we're constantly talking to God in our minds, in our thoughts and in our hearts. We're staying in fellowship with Him.

But in the text, I want you to note these three things that will strengthen or help us to sense the presence of God. Number one, in verse 1, we will be able to "stand fast in the Lord." When we have a sense of God's presence in our lives, it helps us to "stand fast in the Lord." In verse 1, Paul is writing to the believers in Philippi. At the time Paul was writing this, he was under house arrest in Rome.

Paul used endearing terms. I thought about our absence from one another right now as a church, and how precious these terms are for one another in the body of Christ. Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved..." That idea of "beloved" reminds us that God loves us, and we love one another, or that you're loved by me and we're loved by God. He continues, "...and longed-for brethren..."—certainly we long for one another during this time of absence—"...my joy and crown..."

No doubt when Paul gets to heaven, he realizes that those he led to Christ, disciplined in Christ and mentored in the Lord will be his crown. The word used is "stephanos" or "victor's crown." It's not a "diadem," which is a king's crown. It's a reward for faithful, Christian service. I believe that every one of us who share the Gospel, who lead people to Christ, who pray for souls, who participate in the kingdom of God and in advancing His work on earth are going to share in that crown, when we get to heaven, with those who have come to Christ through our service and our faithfulness.

Then he said, "So stand fast in the Lord..."—then he comes back to this endearing term—"...beloved." Paul loved God's people. Paul had a care for God's people. Paul is not only a missionary and an evangelist, but Paul was also a pastor. He had a pastor's heart. In this verse, he said "beloved" twice. Then he tells them to "stand fast in the Lord." When God's presence is in our heart and life, it strengthens us. It gives us courage to stand for the Lord in light of all the opposition and opposing forces that may come against us.

The second thing that the presence of God will do for us is that it helps us to be of the same mind in the Lord, verses 2-3. He says, "I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche." These are

women's names. The name Euodia means "sweet fragrance," and the name "Syntyche" means "fortunate." These are two women in the church, and this is the only place in Philippians where there is an indication that something is going wrong.

In chapter 3, we saw that some Judaizers were influencing some of the believers, and this is division among the brethren. Paul started chapter 4, verse 1, with some endearing terms, but then he deals with this issue. This issue came to Paul's attention, because one of the members of the church, Epaphroditus, who had brought the offering to Paul and would take the letter of Philippians back to the church, had reported to Paul that there were two women who weren't getting along. They weren't seeing eye to eye.

Now we don't know what the problem was. Some think it was a doctrinal issue, but more likely, it was a personal issue. It is sad in the body of Christ when we let personal preferences and petty things divide us as brothers and sisters in Christ. We maybe let some slight or some wrong that someone has done against us upset us, rather than committing it to God, loving that person, giving them the benefit of the doubt, forgiving them or going to them honestly and asking, "Is there some problem between us?" We let it fester and build, and it causes division.

That's not what God wants in His church. He wants us to love one another. Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." So these women were not getting along, even though their names meant "sweet fragrance" and "fortunate." It was unfortunate that they were putting out a bad odor and not getting along in the church in Philippi. So in verse 2, Paul wanted them "to be of the same mind in the Lord."

So, number one, the presence of God help us to "stand fast in the Lord," and number two, it helps us "to be of the same mind in the Lord." When I sense God's presence in my life, I'm going to love you, forgive you, seek to reconcile with you and to defer to you. Remember the theme in Philippians 2 was "joy in spite of people," having a submissive mind. As I humble myself, consider your interests more important than mine and have the mind of Christ, I want to give in order to serve others.

Paul says he wants them to "help these women who labored with me in the Gospel..."—the women who were serving alongside Paul—"...whose names are in the Book of Life." All of God's people have their names written in the "Book of Life," which means that you are a child of God. So we stand fast in the Lord and have the same mind, attitude or outlook as the Lord.

The third thing the presence of God brings us is that we rejoice in the Lord, verses 4-5. "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." Our joy, that we see all through Philippians, is not in our circumstances. We would love to see our circumstances change, but we are not in control of our circumstances. But we know who is. God is. I struggle just as much as you do. I get discouraged and have doubts and fears, worry about the church and the future of America, about our children and grandchildren. But I need to turn to the Lord and sense that He is with me. He hasn't abandoned me or forsaken me. In light of the presence of the Lord, I know that I

can stand fast. I can work together with others to serve the Lord. I can rejoice not for my circumstances, but I can rejoice in the Lord.

The writer of Hebrews 13:5-6 says that Jesus spoke these words: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” So he first says that Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us. This is the only place in the Bible where we have this statement from the Lord. Then as a result, we can boldly say that “the Lord is my helper; I will not fear” what man can do to me.

When Jesus was going to ascend back to the Father and He gave His disciples the great commission, in Matthew 28:20-21, He said, “Go...and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” So we have a sense of God's presence, and we actually know that, because we have His promise that He is with us. Even when you can't see Him, even when you can't feel Him, even when you're not hearing Him, God is there; He's promised never to leave us nor forsake us. He'll give us strength.

The second ingredient in God's antidote for anxiety is God's peace, verses 6-9. So we have the presence of God, and we have the peace of God. Paul says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and...”—the result will be that—“...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Now, again, the key is in verse 7. He said, verses 6-7, “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 understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

I want you to notice verse 7, which is the key, “the peace of God.” This is not what the Bible calls “peace with God.” Both are described in the Bible. In Romans 5:1, Paul says that “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” because we have been justified by faith. That's our salvation. The peace of God comes, once you are saved, when you walk in faith and trust, living by His Word and practicing His presence. That is your sanctification. We talked about that last time; that we are saved and then we are sanctified. So the peace with God is salvation, and the peace of God is my sanctification. Sanctification is something that is experiential, that is progressive. It is something that different Christians have to different degrees, based on their fellowship and in their faith and trust in the Lord. D.L. Moody used to say, “A little faith will get your soul to heaven, but a lot of faith will bring heaven to your soul.” If you trust the Lord, you won't have to be worried or fearful.

The second thing about this peace, in verse 7, it is the peace that passes understanding. In other words, it'll blow your mind. It's beyond your comprehension. You'll be going through a time of trouble, storm, difficulty or adversity. Maybe you've gotten sick and you're in the hospital. Maybe someone you know and love is sick and in the hospital. Maybe you've lost a job. But you have a peace through it. And the world doesn't understand or comprehend that. They don't understand why you're not freaking out. It's because God has given you His peace "which surpasses all understanding."

Notice the third thing about this peace: it is a peace that protects us. This is the important point. Verse 7 says, "The peace of God...will guard..."—or "garrison"—"...your hearts and minds." "Guard" is a military term; it will form a citadel, a protection, a wall around us. God's peace forms a wall of protection. When these thoughts like arrows come to assail us, God's protection of peace watches over us. So His peace guards or protects us.

God's peace protects two things: our hearts and our minds. Our hearts mean our emotions, and our minds mean our thoughts. How our emotions like to play games with us! At a time like this, you're up one day and down the next. You're feeling really good, and then you turn the news on and you feel bad. When we're looking at earthly things, our minds and thoughts go rampant and crazy. We need to guard our minds. We need to mine our minds and thoughts.

My advice is to turn the news off and put praise music on in the house. You feel really bad when you think about things, but then you

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

Look full in His wonderful face,

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,

In the light of His glory and grace."

So we find out that our hearts are calmed.

The fourth thing about this peace is that it comes to us "through Christ Jesus," verse 7. It doesn't come in a bottle. It doesn't come in a pill. It's better than a tranquilizer. It's the Holy Spirit resident in our hearts, which gives us "the peace of God."

God's not freaking out right now. God's not biting His fingernails in heaven, worried about what is going to happen in the world. God is in complete control.

The peace of God can fill our hearts and our minds, but it all comes to us "through Christ Jesus." Jesus said to us in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." He gives a peace unlike the world gives. He says, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

How does this peace come to us as individuals? There are three ways that God's peace can be appropriated by us, as God's people. Number one, we need to pray right, verse 6. The Living Bible says, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank Him for His answers." This is perhaps one of the most important steps that we, as God's people, can take during a critical time like this. We need to not worry, but pray; not fret, but commit our way to the Lord.

So when we are at peace with God, we appropriate that through prayer. Not just prayer, but it is prayer about "everything," verse 6. We should pray about big things, little things, in-the-middle things; all things should lead us to pray to God. This is when we are talking to God daily. "Lord, help me. Lord, guide me. Lord, I love You. Lord, I thank you."

I want to break down for you the four ways to pray, as a child of God, in verse 6, if we want to have peace. First, we should pray with adoration. The word "prayer" is a unique word in the Greek. It is used as a general word for worship, praise and adoration. It's the word for prayer that's used for "the act of worship and service to God."

Remember that Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father, who art in heaven." So we're talking to God, we recognize that He is in heaven, and then Jesus went on to say, "Hallowed be Thy name." That's worship and praise. When we pray, we should start our prayer with worship and adoration.

Then, secondly, we move to supplication. "Supplicate" means "to ask earnestly and humbly." It means I'm asking with earnestness and humility. James says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

And we not only pray with adoration and supplication, thirdly; we pray with appreciation. Verse 6 says, "with thanksgiving." This is something we often forget. I know I often forget to do that. When we are praying, we should thank God for the answers to prayer. We should also thank God for what we have—my house, my wife, my husband, my children, my health, for strength. Take the time to stop and give Him thanksgiving, appreciation.

Fourthly, we are to pray with petition. Adoration, supplication, appreciation and petition, verse 6. "Let your requests be made known to God." The Bible says, "You have not, because you ask not." Sometimes we complain, because we don't have something, but maybe you never stopped to ask God for that something. And we never thanked Him for what He has already given us; we're not counting our blessings. So ask Him; lay out your petitions. Again, in the pattern of the Lord's prayer, He not only said, "Hallowed be Thy name," but He said, "Give us this day our daily bread." So there is nothing wrong with asking God to meet your physical and financial needs.

Proper prayer is one of the best ways to win over worry. 1 Peter 5:7 says, "...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." God cares for us.

Secondly, if we're going to have God's peace, we need to think right. Verse 8 says, "Finally,

brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” We need to think about what we’re thinking about. We need to have our minds brought into subjection to Christ. Mine our minds. Proverb 23:7 says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

So we have to guard our thought life. Sometimes we’ll catch ourselves and say, “Why am I thinking about that? Why am I meditating on that? Why am I dwelling on that?” We need to be like the blessed man of Psalm 1:2: “In His law he meditates day and night.”

And it’s interesting what we are to think about. He tells us what we are to think about. It’s consistent with the Bible. It’s “true...noble...just...pure...lovely...of good report...praiseworthy.” And it’s also consistent with Jesus Christ, who is found in the Bible, on every page of the Bible. So I read God’s Word, and I meditate on God’s Word. Then I’m like that blessed man of Psalm 1. It gets me focused on the living Word, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In Romans 12:2, it says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” So God wants your mind to be renewed, and one of the best ways for your mind to be renewed is in the Bible, God’s Word. Open the Scriptures. Open the Book and take a look. Find Christ there.

I like what Charles Edmund said. He said, “The moral standards of Christianity are true, because they all correspond to the divine ideal revealed in Christ. They trace back to the very nature of God.” So when I read God’s Word and meditate on it, I’m doing what Paul says in Philippians 4:8: I’m thinking about what is “true...noble...just...pure...lovely...of good report ... praiseworthy.”

There is a third thing we need to do if we are to have God’s peace, in verse 9. We need to live right. “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” So we need to pray right, think right and live right. You cannot experience the peace of God in your heart and mind if there is sin in your life. You can’t have God’s peace and an awareness of His presence if you are sinning and being disobedient.

In verse 9, Paul uses himself as an example to the Philippians. They “learned... received... heard...and saw” things from Paul. They didn’t just hear what Paul said, but Paul’s life was an example to them. Paul says, “These do.” You don’t just hear and see; you must do. Then what happens is that “The God of peace will be with you.” It’s interesting that in verse 7, we have “the peace of God,” and in verse 9, we have “the God of peace.” We can have “the peace of God,” because He is “the God of peace.” But this comes through obedience to God’s Word. In James 1:22, it says, “Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only.”

You may have been listening to all these online broadcasts, the morning and evening devotions, the archived sermons and even listening to other preachers, but are you practicing the Word? Are you just underlining verses and taking notes, or are you putting into practice what you’ve

learned? You must be a doer. If you just hear the Word, you're "like a man observing his natural face in a mirror...goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was." The Bible is like a mirror; it shows us our need—our sin, our shortcomings—and then we come to God, and in His grace and mercy, He washes us clean and by His Spirit, He transforms us into the image of Christ.

So we have God's presence and God's peace. Now the third ingredient in this antidote is God's power, verses 10-13. Paul starts to get very personal as he closes out this letter. Paul says, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly..." He uses that common refrain "rejoice in the Lord." Not just rejoice in the Lord, but "rejoice in the Lord greatly." Paul is saying this while in chains. You talk about being in lockdown? You talk about being stuck in your home? Paul was being held under house arrest. Yet he says, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly."

Then he continues, "...that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned..."—God put Paul through school, as He does us, as well—"...in whatever state I am, to be content." That's a course we don't want to take; we don't want to go to school to learn to be content. We want to learn to be prosperous but not content. He says, "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

You say, "Wow! How could Paul enroll in God's school of patience and come out with an A+? The answer is in verse 13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Paul is rejoicing in the Philippians' care of him. There are two things that brought Paul joy, in verse 10. The first is the providence of God. I've always loved this verse, because you see the hand of God in Paul's life. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again." What Paul is actually referring to is the financial gift, the money, that was sent to Paul from Philippi, carried by Epaphroditus. Paul knew the gift was born out of their love and care and concern for him. They weren't giving it out of obligation; they were giving out of love, because they cared for Paul. So Paul says, "Your care for me has flourished again." Then he said, "Though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity." He said that they have always cared for him and showed love for him, but they didn't always have an opportunity.

The thing I see quite often is that we have the opportunity, but we don't have the care. We have opportunity to give and to show our love, but we don't have love or show our love. The Philippians had love for Paul, but they didn't have an opportunity. But now that Paul is under house arrest, and Epaphroditus was going to make the journey with their gift, they had an opportunity. So Paul was actually saying that God had opened these doors; God provided a way. Paul saw the providential hand of God. So Paul said that they had this love for him, but the door had not yet opened for them to share with him. He said that now they had the opportunity.

The word "providence" is not in the Bible, but the teaching is all through the Scriptures; how God works in the affairs of man to bring about His glory and their good. As you look back at

your life, you see how God was with you in situations. God closed one door and opened another. God said “No” and God said “Yes.” God watched over you here, and God allowed this to happen to you there. God worked in your life. It’s called “the providential hand of God.” Even in the painful times and the difficult times, where you wondered, Where is God?! Why isn’t He here?!, He was with you all the time. He was guiding and directing and brought you to this point.

After talking about their providential gift, he now alludes to the fact that he has said that not because he wants more money. He doesn’t say this because he wants them to give to him. He doesn’t say this because he has a need. God has taught him something; he has learned to be content.

I like that word “content.” It means “to be relying on an inner sufficiency.” It means that I don’t need anything more. I don’t need other things to prop me up. I’m actually self-contained.

Paul says, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content,” verse 11. Then, in verse 12, he describes himself. “I know how to be abased.” He was saying, “I know how to be without. I know when I can’t pay the bills. I know when I don’t have any provision.” And Paul said, “And I know how to abound.” So he was saying, “I know when there’s feast or famine. I know when God provides. I know to keep my focus on Him, to be humble and dependent on Him.”

He says, in the KJV, in verse 12, “Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry.” In verse 11, he uses the word “learned,” then in verse 12, he uses the word “instructed.” Then in verse 12, he says, “I know” twice. So God is teaching and instructing him, and he has learned his lesson well. We need to submit to God’s plan and purpose in our lives and learn our lesson well. He said, “...both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”

The way Paul could do this—and the key is in verse 13—is that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” How do we interpret this statement? Does Paul literally mean that he can do whatever he wants? That he can “run faster than a speeding bullet”? That he can “jump over tall buildings in a single bound”? No, that’s not what Paul is talking about. In the context here, I think that Paul is referring to all the things that God has asked him to do.

I like the Living Bible, in which Kenneth Taylor says, “I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and the power.” So you can love your wife as Christ loved the church. You can submit to your husband. I know it’s difficult, but you can do that. You can say “No” to sin and temptation. You can trust Him and “cast your cares upon Him.” Whatever God commands you to do, God will help you and give you the strength to do.

In John 15:5, Jesus says, “Without Me you can do nothing.” Isn’t it interesting that Jesus didn’t say, “Without Me you can do a little bit.” No; Jesus actually said, “Without Me, you’re a big zero.” (I just thought I’d encourage you today.) We need Christ; we can do “nothing.” God will give you the strength to do what He has called you to do. He will give you His peace, He will give you His presence and He will give you His power.

What has God called you to do? What has God called you to be? God's calling is God's enabling. Be sure of what God has called you to be and to do, then rely upon God's ability and strength to do what He has called you to be and do.

There is one last ingredient in God's antidote for anxiety. It is God's provision, verses 14-23. Paul says, "Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress." Actually, verse 14 ties in with verse 10, where he says, "Your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity." Verses 11-13 are parenthetical, where Paul pauses to say that he wanted to make sure that they understood he didn't need anything, because he had learned to trust God to be content in whatever situation he found himself in. In verse 14, he comes back to their offering, their gift, and God's provision. He said, "You have done well that you shared in my distress." That's a reference to their financial support.

In verse 15, he says, "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the Gospel..."—which was 10 years earlier, when he first came to Philippi, in Acts 16—"...when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only." Paul said that the Philippian church was the only one that financially supported him. And he said that their care of him had flourished again; they did well that they communicated with him.

Verse 16, "For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift..."—once again, he diverts to this concept—"...but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account." Paul knew that their generosity would bring their blessing; their giving would open the doors of heaven to bring blessing into their own lives. So Paul said "fruit"; notice he didn't say "loot."

Verse 18, "Indeed I have all and abound. I am full..."—that means he was overflowing—"...having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you..."—notice how he describes their financial gift—"...a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God." Paul is using the imagery of a sacrifice in the Old Testament. They would take a lamb, slay it on the altar and then roast the lamb. The fragrance would arise to heaven. They would offer incense to God, and the fragrance would rise to God. Their gift-giving was a sacrifice that brought a sweet savor to God. So Paul said that he was full, having received this gift.

Then here is the key, verse 19: "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." This is where the main body of the letter closes. Then verses 21-23 is the closing salutation or greeting. He says, "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household." Through Paul's witness, people were getting saved in Caesar's palace. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

The promise of God's provision is in verse 19. In each of these sections, there is a key phrase that conveys this idea of God's presence, God's peace, God's power and God's provision. Verse 19 says, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by

Christ Jesus.” At a time like this, you should highlight that verse, memorize that verse and rest in the promises of God.

I want you to note several things about this promise. This verse was in the context of their giving financially to Paul. By them doing this, it created a need in their own lives. Sometimes we won’t give until we have an extra surplus. But the Bible actually says that it’s not the amount that you give that is important; it’s the sacrifice behind the giving. Number one, it’s the heart —“God loves a cheerful giver”—and it’s the sacrifice behind the giving.

Remember the widow’s mite? She only had two, little mites or coins. And she gave them both to God. So she gave out of her poverty and not out of her prosperity. Then Jesus said that this widow gave more, in the court of the women, than all the wealthy men who had given that day. So God doesn’t look at how much we give but at how much we keep back for ourselves.

Their giving had created a need in their own lives. This is why, in context, Paul said, “My God shall supply all your need.” He was giving this promise to the believers in Philippi, who had given to support the ministry that God had given Paul.

Secondly, the gift was sacrificial. God provides our needs but not our greeds. God has not promised to provide everything we want, but He has promised to provide what we need. Here’s the catch: we often think we need something that God knows we don’t. God knows what we need, so we need to rest in God’s provision. Tell God your needs. And don’t forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this, you’ll experience “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

D.L. Moody, the famous American evangelist of years ago, used to call Philippians 4:19 “God’s blank check.” He described it like this: “The bank—“my God,” the promise—“shall supply,” the amount—“all your need,” the capital—“according to His riches,” the bank address—“in glory,” the signature—“by Christ Jesus.” I like that. All that’s left for you and me to do is endorse it and rely upon the provision of God.

So if we have a promise that if we’re generous, and we give to God’s work, God will take care of us and God will provide for us. That’s a promise that we want to stand on. When we do that, He takes care of our anxiety. I like that.

F.B. Meyer, one of my favorite devotional writers, said, “Lend your boat to Christ, that it may be His floating pulpit, and He will return it laden with fish.” I like that. “Place in His hands your loaves and fish, and He will not only satisfy your hunger, but He will add twelve basketfuls of fragments.”

Did you know that you can’t outgive God? Because God has a bigger shovel than you do; when we shovel it out, God shovels it in. God overflows our lives.

So why should we stop worrying? Number one, we have God’s presence; verse 5, the Lord is with us or near us. Number two, we have God’s peace; verse 7, the peace of God to keep us,

and verse 9, the God of peace to lead us. Number three, we have God power; in verse 13, Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." So it's not me but Christ in me. And number four, we have God's provision; verse 19: "My God shall supply all my needs..."—not just some of them, not just a few of them, but "all" of them—"...according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Let's pray.