

Finding Peace in an Anxious World

Pastor Hangyul Cho 5/4/20

Philippians 4: 4-9

Sermon Summary

This is the most anxious of times, not knowing what tomorrow will bring. This is the strangest of times, not knowing exactly what to do. Such uncertainty is the very breeding ground of anxiety.

Now anxiety is a common problem, but one that affects most people, yet in differing ways. Many require professional help and often medication. But Pastor Han was not handing out pills today. He admitted his sermon was not a professional discourse on the uniqueness of our anxiety about the Covid-19 pandemic. The medical answer is for the specialist. The biblical answer is for the Christian.

Han wanted us to open a physical Bible – the printed book. Not a digital device. A physical book does not change; it has no sidebars with comments or places to make notes, and certainly no distracting attention grabbers popping into view.

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians most likely from a Roman jail; incarceration is a place that surely breeds anxiety.

Read Philippians 4: 4-9.

Notice how it begins. Paul wants us to **rejoice in the Lord always**. We are required to recognize who God is, for He is changing us to be more like Jesus. Jesus was gentle. We are to be gentle, and that is hard to do if you are burdened with anxiety. Your gentleness must be visible to others at all times.

Consider a gentle person you know: what do you see in them? How do you recognize the gentle nature within them? Consider an angry person: why are they like that? And what makes you angry with them in response?

Whatever we are going through, Jesus is with us; God has our 'back'.

Three things to ponder in anxious times

1. **Find peace through praising:** These are times when it becomes necessary to understand what is going on and where we are in it. If you believe God is sovereign over life, then understand that He has your best interests at heart. Acknowledge – and declare – that the Lord is in control, and rest in that.

- 2. Find peace through praying:** Peace is found in prayer. The process of prayer is praying – having a conversation with God. God has no need whatsoever for our prayer; He is certainly able to get along by Himself – **but we cannot**. We need Him. Only He can give us the peace we require; this is what prayer does. And part of prayer is thanksgiving. Always give thanks for the joy of a day just past – even if parts of it were miserable. There are always things for which we can give thanks.

Is the lock-down tough on you? What are the things you are now doing that you were not doing in your busy life before? Well, give thanks for those things, those tasks, that reading. Church has been hit hard right now. Growth has always mattered to churches; new adherents are vital to its longevity. But now, God has stripped churches of this ability. So, has He a reason for this? Perhaps the answer is simple! For a moment in time, perhaps God wants us to fully focus on Him instead of being awash in the minutiae of running a ‘business’? After all, His prime purpose is to give us peace so that it “will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

- 3. Find peace through practicing:** Put good wholesome thoughts into your mind all the time. Don’t allow negative and unseemly desires the slightest crack to slip into your mind. Only in scripture will you find the peace of Christ. This extra free time we now have is ideal to read forgotten bits of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Paul exhorts us to put into practice what we have heard (read) from him. Not only him. The Bible is full of characters we can emulate. Remember the prods we get in our mind from time to time? That is probably the Holy Spirit at work. Don’t push him away! The more we walk in Christian faith, the less sin will weigh us down.

Remember, any past sin in your life will never remove you from God’s salvation – but it will affect your human relationships if you don’t watch out. Eternal security and peace in your heart is impossible if God is **NOT** present in your life. You are made to be in relationship with God. You will never find true happiness until you seek and find this relationship. Without peace with God, you will never have peace in this world.

Four helpful points to reduce anxiety (From Pastor Mark Wallace)

1. Seek the Lord in reading scripture.
2. Use this (spare) time to connect with God.
3. Keep in regular communication with like-minded people (fellow Christians).
4. Exercise to reduce anxiety.

[And on that final note, I shall now go out to the edge of my bubble, and using the well-known formula $2\pi r$, will then walk around the circumference of said bubble until I have lost my anxiety, and probably the way home as well. P.]