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[Introductory video with words and music background:]

**Jesus** said:

IF SOMEONE STRIKES YOU ON THE CHEEK,  
TURN THE OTHER ALSO

IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, GOUGE IT OUT

IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE,  
YOUR FATHER WILL NOT FORGIVE YOU

NARROW IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE:  
ONLY A FEW FIND IT

SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM, AND  
ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

[Then displaying one at a time:]

RIGHTEOUSNESS

PURITY

FORGIVENESS

GENEROSITY

HUMILITY

PEACE

[Video concludes by displaying the series title:]

Really!?!\*

\*The shocking statements of **Jesus**

[Pastor Sal begins:]

Good morning, everybody. Glad to see you. For those [who] I can't see—but you can see me—out there at Fry Road, [good] morning to you as well. We're in a series called *Really!?! The shocking statements of Jesus*. We're going to talk this morning about our anxieties and what Jesus had to say about them. Since I was preaching on anxiety, I was really worried before the first service that... (Okay, I just wanted to see if you were with me.)

Let's take a little quiz and see (really) if we qualify to listen to this message this morning. Okay?

- (1) Are you rattled when things don't go the way you wanted them to go or expected them to go?—okay, you qualify. (All right)
- (2) Do you often worry about things that are beyond your control that you can't do anything about?
- (3) Do you lose sleep over the things which you worry about?
  - (a) Pressing issues?
  - (b) Things you don't know what to do?
- (4) Is it hard for you to turn your mind off at night?

- (5) Is it hard to turn on in the morning?
- (6) Does the unknown intimidate you?
- (7) When you think about the future, is it with:
  - (a) Man, God's going to do something great! (Or is it)
  - (b) Oh, God, what's going to happen to me? (and)
  - (c) Do you often imagine the worst-case scenario when you think about the future?

If so, you're a worry-wart. But, hey, look around; there's a lot of warts sitting on the pews next to you.

All of us deal with worry. In fact, so much so that there's a lot in the Bible about it—

- Fear
- Worry
- Depression
- All the things that come with that

Jesus really says some shocking things. In fact, the Bible tells us early on that: "An anxious heart weighs a man down." [*Proverbs 12:25a (NIV)*]

You know what it's like when you've been worrying for awhile, (I mean) consistently. (I mean) you just feel—

- Pressed down (and)
- The weight of the world (and)
- When is it ever going to let up?

You can't think a good thought; because when you do, you say: Yeah but what if?—what if?—what if?—what if?—what if?—what if?—and you go on these what-if chases. And there's never any stopping to that.

Someone defined *anxiety* as a feeling of uneasiness. That's true. But if you're a believer, it's caused by the absence of the promises and power of God in our thinking. The absence [of the promises] and the power of God in our thinking cause(s) anxiety. Because it makes us feel like:

- What am I going to do?
- What can be done?

In fact, the very word *worry* (that we're going to read here in a second) that Jesus talks about means to divide.

- It divides our heart
- It's destabilizing
- There is no foundation to stand on anymore
- There is no good answer (and)
- There is not a promise that is out there

So our whole life is unstable, because we worry too much. In *Matthew, chapter 6, verse 25*, Jesus speaks directly to us. Listen to what He says about worry:

<sup>25</sup> "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, {Pretty point-blank, isn't it? We worry; Jesus says don't worry. Don't worry about: } 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? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can {even} add a single hour to his life? <sup>28</sup> And why do you worry about clothes? {Jump down to *verse 34-5...34*—there's no *verse 35*, so don't go there} ... <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

*Matthew 6:25-28, 34 (NIV)*

Now, Jesus said: Don't worry. You have no cause to be worried, Jesus is saying. You can look around and see how God takes care of the rest of the world. Why aren't you convinced that God can take care of you?

Someone did a study on worry that I read during this week and they said:

- 40 percent of the things we worry about never happen.
- 30 percent of the things we worry about have already happened. In other words, we go back over our life and worry about something that has already happened. (40 percent never happens; 30 percent's already happened that we're worried about.)
- 12 percent of our worries are about criticism—what other people are saying about us or going to say about us—90 percent of which is never true in most cases.
- Then there's only (after you add all those up)—with another 10 percent, people worry about their health. It's scientifically proven that if you worry about your health, your health goes down.

So add all those up. That's about 92 percent of what we worry about (and so)

- There's only 8 percent (that this study said) really could be considered to be real problems. Even the real problems: if you worry about them, it never changes a problem for good.

A guy said: Don't tell me worry doesn't change things; nothing I've ever worried about has ever happened to me. So there is a sense... (Are you laughing at Fry Road?—because I thought...I wrote that in there because it was so good.) Don't tell me not to worry and it won't do any good; anything I've ever worried about has never happened to me. (Talk about it at lunch and I hope you will get it. All right?)

Now worry is different than the difficulties in life—than the storms in life. You can't control a storm. A storm rolls in and you are *in* a storm. (You know) you look at the weather forecast and say: Hey, a front's coming in. Then—guess what?—the front is on us and it's raining. Then the front leaves. We come outside and (you know) clean up a little bit but keep on going.

In life, things that you have not initiated happen to you. Difficulties come our way. Those difficulties are temporary and then they go away. But then sooner or later here comes another one. Either—

- You are in a storm
- You are coming out of a storm (or)
- You're walking into a storm

They are the fronts of life. You can't control those; they come on us:

- The temptations (and)
- The trials (and)
- The difficulties of life

But worry is something we do to ourselves. Worry is a choice that we make. It's not like a storm that comes in, lasts for awhile, and then leaves. It's something that constantly stays. It's like a fog that sets in. If you take a fog that's covering up 7 blocks—about 100 feet deep—it is only comprised of (just) about a glass of water. But it is broken down into 600 thousand billion little particles and it feels like it's everywhere.

That's what happens with us. The tiny/little things of life that we worry about (and worry about) and we can't do anything about, but worry about; pretty soon we're in a fog and—

- We don't know where to go (and)
- We don't know what to do (and)
- We don't think anybody's there to help us (and)
- We're reaching out (and)
- We're hoping we don't run into a brick wall.

God never meant our lives to be that way. [Repeated for emphasis] So let's talk about some worry-wart removers.

## **WORRY-WART REMOVERS**

Here's how you remove the worry-wart. Here's how you get rid of anxiety. Number one—let me ask you a question:

### **1. WHO'S YOUR DADDY?**

Who's your Daddy? Do you not know who your Daddy is? Do you not know that your Heavenly Father is your Daddy? Listen to what Jesus says about our Daddy in *Matthew 7:11*.

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

*Matthew 7:11 (NIV)*

Who is your Daddy? I have a Heavenly Father who knows what I need even before I need it. Therefore, I shouldn't ever have to worry about what might happen, because I know what's

going to happen. Whatever might happen is going to be taken care of by my Heavenly Father. I know who my Daddy is. Who's your Daddy? [Repeated] Because if [God is] your Daddy, you don't *have* to worry.

Now, it doesn't necessarily mean that I don't worry. Someone asked—my favorite thing to say when—

Someone says: Hey, how's it going?

I say: I can't complain, but it won't stop me.

(You know) we're going to worry. It's in our nature to do that. Why?—because we think we control life and we can do something about it.

God says: You can't control life. Even if you could think about and worry about something, do you think you could even add an hour to your life?—no, you can't. [*Matthew 6:27* (paraphrased)] My Heavenly Father—your Heavenly Father—loves you so much, He wants to give you exactly what you need. And He wants to dissipate your worry. He wants the sun to shine in your life again so you're not in this fog of [thinking]: Oh, what's going to happen to me?

*Matthew 6:32 [NIV]:*

For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

The pagans run after [them].

- People who don't know Daddy run after these things.
- People who don't know Daddy worry about what's going to happen in retirement.
- People who don't know Daddy worry about what people are thinking about them.
- People who don't know Daddy worry about:
  - What's going to happen to me when I die?
  - What's going to happen to my kids?
  - What if this happens?
  - What if that [happens]?

What if?—what if?—what if?—what if?—because they have nobody to care for them.

We have a Heavenly Father who knows what we need, even before we need it. Our Daddy loves and takes care of us. Stop worrying! Jesus said: Stop worrying; you have no need to.

- God numbers the hairs on your head. [*Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7*] Some He doesn't have to take a whole lot of time counting, but He numbers them anyway! Why? He says: I want you to know to the detail I know you. I know the numbers [of hair] on your head, and when you start losing hair there, I'll count them on your back, buddy! I know who you are!
- I knew you before I knitted you together in your mother's womb. Before you said a word I knew every word you were going to say. Before you thought a thought I knew every thought that you were going to think. Before you did a deed I knew all of those. I knew

you before you were born, when you're alive, and when you die. [*Psalm 139:13-16* (paraphrased)]

- Wherever you go, I'm going to be with you. [*Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5*]
- I know what you need and I'll give it to you before you need it. [*Matthew 6:8*]

Don't worry! You don't have to worry. [Repeated for emphasis] So—number one: Who's Your Daddy? [Repeated for emphasis]

## 2. THE POWER OF FAITH

Where's your faith? Listen to what Jesus said—*chapter 6* again, *verse 30*.

...Why do you have so little faith?

*Matthew 6:30b (NLT, 2004 edition)*

Gosh, don't you hate it when Jesus says stuff like that? Uh...well...uh, I don't know. Uh, I'm a sinner...uh...I don't know. Either the answer is *Jesus* or *I'm a sinner*, all right?

So, why do I have so little faith? Here's the reason why—do you know why?—because we have the wrong priorities. We focus on the wrong thing. If we focus on the what-ifs, we never enjoy the what-ares, do we? But what if?—what if?—what if? (I mean) why am I thinking about that? I can't do anything about what-ifs!

- I have got a life today. (And)
- Today the Son of God is blessing me. (And)

Why don't I have faith in what God is doing in my life today? Because my focus is out of whack, that's why. But how do you refocus?—*verse 33, chapter 6*—

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

*Matthew 6:33 (NIV)*

Did you ever see that ad on TV for FOCUSfactor® pills? (They don't work by the way.) They said: Look, if you have trouble focusing, take this pill.

Look, if you have trouble and you are dissipated by all these what-ifs and worries in life, focus in on one thing; and here's what God says: You focus in on Me. Put God first! He said:

- If you seek Me
- If you trust Me
- If you understand that I am your Heavenly Father

If you first put Me as priority and preeminence in your life—and not the co-pilot, not the pilot, but the owner of the plane and the world in which it flies around—you're not going to be worried! [Repeated for emphasis]

Here's what Jesus said: You take care of your Father's business; your Father will take care of your business. You take care of your Father's business—seek Him first and His kingdom—He'll take care of your business.

Have you ever thought maybe—

- When your business was upside down (or)
- You're worried about when the next job is going to come (and)
- Are we going to have enough money?

—that maybe you [should] get on your knees and say: Father, what are You trying to do, Daddy? I want to get my priority and my focus on You.

Rather than spending time worrying about what you can do nothing about, how about spending some time doing what you can do something about; and that's, seeking God first and God will take care of you. He promised it.

- If it's a financial deal, seek God first.
- If it's an emotional [worry], seek God first.
- Whatever the worry is, put God first.

Everything dissipates [after] that.

Listen, the Bible says, "that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow...and every tongue ...confess" [*Philippians 2:10-11(NLT)*]. So will your worries. [Repeated] Take care of God's business; He will take care of yours. God can take care of the things in your life if you take care of the kingdom business first.

- Faith (faith) brings peace; worry brings turmoil.
- Faith draws you closer to God; worry takes you away from God.
- Faith changes things; worry changes nothing.

How do I know? I've spent years—when you count them all up—worrying, and it didn't change a thing; but added some more gray hairs and a few wrinkles to my brow, and that's it. So—you know what?—I am going to do the best I can, by the grace of God, to live by faith and seek my Heavenly Father and quit wasting time and staying awake at night and getting all churned up about stuff I can do nothing about. Seek God first.

## **2(A) LOOK FOR BLESSING TODAY NOT TROUBLE TOMORROW**

How many of you—it's going to be Sunday afternoon: Lord Jesus, please let the Texans win!

- You're going to watch a game.
- You're going to fall asleep.
- You're going to get up.
- You're going to eat something else.
- You're going to start thinking about tomorrow.

In the world is [called] getting your day straight. But let me tell you what it is spiritually: It's worrying about stuff you have no control over—none! You have no control. And rather than enjoy today and be grateful for what God has given us today, we borrow tomorrow's trouble.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow. {He said: Don't even worry. Don't worry today. Don't worry tomorrow} for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

*Matthew 6:34 (NIV)*

Each day! Don't reach out [to] tomorrow and borrow trouble. That gives you double-trouble today. And you wonder why you don't sleep at night? You've got two days worth of junk in you. And then with those two days, you wake up the next day and say: I don't know why I'm so tired! Then you borrow another day; that's three days of junk. And then another day, and pretty soon you're burned out or on the verge of a breakdown; because you were never made to handle tomorrow's trouble.

God's promised grace for today, never tomorrow—today! If you live till tomorrow you'll get some tomorrow, but you're not going to need it until tomorrow. That's why when the manna fell on the wilderness they got one day's supply—that was it. Because—guess what?—tomorrow it'll fall again. And before the Sabbath, a double portion came—why?—because it wasn't going to fall the next day. They had a double portion to keep them over till the Sabbath.

God gives you daily bread and daily grace. You're not going to get it, if you borrow tomorrow's, He says: Sorry, I'm not giving you grace for that. I'll give you grace for that tomorrow.

Worry is the interest paid on borrowed trouble. I'm going to tell you, God engineers some problems in our lives so that we will come to Him. But we self-engineer problems that keep us from coming to Him.

Are you grateful today? (I mean) can you say today: God, thank You.

- God, You've given me a wife.
- You've given me a husband.
- You've given me a family.
- Lord, You gave me food today to eat. (And)
  - I'm going to eat food when I get out of here (and)
  - I'll probably eat tonight too. (And)
  - I will get up in the middle of the night; I'm going to eat some more food.
  - God, I've got more food than I can eat; so I'm going to get bigger so I could eat more food. God, thank You!

Thank You for being so good to me:

- I've got a job.
- Lord, I've got an income.
- God, I've got a church.
- I've got people to love me.
- I've got:
  - Lungs that work
  - A mouth that actually speaks (and)
  - Ears that can hear (and)
  - Eyes that can see, God.

God, thank You. Today is a great day, God, thank You very much. Thank You!

Look at what you are thinking and saying—right now—and what you're doing. Because if you start thinking and saying and doing—in this present moment—then you'll start moving in harmony with the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God is always leading to the future—

- But *never* in worry and doubt and fear and trepidation.
- But in victory and in confidence and in the power of God's might.

If you're worried about tomorrow—

- You're not grateful today
- You're not in touch with [what] God's doing today
- It's going to be worse tomorrow—absolutely worse tomorrow

And all the Prozac in the world is not going to knock the edge off of that. You need to walk with God.

## **2(B) FIND A PROMISE TO FUEL YOUR FAITH**

Find some promises to fuel your faith. Every single thought—the Bible says—we need to make obedient to Christ. [2 *Corinthians 10:5* (paraphrased)] Everything that comes through your mind—and it's all going to come flashing through your mind. You're like a control center at an airport. The problem is we have no control most of the time. We let anything land that wants to.

Here comes fear! Hey, here comes tomorrow's fear! Oh, okay, I want you to land right here and tell me—

- How bad my life's going to be tomorrow (and)
- What God is not going to do (and)
- How bad people are going to talk about me (and)
- I'll probably lose all my money (and)
- I won't get another job

[Pounds his head on the podium while groaning]

Don't let that land! Take control of that to the obedience of Christ and say this:

- God said: Don't worry about tomorrow (that)
- I'll have grace for today (and)
- If you do come my way I'll have grace for you when you come my way.
- Get out of my mind!

You need to control what you are thinking and replace it with God's thoughts.

- If it doesn't honor God
- If it doesn't build you up
- If it doesn't build others up

—guess what?—it needs to be swept out and done away with.

So when you're thinking:

- Gosh, I've got to go to work Monday (and)
- My boss is a jerk

That may be reality, but here's the other reality: There've been plenty of people in the Bible who had bosses for jerks—I mean, jerks for bosses. (I don't know if they had those other ones.) Joseph did; he even had brothers who were jerks. But that didn't stop him from doing good and doing right. And it sure didn't stop God from blessing him and putting him over all of that.

So rather than getting under it, why don't you get over it with God? Why don't you become an overcomer! Why don't you stop stinking thinking: all that negative stuff that's trying to run through your mind? Maybe God has you there with that jerk because he needs Jesus. Don't be a Jesus jerk to him; love him.

Maybe you're saying (you know what?): You're never ever going to change my wife, God.

Well, maybe He will when you change—vice versa (by the way), ladies. Maybe God is putting some pressure on you, and all she (or he) is doing is bringing out what He wants to change.

- Your focus is wrong!
- Your thoughts are wrong!
- Let God be God in every situation in your life!

You don't have to worry about the what-ifs and how-comes and it's-never-going-to-work-out.

And how about this one: Oh, God, this is so impossible I'm never ever—we're never going to get out of debt. We're never going to have a home. We're never... (You know what?) Thinking like that, you never will.

But (you know what?) when you say (you know what?)—

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.  
*Philippians 4:13 (NIV)*

—you will!

Certainly—

- If you won't
- If you can't
- [If] you think so

—so it shall be. But that's not God's will. That's not the Spirit of God speaking to you. Lord, how am I going to ever overcome? I'm never going to overcome this sinful habit. I'm never going to be able to break this.

(You know what?) Yes, you can! Because you are more than an overcomer. You are more than victorious in Jesus Christ. You, by—

- The blood of Jesus (and)
- The word of your testimony (and)
- The power of the Spirit of God inside of you (and)
- The Word of God that is right here [indicating the Bible] that is “Yes” and it's always “Yes” and it never backs off. [2 *Corinthians 1:20* (paraphrased)]

—YOU ARE A VICTOR IN JESUS CHRIST!

If not, then you're a victim of this world and (you know what?) the pagans feel that way.

Who's your daddy? Your Heavenly Father loves you so much when He gave you His best when He gave you Jesus. Do you think for any second that He would not give you everything else if He gave you the best thing first? Of course not. Find a promise to fuel your faith.

## **2(C) FIND SOME FRIENDS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR FAITH**

Let me tell you why some of us worry all the time. We hang around people who are negative and critical and are worry-warts. All they see is:

- Conspiracy behind everything (and)
- Somebody's out to get them (and)
- God isn't going to do that

And if you hang around [them]—

- You'll get critical of people (and)
- You'll get critical of ministries (and)
- You'll get critical of anything that God does, because it's never ever exactly right.

Let me tell you what's happening to you. You are being sucked down to the vortex of a critical, cynical person who's going to end up being bitter.

You need to get (you) some friends [who] won't corrupt your spiritual values, but will build them up. (You know what?) There are just some people after awhile—being very nice, strategic about it—that I just can't hang around. I can't hang around people [who] are bad for my soul, because—

- My soul's going to live forever.
- My soul's accountable to God. (And)
- As a man thinks in his heart, so he is; [*Proverbs 23:7* (paraphrased)] and

I don't want to think like some of the people that I used to hang around with and neither do you.

- You love them
- You minister to them
- You're nice to them

But you've got to do the spiritual stiff-arm and keep running down the field, baby. Because they will make you fumble.

Some of you are dating them right now. (And) you're going to marry them. You think things are going to get better when you get married—you live in la-la land if you think that. That doesn't get better; it just becomes more of what it really is.

Some of you are in business partnerships with those people. GET OUT! Get out before they ruin you totally and completely.

Some of you are socializing with people like that and they're tearing down everything good that you hear. (I'm going to tell you something.) One negative thing tears down a lot of positive stuff. (And) that's what destroys a lot of churches: a bunch of negative, critical people who have the

ears of people whose hearts are good; but they do not have the spiritual stature and strength to say: Shut up in the name of Jesus and let's get right with God and go forward.

That's got to change. That's got to change or you're going to be a worry-wart all your life. Get some friends [who] encourage your faith (and usually if they fish, they're good people...but anyway.)

Find a ministry—find a ministry in which you can share your faith.

## **2(D) FIND A MINISTRY TO SHARE YOUR FAITH**

Do you know what worry is? It's [hands clasped in prayer:] Oh, me-me-me-me. Even if it's about your kids, it's about the *me* in your kids. It's what my kid's are doing to me. My kids are taking my money—me-me-me.

Here's what you need to do:

- Get away from you.
- Die to yourself.
- Come alive to Jesus.

Go in somebody else's life who is worried about something (and)

- Encourage them (and)
- Minister to them (and)
- Speak to them (and)
- Show them the promises of God

As you do that, you (yourself) shall be convinced. And your problems won't seem that big, because you're not thinking about them all the time. You're thinking about other people.

Here's what the Bible says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you..." [*Luke 6:38 (KJV)*]

- If you're going to give yourself to worry
- If you're going to give yourself to doubt
- If you're going to give yourself to negativity

Guess what you're going to get back in abundance?—worry, doubt and negativity.

- If you're going to give yourself to encouragement
- If you're going to give yourself to ministry
- If you give yourself to love
- If you give yourself to building up

Guess what you're going to get back?—more than you can handle...given to you. Poured into your lap, shaken together, pressed down shall men—people—come and give to you until you can't handle it any more. [*Luke 6:38 (paraphrased)*]

So quit making appointments to come talk to me and get busy! Get busy! Get busy serving God and serving people. And the last (kind of) point is that we need the peace of prayer.

### 3. WE NEED THE PEACE OF PRAYER

Paul puts it this way:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!  
*Philippians 4:4 (NIV)*

(Man! What time's the next service? Eleven—good—we're cool. This isn't the last point.)

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. {Say this with me.} Do not {Wait; let's do it again—you ready?—one, two, three;} <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything...

*Philippians 4:4-6 (NIV)*

Stop! That's the Greek word for *anything*—whatever it is in your mind; the will of God is that we are not anxious and worried about it. So if that is the will of God and we're anxious and worried, what did we just do? We just sinned against the heart of God for us. And we don't have to; we *choose* to. We can't stop trouble [from] coming our way, but we can stop worry from fogging up our vision of our Heavenly Father.

<sup>6</sup> ...but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)*

Here's what Paul is saying:

#### 3(A) LIFT TO GOD IN PRAYER WHAT WEIGHS YOU DOWN WITH CARE

Lift to God in prayer what weighs you down with care. Now you say: He's the apostle Paul; he was special. No he wasn't. He was the apostle Paul; he got some special difficulties in his life. But the same Spirit that lived in Paul is the same Spirit that lives in us. The same God in heaven [Who] ruled over Paul's life is the same God in heaven Who rules over our lives.

And do you think Paul didn't have trouble when he wrote this? Paul writes—he said: I don't know if I'm going to live or die. I'm in prison. And he writes: I don't know what the sentence is. I might live and I might die. And if I die, that's okay. I just want God to be glorified in my body through my death. But if I live, well then, I just want to be of better use to you. So here he is:

- He's in prison for preaching the Gospel—doing good (and)
- He doesn't know if he's going to live or die.
- He doesn't know—if he doesn't die—how long that prison term is going to be (and)

- On top of that, he has no money; and when you're under house arrest like that, you paid for your own stuff.

He writes to the Philippians and he says: Man, you cared for me before, and would you revive your care again; because nobody has given to me and I'm poor. But—you know what?—I know how to exist when I have a lot and I know how to exist when I am poor; because—

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.  
*Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)*

And on top of that, he had bad press going against him. He had people talking about him. Outside of the jail—do you know what they're doing?—they were preaching the Gospel, thinking it would stir up the government authorities to make sure that Paul died. [So] they're preaching the Gospel and Paul says (you know): Whether they do it to hurt me, or whether they do it to help me—doesn't bother me—I'm just glad they're preaching the Gospel, because people are being saved.

And then, on top of that, he's writing [to] a church where two ladies are going after it [arguing] and the church is getting ready to split. In all of that Paul's concern is about them. And in the middle of that, he says: Hey, make the choice to rejoice!

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!  
*Philippians 4:4 (NASB)*

Worry about nothing, give your cares to God, and never take them back.

Paul isn't carrying the load of that stuff. So, I'm telling you, does Paul know how you feel? You'd better know he does.

- Maybe you've got life-or-death cancer inside of you. Paul knows what that's like.
- Maybe you've got a child in prison. Paul's been in prison.
- Maybe you might be going to [prison]. He's in prison when he writes this.
- Maybe you've got people talking about you and saying things that aren't true (and)
  - They're hurting your feelings (and)
  - They're making you feel bad (and)
  - You're worried about what they're saying.

Paul had the same thing.

- Maybe there [are] people at church [who] are mad at each other and you don't know what [to think]. Paul had the same stuff.
- Maybe you don't have a job; you don't have money. Paul had the same stuff.

And here's what he said:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!  
*Philippians 4:4 (NASB)*

Who's your daddy? [Repeated] Paul said: I don't have anything to worry about. Kill me! I'm going to heaven; I won't have to deal with this church stuff anymore (he said) later! [Demonstrating a goodbye salute] Y'all go ahead and fight it out; I'm going to heaven.

[Repeated] Look what he says, "The Lord is near." Whew! Now, you think about that; he says, "The Lord is near." Paul's in prison. He's separated from all those good people, and he said (but—you know what?), "The Lord is near." [*Philippians 4:5b (NIV)*]

Let me tell you. Do you know Who really knows what you're going through?—the Lord who lives inside of you. How near is He? [Patting his chest:] Right there (right there)—

- In the depths of my soul
- In the darkest places of my being

His light is shining; He said: I AM near, you don't have to fear; "...[but] in everything, by prayer..." [*Philippians 4:6 (NIV)*]

If God does not matter—rather—it doesn't matter who's closest to you:

- You can tell your problems to your spouse and they give you a little encouragement. But (you know what?) they're going to go to work. They don't live inside of you. They can't be there to straighten out your stuff and to make sure that you don't worry about that.
- You can come see a pastor and we can talk to you and pray with you and give you Scripture; but we can't walk out the door with you into your life.
- You can go see a psychiatrist and a psychologist; but (I'm going to tell you) they're going to leave you and they're going to be distanced from you.

But He (Himself) has said:

- I will never leave you. [*Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5*]
- I will never forsake you. [*Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5*]
- I will make My dwelling with you. [*Psalms 101:6*]
- I AM always near; what's your fear? [*Philippians 4:6*]

He's right there. [Repeated]

### **3(B) PEACE IS SPIRITUAL NOT CIRCUMSTANTIAL**

Peace is spiritual not circumstantial. It transcends all understanding.

And the peace of God, which transcends all [understanding]...  
*Philippians 4:7 (NIV)*

(I mean) it's just beyond what you can understand. You should not have peace if—

- You are in jail and waiting a death sentence (and)
- You don't have any money (and)
- People are talking about you (and you have)
- The people that you *do* like are fighting one another.

You shouldn't have peace. Paul says: I've got peace; I have peace. (And) it goes beyond our understanding (and)—

- You have peace and you have joy even though you have a spouse [who] isn't a source of peace and joy right now.
- You've got peace in the middle of the fact that God—at this point in time—has not given you job. But you can rejoice and you can thank God right now: I'm going to get a job.
- I've got peace that God is going to take care of me; because I know who my Daddy is and He said He would take care of me.
- Your kids aren't doing what their supposed to be doing right now. But you've got peace in your life because you know that "everything, by prayer and supplication" the will of God is going to be done whether they like it or not. [*Philippians 4:6 (NASB)*]

You're going to have peace in every situation—every situation.

Now, this is how you keep the peace (and we'll close): you have to practice His presence.

#### **4. THE PRACTICE OF HIS PRESENCE**

Practice His presence.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

*Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV)*

Now listen:

- Peace of God in you
- God of peace with you

That's kind of like double-insulation, isn't it?

- Peace of God in you—through prayer
- Peace of God with you—through practice

Remember I said you've got to change the way you think? That's what he says right here: Think about these things (I mean) these are the things you need to be dwelling on.

You can see it in God's world—two different birds:

- Vulture
- Hummingbird

A vulture finds dead things and feeds off nasty road kill. And even when you drive by and blow your horn, it's not going to bother him. He's going to eat the road kill. Even if you try to go off the side of the road and hit him—not that I've ever done that—they will fly up real quick. And

when you're gone, they'll come right back down on it. Because they love dead, nasty, smelly, putrid road kill.

A hummingbird never would be around road kill. A hummingbird looks for sweet things, beautiful things—nectar. They're so beautiful to watch that we even put little sugar-water [feeders] out there so we can watch them and they're beautiful.

You don't put dead road kill in your backyard so a vulture will come there, do you? No! You don't want that! They're ugly and nasty. You know what? Both of them find what they're looking for. You cannot keep road kill from a vulture; you can't keep sugar-water from a hummingbird.

What are you looking for? You're going to find it. If you're looking for the presence of God in your everyday situations—guess what you're going to find?—you're going to find the presence of God. It's going to be lovely and beautiful and sweet. And you're going to have peace that passes the understanding of everybody around you [who] looks at you and your situation; because you're looking for God and you're practicing His presence:

- You're walking with Him.
- You're in the Word.
- You're praying.
- You've surrounding yourself with godly people who are speaking into your life.
- You're not doing stinking thinking anymore.
- You're not looking for the road kill of life.
- You're looking for the beauty that God has [for] you in the midst of the mess; God will give it to you. (God will give it to you.)

The long-term benefit of practicing walking with God is peace in every situation.

Do you have peace or are you worried? Jesus said: Don't worry; (don't worry) God will take care of you. Here's the one thing you ought to worry about though. If you don't know God, I'd be really worried.

- Who's going to help you?
- Who's going to be in control of those things that you have no control of? You can't, it's proven.
- What's going to happen when you die?
  - Who's going to make sure that you don't go to hell, but you go to heaven?
  - Who's going to take care of your kids when you can't take care of them?

All of those things, only God can! And the one worry that you can take care of that will take care of every other worry of your life is whether or not you know Jesus Christ. You are in control of that one too. (You're in control of that one.)

And today you can give your life to Jesus and you can walk out of here worry-free!

- You don't have to wonder anymore: Does God love me? Yes, He does!
- You don't have to wonder anymore: What about my sin? Jesus will pay for it!
- You don't have to wonder: How does He see me? Through the blood of Christ as one of His children!

- You don't have to worry: What's going to happen? When you die, you're going to go to heaven!

You take care of that right now. You take care of the one worry to take care of the rest of the worries for the rest of your life.

Let's pray together with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. If you don't know who your Daddy is—if you don't know your Heavenly Father—I'm going to ask you to pray this prayer silently as I do aloud; and it goes like this:

Dear God, I need You to be my Daddy. I need You to take care of me. And I want to start by You taking care of my sin. Forgive me. Wash me in the blood of Jesus. I trust in what You did in Christ to make me part of Your family. I want to follow You and live for You.

Those of us who are believers already, all of us have those worried thoughts that go through our mind. God, deliver us. Deliver us from thinking about things we can do nothing about. Give us victory in thinking about the things that only You can do for us.

Bless our church, God. And as we walk into the future may we do so victoriously—not worried about a thing—rejoicing in all that You are doing and all that You are going to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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**Even his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"**

*John 6:60*  
(*New Living Translation*)

**Legend:**

(**words in parentheses**) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[**words in square brackets**] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{**words in curly brackets within indented quote**} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*