

FROM CONFUSION TO CLARITY

FINDING CALM IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

BEFORE THE LESSON

Our examination of Scripture today will include Philippians 4:4-9. This week's sermon focused on the idea that in a chaotic world no matter your nationality, age or even if you are Christian, the chaos can make you feel worried and anxious. This is not the will of God. The will of God is for us to keep calm even in chaos and experience the peace of God. In Philippians, Paul is encouraging the early church to seek God in prayer instead of worrying. Let's explore how to move forward in this peace.

TIPS TO SHARE WITH LEADERS

This is a difficult season for most. Be conscious of others' experiences. Be patient and gentle, remembering that it is Christ who gives us the power to stand in times of crisis and chaos.

This article could be helpful to read in preparation for the study:

<https://multiplyvineyard.org/find-peace-amid-the-chaos/>

STARTING THE LESSON

This lesson will focus on the idea: that no matter who you are, when chaos strikes, it is easy to feel anxious and worried. Yet, the will of God is for us to keep calm in the chaos by way of the peace of God. We will look at a place in Scripture (Philippians 4:4-9) where Paul encourages that early church to not worry but to pray.

STARTER QUESTION

- When, recently, have you felt the peace of God? Even if just for a moment.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, we welcome your presence in our time together. Thank you, God, that you are the giver of life and peace. Please rest on us right now. Turn our attention back to you. Amen.

BIBLE PASSAGE REFERENCE

Philippians 4

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **8** Finally, brothers and sisters, 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. **9** 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.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

- What a command, “rejoice in the Lord always.” Easier said than done. This seems counterintuitive, but Paul explains that when we look to Christ, He draws near (v. 5). Pastor Charles says joy (or rehearsing joy) is “the confident expectation of the Christian that comes from the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord.” How does this truth give you comfort--that God is near to us when we focus on Him through praise?

Answers may vary. The more we stare at our problems, the bigger they seem. When we focus on Jesus, we see things from a different perspective.

We're able to stand back and see the God of Glory is in control of all things. It's comforting to know that even in the worst of circumstances, the Lord is near. All we need to do is turn to him, praise him, and trust him.

QUESTION 2

- Paul is clear to give us the next step to finding peace in God, which is to ask for His help through prayer, or inviting his presence in our lives. He also encourages us to ask Him for what we need with thanksgiving (v.6). How has your prayer life been lately? How could putting petitioning with thanksgiving into practice be helpful?

Answers may vary. Perhaps it's been a difficult season and prayer hasn't been on your mind...how encouraging to know that God is near and wants to listen to us. He wants us to talk with him. He cares about every detail of our lives. Perhaps you have been praying but there haven't been any answers. Take time to listen and encourage group members to remain faithful. God is alive and working even if we cannot see it sometimes. Practicing thanksgiving, or gratitude, is a good way to see things from a bigger perspective too.

QUESTION 3

- Verse 7 says that when we pray to God, His peace will guard our hearts and minds. Have you experienced this peace of heart and mind before? How does it encourage you to know that God is protecting you in this way?

Answers may vary. Perhaps some have experienced this peace when coming to the Lord in prayer. Perhaps others have not. Make space for people to share and pray for grace over those who struggle with anxiety. Perhaps knowing that God is protecting our hearts and minds may give people courage to open up to Him more in prayer.

QUESTION 4

- Finally, in verses 8-9, Paul tells us to meditate on and to practice good things. What are some practical choices we can make to think and do what God deems as good?

Answers may vary. Our minds are a battlefield where worries and hopes collide. One practical choice is to get into God's Word. Know what he says to us and equip ourselves with his truth. Choose to be still with God. (Psalm 46:10; Matthew 11:28-30).

*Or try this exercise to retrain your thoughts. [Negative emotion], and [reason], so I will [choice]. Example: I'm **stressed**, and I'm fearful about my **finances**, so I will choose to **pray** instead of fear.*

PRAYER MINISTRY

Take some time as a group to praise God. Make space to pray aloud, popcorn style, and esteem the Lord. He is mighty, worthy of our praise. He is good, the beautiful creator, passionate redeemer. He is in control, faithful, a promise keeper, healer, comforter. He is closer than our breath and the lover of our souls! Lift him high and allow him into your time and space!

Now, especially if prayer has been difficult for some group members, make space to pair off in smaller groups or breakout rooms to come together and pray to the Lord with one another, petitioning him for specific needs in your lives.

Or, perhaps spend some time together as a group waiting in the presence of the Lord. Ask him to show you his truth, to equip you to choose good thoughts. To show you how you might serve Him and do the good things he's called us to do on this earth.