

Day 9

Peace

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:7

Discussion Near the end of Paul’s letter to the Philippians he instructs them, and us, very practically about dealing with opposition, difficulties and stress that the Philippians are experiencing. Paul’s first instruction is to rejoice in God; and he says it twice. In the midst of difficulties we are to praise God for who He is. The difficulties are real and the praise is to be real. They exist simultaneously. Instead of letting the situation affect our behavior in a negative way, Paul goes on to say we are to be gentle, so gentle it is seen by everyone. Not ignoring, interrupting, complaining, yelling, being rude, or driving irresponsibly, but being gentle. Paul then reminds us that even in these difficult times God is near to us. The difficulty is real and God’s nearness is real. He did not go away. Whether we feel God’s presence or not, He is near in difficulties. Instead of being anxious, Paul then tells us to pray about everything. The difficulties are made up of specific situations, people, and details and we are to tell God what we want related to those situations, people, and details. Paul also tells us how to pray what we want: with earnestness and while thanking God. Our earnestness allows us to express the intensity of what we feel and thanking God acknowledges that God is God. He is loving, just, good, powerful, and wise. That is when God’s peace, which is beyond our understanding, will protect our minds and hearts in Jesus. God is powerful enough to protect our hearts and minds. He wants us to rejoice in Him, be gentle and know that He is near in the midst of our difficulties, to tell Him what we want, and to speak to Him with earnestness, thanking Him as our God and Savior. Paul goes on to tell us to think about whatever is: true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. That’s a lot to fill our minds with. Paul concludes by telling us to put into practice whatever he has taught us. And the God of peace will be with us.

Application At the end of today, praise God for being loving and faithful to you regardless of whether or not you feel at peace.

Prayer Father, I praise You that You are intimately aware of how I can be distracted from You or overwhelmed. Thank You that You love me and have provided practical steps to deal with difficulties in my life as well as my own weaknesses. I praise You for Your wisdom that these steps of coping are the very things that keep me close to You. I praise You that You are powerful. You protect my mind and my heart. You are Lord and King; nothing is more powerful than You. “The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23). Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.* Isaiah 26:3-4