

Well, good morning everyone. It's a little humid outside. Anyone notice that? There was so much humidity on the windows coming in. I thought we had put like, like this film wrap on the windows, like a, like a non transparent.

I thought you can't even see in the church anymore. There's so much, so much fog and mist on those. I don't mind humidity, but a little goes a long way with me. How about y'? All?

Glad you're here this morning. Even in a hot, humid day. Listen, we are all facing the same kinds of pressures this week. We're facing some humidity, heat is on the way. But beyond the weather, we all face pressures in our lives.

This series that we've been going through is how the gospel comes into those different places in our lives and transforms them. One of the pressures that we feel is just the pressure of wanting to be known and loved, searching for peace in a nonstop world. This idea of wondering, am I enough for God, for others, in the midst of just trying to hold our lives together in some way, shape or form, faith can start to feel disconnected from real life. And you come in and you hear a sermon and go, but okay, that's great. That's inspiring on Sunday morning, but on Tuesday, what difference is this going to make?

And that's a really, really honest question to ask. But when Jesus steps into the scene, his message is very simple. It's disruptive, but it's simple. And it says this. The kingdom of God is near.

And it's not just near on Sunday morning when we're singing hallelujah, hallelujah. It's clear, it's, it's near, it's close. Is at hand on Tuesday as well. Not someday, but right now. We can experience the kingdom of God all the time.

And so as we've been going through this series, the first week we looked at just how following Jesus changed how we live right now. Not just in the hereafter. Someday when we get to heaven, it'll all be good. And we're looking at Jesus says, no, no, no. It's out present with you right now.

The gospel impacts and informs and changes your life right now. Week two, Alan preached about how the gospel frees you from performing for approval. We all feel that, don't we? This desire to do a little bit more so that people think more highly of us or we feel better about ourselves, or certainly so God may be maybe more apt to accept us. But we looked at how, no, the gospel says you're approved because you are in Christ.

You're his he loves you. Nothing's going to change that. Week three, Andy Fish was with us and he talked about how the gospel creates a place where we're fully known and fully loved in the power of

community within the body of Christ. Week four, we talked about guilt. Ah man.

How this gospel silences those, those condemnations and insecurities because we are fully known and fully loved and accepted in Christ. And today we're going to continue. This is our last week in this series, but we're going to look about how the news of Jesus, the Gospel of Jesus brings us peace. Anyone need some peace in their lives? The Gospel brings us peace not by removing all the pressures in our lives.

Although that sounds great, doesn't it? But the gospel doesn't do that. But it does change how we carry those burdens into and in the presence of God. So I'm going to pray and then we're going to dig right in again. I'm glad you guys are here this morning.

Heavenly Father, man, we look for peace in all sorts of ways. We try to simplify our lives, we try to change the rhythms. We get away, we go on vacation, we change jobs, we move our families, we move our lives, hoping that maybe the external changes will finally calm what is unsettled inside of us. But you point us to a different pathway. Your word, the Holy Spirit directs us and into a deeper pathway where we're not promised a pressure free life, but we are promised that we will experience your presence in the middle of it.

And in the way that that happens is life changing. So today as we open your word, remind us and challenge us from your word. May your spirit steady us as we seek your peace. In the middle of whatever storms our lives seem to be caught up in at this moment. We pray this in Jesus name, Amen.

Matt Nussbaum, who's preaching this sermon up at Bloomington this morning, sent me a quote about, about peace and, and they surveyed, I think about 46,000 people. He said, and, and one in four said they struggled with this, with the notion of inner peace. They struggled finding it, they, they struggled achieving it, they struggled maintaining it. And it reminds me always when I, when I think about peace, it reminds me of one of my favorite accounts and the Gospels. And for many of you this will be very familiar as well.

If not, if this is not a familiar story, I encourage you to go to the gospels, read this because there's so much good stuff there. But, but this is an example where Jesus and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee and it's been a very, very, very long day of ministry. And Jesus falls into a very deserved sleep. Now, those of you who know the story, nod your head if you know where, where I'm going with this. So while he's sleeping, a storm blows in.

And it blows in really quickly, like storms are often do. We don't expect them. We now have radars that can tell us what's coming, but they didn't. The disciples did not have access to Doppler radar. And

so this thing seems to come out of nowhere.

And it blows in so quickly and it blows in so hard that the disciples are terrified that the boat is going to capsize and they're going to drown. But do they think to wake up Jesus, who is over there in the boat asleep? Not until all hope seems to be lost. I tell you this because I identify with this a lot. Now they finally wakened Jesus, and with just a word, he calms the storm.

But like the disciples in that boat, I can get so wrapped up and focused by the storm around me, by the waves and the problems, and overwhelmed with my own fretting fear that I forget who is in the boat with me. And I don't forget. But if you're like me, let's just be honest, sometimes the waves seem a lot more powerful than Jesus, who's with us. And anyone say a quiet, yes, I know what you're talking about.

And then the moment passes. And Jesus has been with me the whole time, even though I've not been friends, fully cognizant of it, or as cognizant as I should be of it. And what I feared was going to happen doesn't happen. And I'm still standing, and I'm still right there, safe and secure. And Jesus asks me, hey, why did you have so little faith?

This is the question he asked his disciples. This is the question he asked me. Did you forget that I was in the boat with you during that storm? And I have to be honest, honestly, Jesus, I was more focused on my problem than I was on your presence. Can anyone say I've been there, where I focus more on my problem than I focused on God's presence with me?

Last week, Brian Sherwood started the service with a prayer. And it's a prayer that many of us know by heart. It begins this way. Our Father, who art in heaven. If you were here, that was a beautiful way to begin the service because Jesus wants us to know God as our Father.

That's the. That's the prayer he taught his disciples that's the. That's the image he gave them of God as our Father. And that's important to know him as Father, because learning to know God as Father is where trust begins and peace grows. Where trust grows, grows.

That's important. Peace grows where. Turn to your neighbor and say, peace grows where trust grows. I don't ask you to talk to your neighbor very often, so just do it. Peace grows where trust grows.

Did you look at someone when you said that, or did you look at me? I'm not. We're not moving on until you say it. Go do it. Peace grows where trust grows.

And this is the relationship God wants to have with us. He's inviting us into this trusting relationship because he knows that that peace will follow on. If God is a good, good Father as we sing that he is, then I don't have to live like I'm alone out there on the stormy seas and the unpredictable universe that I inhabit. Knowing God as my Father shifts my focus from trying to control everything on my own and sort all this out and make it all make sense and make it all succeed, to just resting in my good, good Father, who knows what I need and will provide what I need, and only asks me to join him in the process. Peace happens when we shift our focus from problems to his presence.

Now, if you're like me, you need that reminder again and again. Yesterday morning, our Saturday Bible study, one of the guys said, I I really wrestle with. With anxious, anxious thoughts. I still have a lot of anxiety. And around the table.

We had about seven or eight guys there around the table. And of course, if the stats are true, one in four of those guys also struggles with anxiety. And sure enough, another guy popped up and said, yeah, I do too, and here's what I do. And he proceeded to really talk about how he. How he trusts God with those things.

But they're not alone. We all struggle with some anxiety at some level. We all still find ourselves trying to figure out a future that's beyond our comprehension, honest, certainly beyond our control. We all still fall into the sin periodically of trying to do and figure out life on our own. We end up anxious, maybe losing sleep, fearful with the.

With the vague idea, the notion that God can help, like no one's denying that God can help. But we're still so captured, we're still so chained to our emotions about this, this that we forget that he is in the boat with us. So listen to what Jesus tells us and we're going to. I'm going to read these verses and Then bode. I'm going to.

We're going to read them together because these are very familiar. But they may be too familiar. Have you ever have that problem? We need to read them again. So I'm going to read them, you're going to listen, and then we're going to read it together.

Matthew 11:28 30 says this. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Now let's read that together.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. That's our first verse.

The second verse just builds on it and it sort of gives us the how to do this. So let's look at Philippians chapter four, six through seven. And again, I'm going to read it and I'm going to ask you to read it with me. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Now let's read that together. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. These are very familiar passages and we quote them to give us comfort in these moments. But they do more than just comfort us.

They actually give us a path forward through the storms. In what way? Well, first of all, what did the first. Our first verse say? Can you throw the first one back up?

It begins this way. Come to Jesus. Jesus says come to me. Peace begins by coming to a person. You can go to the bookstore and search through the self help books.

Do we do that today or do we go online, try to find a website that'll talk us through whatever anxiousness we have? You can do that. There's lots of good advice out there. Lots of those are. Those are fine.

But ultimately true and lasting peace, peace that passes understanding isn't found in a book. It's not found by going to some relaxation weekend, some spa, doing some yoga poses. Again, I'm not here to discount any of those wonderful things. But peace is not ultimately found in those things. Peace is found in a person.

And he says, do this, all you who are weary and burdened, come to me and I'll give you rest. And he says, take my yoke upon you. Join yourself to his yoke. His yoke. He says, take my yoke upon you.

Do you know what a yoke is? Do we have an illustration of a yoke bode? I don't know if we've got one or not. We don't. We.

Now, was that a thumbs down? Thumbs down. We don't have a yoke. Does anyone know what a yoke is? Can someone just stand up real quick and describe it out loud to someone?

Otherwise you're going to have to have me do it. I mean, I can do.

Ties two animals together. And we've seen these things. We've seen the old wooden ones. You know that, that, that you put around the neck of one oxen and you pair it and you tie it around and you, and you and

you brace it around the other oxen. It's an ancient piece of labor saving technology.

One of the first pieces of labor saving, maybe next to the wheel. This changed the way people work out in the fields. It transformed things immensely. Yokes are very useful things. They allow a burden to be shared by two beasts of burden rather than just one.

It's the equivalent of working smarter, not harder. And this picture of a yoke is very, very interesting that Jesus chose that one. But I think there's a reason. Because too often our anxiety comes from carrying a yoke alone or carrying a yoke. Jesus never asked us to carry.

Some of us are burdening ourselves with concerns that Jesus did not ask us to worry about. Have you guys got teenagers in your house? Kids? If you've got more than two kids, there's always this unreasonable fascination that they have with what the other one is doing, particularly how the other one is being corrected and disciplined versus how they're being corrected and disciplined. Well, what about.

Well, what about that? Did you see that? Well, how come you're focused on me? Did you not. Da, da, da, da, da.

There's a. There's a. I'm off. I'm off script right now, Bo. You know what was going to happen, but it's happening right now. The end of Jesus life.

He gathers with his disciples there. It's after his resurrection. He's there and he's talking to Peter and they're walking away. And you remember Jesus. He's asking him, do you love me?

Do you love me? Do you love me? And Peter's answering, but he. But he. But he says also, well, what about.

What about that one? He points to one of the other disciples. And Jesus says, what is that to you? What is that to you? Why are you.

Why are you worried about him and his yoke? You should worry about the yoke that I have given to you. My yoke that I have given to you.

His yoke is not harsh or crushing. And remember, let's keep our pronouns correct here. It's not my yoke that Jesus has given to me. It's his yoke that he's invited me to be part of. And he brings us into his yoke.

And it's not harsh, it's not crushing. It's fitted to our neck, to our skill, to our gifting, to the calling that he has called us to. Not our brother, not our sister. The yoke he's called us to, and it is

shared with him. And when I say share, it's like.

It's like a parent.

It's like a parent helping a kid make their bed. Who's making the bed? Let's be honest. Mom or Dad's making the bed. But we're letting the kid help.

They're three years old. They want to help. And by golly, we want to help. We want them to learn how to vacuum. So we're going to let them vacuum.

Now, now, again, I won't go into this, but Jesus is carrying the bulk of the weight with this yoke. He's the one shouldering the burden, and he invites us to share it with Him. It is his yoke. He is the stronger one. He shoulders the greater part of the burden.

But as we walk with him, he enables us to shoulder burdens that he's entrusted to us, responsibilities that he's entrusted to us without being close, crushed by them. But it's. But it's important that we take his yoke and not find one of our own. The yolks that we find on our own will crush us. But the yoke that he offers to us that says, join me in this will be perfectly fitted to us.

And then he says, experience my rest in Philippians 4. Let's throw that verse up there. Philippians 4 gives us the how we give our concerns to God. He says, don't be anxious about anything. And this is not the Holy Spirit saying to us through the Scriptures.

Now, now, don't worry, don't worry, don't worry. It's all going to be all right. This is not what the scripture is saying here. This is actually a command. It's not a platitude.

It's a command. Do not be anxious for anything. That's the command. You go, who can keep that command? Here's how you keep it.

This is the next step. But in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, you present your request to God. Listen, I stand here as someone who is learning this lesson. Still, I am not. I'm not an expert on turning everything over to the Lord when I.

When I need to turn things over to the Lord. Lord. So you're not hearing from someone who's saying, do it my way. No, we do it Jesus way. And I'm learning that way as well.

But here's what I learned. Anxiety pushes us into our fear. And if we feed that anxiety, we go deeper and deeper and deeper into things that cause us fear. But prayer turns us outward towards our Father. When we pray about the things that worry us, we leave there going, okay, we can deal with this.

This yoke is not being carried by me alone. There's a reason Jesus says the Holy Spirit says, the scripture says, do not be anxious about anything because. Because here's what happens when we indulge that. It reveals some things about us. One, it reveals where we don't trust Jesus yet.

In that sense, maybe it's useful. We can go, okay. I'm anxious about my kids. Do I fully trust my kids to Jesus? I'm anxious about my job.

Am I trusting my job to Jesus? Maybe I'm anxious about my marriage. Am I trusting my marriage to Jesus? Maybe I'm. Maybe I'm got a health scare.

Am I trusting that to Jesus? Worry reveals where we do not yet fully trust him. And so in that way, it can be very instructive. It also shows us where we're trying to control something that's beyond our ability to control. I have.

I cannot control X, Y and Z. I can worry about it, but it is useless. And so what I do with that, well, I turn it over to the Lord. I take it to Jesus. But here's the thing that, that Oswald Chambers said, and I thought this was so good. Worry can be the mask that pride wears when we insist on doing it our way over God's way.

What's the result? Worry and anxiety. Worry is just pride masquerading. So God says, don't worry. Don't worry.

Don't be anxious. Don't do it. Don't go down that path. Instead, take those worries and Those anxieties to God, give him your request. Make your request known.

Present your request. That word request in the Greek is. It's not like, oh, can I get extra seasoning on my fries? It's not like what I would like to have. And although we.

The Bible is very clear, you have not, because you ask not, we can make any request to God absolutely. But this request, this word right here means a requirement. What does the situation require? From your perspective, what is needed in this? And says, take that need to God.

Let him know. Be. Just be blunt. Tell him exactly what you need. Name the need.

Speak it honestly. Bring to him what is actually weighing on you. Don't try to spiritualize it. Don't try to make it pretty. Just tell him exactly what it is.

And what happens is when we confer with Jesus about our concerns, our. The confusion stops when we're honest to God about what we are worried

about. The confusion over that matter stops. There's no confusion with Jesus. No confusion.

He will make it clear, you need to stop. That's not your problem. Don't worry about it. Or here's how you need to move forward into it. He will give you clarity on that.

And then that peace that will come will be a guard on your heart and your mind. Peace does not come because our circumstances change. It doesn't. Circumstances will stay the same very often because God wants to lead you through the storm. The peace doesn't come when the circumstances change.

Peace comes when we stop arguing with God about our circumstances. We say, okay, here's where you've settled me, Lord. Here's the situation I'm in. I'm going to present my concerns, my needs, my anxious thoughts, my requirements to you. And you're going to give me clarity and you're going.

You're going to give me insight, you're going to give me wisdom, and you're going to give me peace about wherever I'm at and whatever I'm into. Peace comes when we shift our focus from our problems to his presence. Remember last week, we ended the last couple of weeks with this prayer that Moses taught his brother Aaron. It's a good one, and it's from Numbers, chapter six. Let's say it together.

The Lord bless and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. And we got just a little hint of what that lifting up the countenance means last week. But to have God lift up his countenance Means you have his attention.

You have his attention. He is listening, you are seen. His face is turned towards you in grace, and he invites you into his presence. Presence. And his presence produces peace.

In his presence we are known and loved as his children. 1 John 3:1 says, See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And what does John say? Say it with me. And that is what we are.

We are his children. He has lavished his love on us. In his presence we can release, control and trust his wisdom. That's where we get our clarity. Say, lord, I don't know.

Here's the situation. We're going to trust you with it. Luke 11, 11:13 says this. Read it with me. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?

How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those

who ask him? The Holy Spirit is God's presence in us. And what comes with his presence. Peace in his presence. You can trust him with your stuff.

I love how Sean describes our stuff. He describes us as our hurts, our habits and our hangups. And we all got them, don't we? We've all got hurts, we've all got habits, and we've all got hang ups. And the Holy Spirit helps us with those.

We can trust him with those. Psalm 103. David wrote this verse 13 as a father has compassion on his children. Read it with me. The Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

And in his presence we can learn to have confidence even in the what ifs and the what abouts. What about Him? What about this situation we can have? We can have confidence that God knows those situations and is taking care of it. Matthew 6:31 32 Again, read it with me.

So do not worry saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? They've been in my house this last night. Your Heavenly Father knows that you need them, and your Heavenly Father will take care of you.

Now here's the practical end of this.

All these reminders about our Heavenly Father really challenge us also, as parents, as grandparents, maybe as mentors, as leaders of other people. And if we have people entrusted to our care or within our sphere of influence, as believers, we have the responsibility to demonstrate the peace that we say we believe in. Do we get it? I had to apologize to Eli the other night because I lost my cool, because I was anxious about something that I had no control over. And in that moment of lack of control, I lost my temper.

And hurt his feelings. I mean, I really did. He doesn't want me talking about it right now, but, but, but I confessed to him and I asked for his forgiveness. Well, I apologize to him. I don't know if he's forgiven me yet, but, but I did apologize to him because in these moments, as leaders, as parents, as people of faith, we, we have a responsibility to live out the truth that we say we believe in.

Can I get an amen on that? So here's the deal, that we're still going to experience these moments of anxiety. We're still going to experience these moments of like, what do we do? But there's a practical way through this. And this is, this is where we get, this is the scripture right here.

This is Philippians. We're going to take a three minute recess, a three minute reset maybe where we just take a break. We step out of the situation for just a moment and we do three things. And you can

take as much time as you need, but a minute is great. Some of you guys do this already in your morning quiet time or your evening quiet time.

But this is just a practical way to quiet your anxious thoughts and reset your trust in God by actively inviting God's peace into the situation that you're in by shifting your focus from the problem back to his presence. And the step one is this. You name the issue, you present the request to God, you speak it out loud, you tell the exact worry. If you can figure that exact worry out, you say, I'm worried about this, I'm anxious about this, I'm afraid of this. I am overwhelmed by this thing.

You don't bury it. You don't pretend it. You don't try to over-spiritualize it or give it religious language. Just say it. Just say it.

Just tell God what it is. Present your request to God. It's as simple as that. That's your first task. The second task is this.

And then release it. Take a deep breath and pray. God, I release my control over this situation and I give it to you. I release it to you. I'm, I'm not going to hold on to it.

I'm like, take it, take it, take it. I don't, I don't want it. You lay the mental burden down. You lay the physical burden down. You lay the anxious thoughts down.

And you give them to the Lord. And you take a deep breath. Okay, okay, okay. Lord, I give you these boys, I give you this church, I give you the car problems, I give you the work related issues. I give you this weird thing going on with this thing on the back of my head.

I give this to you. I trust you with this. You take a deep breath, and then here's. Here's the. Here's the clincher.

And this may be almost the most important thing, although it seems like an afterthought. You give him thanks. What did Paul say with Thanksgiving? You make these requests known with Thanksgiving. This is so important.

Derek, at our study yesterday was saying, thanksgiving anxiety. You heard it from someone. Who was it that told you?

John Robbins told him this. And it's true. Anxiety cannot coexist with Thanksgiving. It can't. So this is important.

With Thanksgiving, you surrender this to God. So thank him and shift your perspective from the problem and look and acknowledge his presence. Thank him for how he's helped you in the past. Thank you for his presence right here in this present moment. Philippians says to

turn our anxiety into prayer and turn our prayer into thanksgiving.

And obeying this command interrupts that cycle of fear and makes room to receive the peace of God. Let's share communion together, shall we? Here's our thought. In Romans 8, 38, 39, it says this. I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us or from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And we've done this before. Let's do it again. Let's read this together. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And as we come to the table of the Lord this morning, the elements are going to be distributed.

This moment, this moment of communion reminds us that peace is ours through the work of Jesus on the cross. It was purchased for us. We don't have to buy a book. We don't have to sign up for a class. Peace is offered to us through the cross.

At the cross, Jesus carried everything that separated us from God. Our anxious thoughts, those fears that draw us from his presence. He carried all of that. And because he gave his body and shed his blood on our behalf, we do not come to God as orphans or strangers or people working really hard to please Him. We come as children.

As children, we come to him, and he invites us to sit on the front porch with him and let's just talk about it. Let's just talk about the stuff that worries you. Let's get it out there now. Take a deep breath and let your dad take care of this. His presence is greater than your problems.

And his finished work is stronger than the storm around you. So we're going to take this. These elements, the wine or the juice. For those of you who are nervous about wine, it's just juice. Juice and bread.

And we're going to do it with gratitude and trust and surrender. And we remember as we do it that nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. This is peace, and this is a peace that is promised to us. So let's take God up on that promise. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the way that you invite us into this relationship as father and son, father and daughter.

And you invite us into a good, healthy relationship where we can bring our anxious thoughts to you. We don't have to hide them from you. We don't have to be embarrassed or ashamed of them. We just bring them to you and say yes. Sometimes we forget that we have a father who loves us, a good, good father.

But now, in this moment, we are reminded. And we bring those thoughts to you now, even as we take these. These elements that remind us of how much you love us. Help us to trust you in everything. In Jesus name, amen.

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