

Fellowship of Joy in Peace (Part 1)

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[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning and open them to Philippians chapter 4 and find verse 2.

! I'm going to read verses 2 through 9. Philippians chapter 4, verses 2 through 9. Are you there? While you're finding it, and you probably are there already, but every time I ask that I'm mindful of some prison inmates. Back a few years ago when I was involved in a prison ministry in Tennessee, and it was kind of their habit there, you know, when the preacher has them turn to the text, and then he says, have you found it?

And they say, praise the Lord, and we're ready to go. And as a matter of fact, this Friday night we had a group of eight of us, nine of us, actually counting Karen Duroy, it was ten of us, I think. Isn't that right? Nine or ten? Had our very first experience of ministering at the Dick Connor Correctional Institute, not Institute, Correctional Center, the prison over there in Hominy.

[1:30] And we had just a tremendous time, we really did. And had two worship services, by the way. One to the, first to the minimum side, and then to the medium side.

And by far the medium side was the larger of the group. We had 60, around 60 inmates in there to hear from our people here, testimonies and scripture readings and devotionals and preaching and singing, and it was a great time, great time.

All right, so you found it now, Philippians chapter 4. Thank you. Praise the Lord. Amen. All right, starting with verse 2. I implore Yodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[2:45] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is any praiseworthy, anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do. And the God of peace will be with you.

Tremendous text of Scripture. And you might need to be reminded, probably not, but as we continue through this marvelous letter, the letter of Philippians, we need to remember, as I've said a number of times, that this is a book on joy.

It's really the joy book of the New Testament. And joy, of course, is the subject, and I have kind of expanded that subject because I believe it includes this in a more broad sense.

This is the fellowship of joy. That's the subject here. The fellowship of joy. And that is, all believers, all followers of Christ, all born-again believers, have this in common with one another.

[4:15] Joy. Or should have that. And that's the purpose for Paul writing here. It's something you should have. Something you should experience. Something we all should have in common.

And that is the joy of the Lord expressed through our lives. Permeating our lives. Joy. In private. And certainly also in public.

Joy. As a matter of fact, and you know this, I'm sure, according to Galatians chapter 5, verse 22, joy is the fruit of the Spirit. And so, I believe that the Apostle Paul has written this letter for purposes of cultivating that fruit.

fruit to, for purposes of blossoming, allowing that fruit, the fruit of joy, to blossom in our lives.

And to bear greater fruit. And so, it has directed our attention to a number of issues related to joy. To the fellowship of joy. Christian joy. And we've been working our way through each of these as we've been looking at this book.

[5:23] And I've been taking us step by step through, again, this marvelous letter. Let me just list them for you again. This is what we've already seen.

The fellowship of joy in prayer. The fellowship of joy in persecution. Or we might say in spite of persecution or in the very midst of persecution.

We've already looked at that. The fellowship of joy in perfection. That is in the sense of Christian perfection. Christian maturity. The fellowship of joy in the person of Christ.

And we finished that up last week. And now we're ready for the fellowship of joy in peace. Peace. The peace of God.

You see, in this passage that I read a moment ago, in this passage, verses 2 through 9, we have a promise. And it's a promise of peace.

[6:27] And that's something we need. Something we want. On going in our lives. There is a promise here. It's a promise of peace. And it is a promise that is given to all born-again, true born-again followers of Christ.

It's a promise. It's a promise. Paul states the promise twice. Verse 7, of course, it's very clear. Do you see it? Verse 7. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts, your hearts, and minds through Christ Jesus.

This is a promise. Very clearly. Will guard. The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And then again in verse 9, we have the promise referred to.

And the God of peace will be with you. Those are promises. Very clearly. Issued twice. Same promise, but given twice.

Now, my task, as we look at this passage, my task is two-fold, as I see it. Number one, or first, to explain from Scripture just what this peace is, what it is, and why we should want it.

[7:48] That's task number one. What it is and why we should want it. And then the second task, which is something we'll look at next Sunday, and that is to expose what Paul says here about how we can have it.

Now, that's important. Two things we learn from this text and need to learn from this text. Number one, how, well, really, first, what this peace is and why we want it.

And secondly, how we can have it. Have it every day. You see, it's not automatic having this peace. The kind of peace of which Paul is teaching us.

It's not automatic. You see, there are two things, two significant things going on here in this passage. Two things that we should notice about this passage. There is, first of all, very obviously, the promise.

The promise of peace. But there is also what I would call the precepts. There are, rather. The precepts. There's the promise and then there are the precepts.

[8:53] What's a precept? It's a rule of behavior. We could even use the word command.

Command. So there's the promise and then there are the precepts. These two things we need to see in the text and the point being that you can't just have the promise without first obeying the precepts.

I'm sorry, but you can't just have the icing. You can't just have the prize. You can't just have the blessing. And this really is very clear from the text.

Clearer than maybe we might see at first notice our first glance. Now let me show it to you. There is an important word that is used in verse 7 and also in verse 9.

You know, by the way, I preach this way to have us focus on words not just because it's a good way to communicate the truth, but it's also a good way to tell you this is how you ought to study Scripture.

It's not just something exclusively for preachers to do. You know, to do these word studies and to look at particular words and pay close attention to the way things are worded and so forth.

[10:08] This is an example for you. This is how you ought to study Scripture. So pay attention to words in the verse. Not just concepts. Not just maybe the overall truth of a thing, but look at the words.

It is the word, the word, that helps us understand the meaning. Now I said this is clear from the text that you cannot have the promise without obeying the precepts and we understand that from a word

that is repeated twice in verse 7 and also in verse 9.

It's a very small word in the Greek language. As a matter of fact, it's the same size in the Greek as it is in the English. Just three letters. And as a part of speech, it is a conjunction.

Conjunction. You say, boy, you're serious about paying attention to every word. Yeah, even the conjunctions are important. I've made the point that prepositions are important to look at and they are.

Here, the conjunctions are very important that we understand now in English we have a number of conjunctions as we do in Greek as well. And the conjunction that I'm speaking of here referring to here is the conjunction and.

[11:30] And. Small little word. Verse 7. And the peace of God. Do you see that? Verse 7. The word and is there at the beginning of it.

Verse 9. And the God of peace. peace. All right. So you see, Paul did not say in verse 7, the peace of God will guard your hearts and mind.

He said, and the peace of God will guard your hearts and mind. Paul did not say in verse 9, the God of peace will be with you.

He said, and the God of peace will be with you. and you're probably thinking, so. What? This is important?

It is. And it's important in this way. In each case, the promise that's given in verse 7, also verse 9, in each instance, the promise of peace is the consequence of something else.

[12:36] We need to get this. Because we all want peace. We all want that tranquility of life that is indicative of a believer.

We all want that. Long for that. Desire that. Enjoy it when we have it. And indeed, it is promised. But it's not promised without a condition.

And so, in each case, the promise of peace is the consequence of something else. Or put it another way, it is the reward that comes as a result of something else.

And that something else is a series of precepts or rules of behavior. And there are six of them, as a matter of fact, here. Six of them.

Precepts. And we're going to look at those next week. Okay? And so, what is the Bible telling us?

The Bible is telling us very clearly that if you want to enjoy the promise, then you must obey the precepts.

[13:39] You can't take a shortcut. You can't have the promise without the precepts. There are no shortcuts in this. There are conditions. You say, well, I thought God was a loving God, a gracious God, and He just gives freely.

Well, He does. And salvation is free. There are no conditions for salvation. Well, there are, but Jesus has fulfilled all of those.

But there are, for the promises that are issued to believers, there are precepts. There are conditions. There are commands that we are to obey if we want to enjoy the promises.

Now, let's look at this then. And though Paul does not begin with the promise here in the text, the promise appears really further on down in the text, as I've said, in verse 7.

But I would like to begin with the promise this morning. And we need to get that first, okay? Alright, so let's look at the promise. The promise.

[14:39] There is a promise here of peace. And again, let me read it to you. Verse 7, And the peace of God, or the peace that comes from God, only from God, which surpasses all understanding, Paul said, will, the promise, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Now, this is Paul's full statement of the promise. Here is the whole thing. Now, he makes another reference to it in verse 9. But here, in verse 7, we have the full statement of it.

The promise. The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

There is the promise. Now, what is this promise of peace? Well, what does Paul say about it? He tells us three things that we need to get.

Three things. First, he tells us that it is a supernatural promise. He tells us this promise, this promise of peace.

[15:49] The promise is a supernatural peace. Here are people, Christian peace, the kind of peace that only a Christian can experience.

Christian peace is the mark of the supernatural on the life of the true believer. Let me say that again because we had a little distraction.

Christian peace. This is what is promised. Christian peace is the mark of the supernatural on the life of the true believer.

And how does Paul say this? He says, it surpasses all understanding. It's supernatural. Now, people, listen. the kind of peace that can and should characterize every born-again follower of Christ.

The world cannot explain it. Not this kind of peace. The world cannot explain it, nor can they, by the way, explain it away.

[16:59] They can't explain it. They can't explain it away. This is the promise that Paul is giving us here or God is giving us through Paul. It's the promise. The promise is a supernatural promise.

Or we could define it this way. It is, and many of us, all of us, at some point have experienced this. We know what this means. It is an unshakable tranquility that we experience in our hearts and in our minds.

unshakable. That is, no matter what happens. No matter how big a thing it is, no matter how hard a thing it is, no matter how tragic, even sudden, it is an unshakable tranquility in the heart.

To put it another way, it is an unconquerable confidence that a believer has. A confidence in what? Well, a number of things.

a confidence that God's precepts, His rules, His Word is flawless. It's a confidence about that.

[18:11] So then, everything He has said in His Word about life and about us and about His promises and about our future, we have an absolute confidence in that because we have a confidence that it is flawless.

There are no mistakes in it. It is also an unconquerable confidence that God's power, His power toward us is absolute and infinite, unrivaled, unmatched by any other power we may face, including Satan's, especially His.

It's an unconquerable confidence in it. And also, I would add to that, an unconquerable confidence that God's provision, His provision for us is all sufficient.

Now, it may not include all you want. Amen? Oh, me. But His provision is all sufficient.

It's an unconquerable confidence in it. I don't know how, I mean, you could describe it in so many different ways. And the description of it is not only based in the truth, and first and foremost, it is based there in what God has said about peace, but it is also based upon what we have experienced as believers.

[19:39] this abiding calm that just permeates our minds and our hearts.

An abiding calm even in the midst of the storms of life. Any and all of them.

Regardless of what shape they may take. This is the kind of peace that is promised. Have you always had that? No. We don't always have it.

But dear people, based upon the authority of God's Word, it is something we can always have. We'll get into the precepts that are the condition next time, but understand the promise.

It is huge. It is far reaching. In fact, it reaches every conceivable experience of life.

[20:49] And that's why I say it's supernatural. Because the real thing, this real peace is something the world cannot explain. It cannot explain it away.

It cannot understand it. It surpasses understanding, Paul said. it's supernatural. In Exodus chapter 8 verse 19, familiar portion of Scripture in the book of Exodus, it is that time when Moses has been brought up, called up by God to be the deliverer of Israel.

And they are in bondage in Egypt. You know all about the story. And Moses with his rod, the rod of God, he comes and God through Moses sends the plagues to Egypt.

You know all about that story. We also know that for a few of the plagues initially, the priests in Egypt, the magicians, I think probably would be better characterized as magicians, they were able to duplicate what Moses did.

Kind of puzzling, but I think they did it through trickery, through smoke and mirrors, or some other method they may have had. But there was some point when they couldn't do it anymore.

[22:03] Do you remember? They could not by trickery, or maybe even by magic, quote, magic, they could not duplicate the power of God through Moses and they finally had to admit something very astounding.

And this is what they said. They said, this is the finger of God. Amazing. They couldn't explain it.

They couldn't understand it. They couldn't duplicate it. They couldn't explain it or wait any longer. And so they finally had to admit the truth of it. This is supernatural. It's the finger of God.

Now that's the idea here. When Paul says, surpassing all understanding. You see, the promise of peace, the kind of peace that God promises, promises, the promise of peace to experience, it is to experience the touch of the supernatural, something that the world cannot explain except to say, this is the finger of God.

This is supernatural. That's the promise here. Is that something you want? No?

[23 : 21] Okay, well, let's go home. Well, it's something you want, isn't it? Alright, thank you. I knew there was somebody out there. Are you out there? Okay. It's something we want.

Something we desperately need. You may not think you need it right now. And, indeed, from an earthly perspective, maybe you don't. Everything's kind of even keel.

Everything's fine with you. But, something will come one day. And, all of you can testify to this.

Something will come one day that will shake and rock your world. And, though we need this peace of God and can't have it all the time, we especially need it then.

A supernatural peace. So much so that when others outside, outside the body of Christ, those who are not saved, the world, when they look at you, and they are looking, they know what's happened to you.

[24 : 33] They know how you've been treated, or they know what you have lost, or they know what you're experiencing, and they're looking to see how you react. it. And if you have the peace of God, then they will see something they cannot explain other than to say, it's God.

It's the finger of God. That has, by the way, and though we'll not get into this, Paul doesn't, that has some evangelistic implications.

Where God would use the peace that He has given you, in the midst of maybe the largest storm you could conceive of, and when He does that, and others see that peace, they know they don't have it. And it is a way for God to begin to draw them, to move them unto Himself. All right, so that's the idea here, supernatural peace.

Second, Paul tells us that this peace is a securing peace. It is a securing peace.

[25 : 52] It secures us. Paul said here in verse 7, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, then what does he say? It will guard you.

Guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. It will guard you. King James might have the word keep you. Maybe other words, but the idea is to guard.

That's the literal meaning. In fact, the word here that Paul used is a military word. Paul used a lot of military words. It's interesting. And a very picturesque word.

especially for those Philippian believers. They would have been able to visualize Paul's meaning when he used this word guard. We'll guard you.

You know, the city of Philippi was part of the Roman Empire. And because of that, the people of Philippi would have been used to seeing Roman soldiers in their city.

[26 : 57] They would have seen a number of them. It was a major city in that part of the world in Europe. A major commercial city. A lot of traffic going through and so forth.

Major, major city. And the Romans, it was part of their empire as was nearly all the world of the day. The known world. And so the people would be used to seeing guards stationed all around the city at strategic places in the city, important places in the city as well as other places, certainly at the city gates and even soldiers that would be around the city from time to time.

And so they were used to seeing soldiers guarding the city. And they were there, these Roman soldiers were there, guarding the city because they were guarding Rome's interests.

It was important to Rome that this city be secure. Secure from enemies. Secure not only from out, without, but also from within. Now this is the word that Paul used, same word.

And he used it though here in Scripture not to describe physical guards or soldiers or Roman soldiers guarding a city in a physical sense, but the imagery is the same.

[28 : 17] He used this word will guard to describe what the quote, peace of God does for the believer and what we need him to do for us.

And we desperately need this. And so let's just picture this as I believe the people of Philippi would have pictured. Picture your heart and mind in the sense of your inner being, the real you.

This is the real you. Picture your heart. And picture your heart and mind as a citadel. A castle.

Picture it as a castle.

And it is crucial, of course, that your castle, the castle of your heart and mind, the real you, your soul, will be included in that. It is crucial that your castle be held secure from all invading enemies, from without as well as from within.

Very crucial. whether it's an invading enemy or some insurrection from within. It's crucial that the castle of your life be held secure.

[29 : 29] And so picture sentries, sentries at their posts of your heart. Never sleeping. Never sleeping, never going off duty.

They're always there, heavily armed, and they never sleep. Picture that. And picture in your mind, guards constantly patrolling the walls of your castle, the castle, the citadel, citadel of your heart. And they're marching with their weapons and they are on guard and they're patrolling and they are there to protect and to secure. Picture that. And troops kind of, kind of, sort of ready to go into battle against all potential invaders.

And they are ready, always on their guard, always ready to do battle for your castle, the castle of your heart and life. Picture that. And then understand that these guards that are at their post, these guards that never sleep, these guards that are empowered by the very power of God, these guards just understand that these guards belong to the King of Kings, God Himself.

And they march behind the royal standard of the peace of God. Just picture that. They're carrying the standard and it's the peace of God and they are the soldiers of the King of Kings.

[31 : 08] And then know that inside the castle of the heart and mind, all is calm. All is quiet.

All is at peace. And why? Because all is secure. Secure. Not only because the King's guards are at their post and they never sleep, but also because the King Himself is in the castle.

That would be a good place for an amen. Amen. The King is in the castle. He not only has his guards at their post keeping watch and vigilance and they have all they need to take on any attack against your heart and mind, God.

But you have the King Himself inside. Paul said in verse 9, the God of peace will be with you. With you. What a promise.

A securing promise. The peace of God guarding your heart and mind and the God of peace Himself with you. He is your constant companion.

[32 : 32] Your permanent resident in your heart. This is the promise of God. It is a supernatural peace that He has promised.

Surpasses all understanding. It is a securing peace. Guarding. Always guarding your heart and your mind.

Finally, this peace is a substantive peace. Substantive. It is important we understand this.

He said through Christ Jesus. Through Christ Jesus. In the world outside of biblical Christianity, peace, J.A.

Mott, the way he put it, he said, peace is a sort of spiritual marshmallow full of softness and sweetness but without much actual substance.

[33 : 37] I love marshmallows, love to roast them and I'm an expert at roasting marshmallows. I've got to tell you and I can just use the rotisserie method and pretty soon it's just a nice golden brown on the outside and it's nothing but liquid on the inside and you put that in your mouth and it's so good and in an instant it's gone.

Just like that. So you've got to get another one out and put it back in the fire. I think that's a good kind of analogy of the kind of peace the world has.

If you can say they have any kind of peace. But this is how they would characterize peace. Outside our understanding which is a biblical understanding peace is just a spiritual marshmallow.

It may be soft, it may be sweet, but it has no substance really. But when you attach the word peace to the word God, when you put those two together in close proximity, whether it's the peace that comes from Him or it is the peace that is who He is, when you put the two together you have something highly substantive.

You have indeed something eternally substantive. two. This peace that's promised us is far more than just a feeling of tranquility.

[35 : 01] It's far more than just a feeling of security or some kind of confidence of security. It is that. It's far more than that because it has substance.

And so what is the substance of this peace? Well, salvation for one thing. salvation full and free.

Romans 5:1 says therefore having been justified by faith we have who knows the next few words peace with God. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the substance of it. We have peace with God and that's how it all begins. You can't have any kind of peace with God or the peace of God until you first have peace with God through salvation. That's how it begins. And this was, by the way, profoundly demonstrated to the apostles immediately after the resurrection. And I want to have you look at this passage. Very key. [36:05] John chapter 20 and verse 19. Would you turn to that? John chapter 20 and verse 19. This again is after the resurrection. And Jesus is about to appear to his apostles in that closed room.

It's an incredible scene. Why don't you listen to this? Then, John 20 verse 19, then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, this is the very day of the resurrection, that evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be with you.

You say, well, that's just kind of a greeting, kind of a polite, maybe even customary greeting, but it's not that. It's not that because he repeats it again in verse 21.

So Jesus said to them again, Peace to you. Literally. Peace, again, be with you.

It's the same wording as we have in verse 19. It's not a greeting. Not some customary way to address people when you come into the room.

[37:33] Now, they did have such a greeting, but that's not what this is. It was something more, much more than that. This was not a greeting. This was an announcement of good news to them.

Great news. Because he is saying to them and to us that there now exists a condition of peace between you and God.

a condition of peace that did not exist before. There was a condition of hostility before.

You were not at peace with God before. You were an enemy of God before. But there now exists a state of peace, a condition of peace.

This is great news, good news. A peace, by the way, obviously, clearly, that was accomplished through the cross. This is what Jesus is saying to them.

[38:38] He said, how do we know that? We know that because of what he says, what happens in between. These two statements or declarations. Peace be with you.

The thing that happens in between. In between. In verse 20. Let me put all three verses together.

Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, this verse 19, peace be with you.

And when he had said this, what did he do? He showed them his hands and his side, the marks of the cross. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

So Jesus said to them again, peace to you. Peace to you as the Father has sent me, I also send you. By the way, Thomas, you know, was not there and then a little bit later Thomas comes and so Jesus says the same thing to him in verse 26.

Peace to you. You see, listen, he's not just greeting them, he is announcing great news to them and it's great news not only to them, but to us.

[39:54] It's peace. Because you see, the first fruit of the cross of Christ is peace. It's peace with God. A state of peace that did not exist before and could not exist before.

We were at enmity with God, enemies of God. There were hostilities between us. We were under the wrath of God. And because of the cross, what Jesus did at the cross, we now can have peace with God.

Romans 5, 1, I'll go back to that verse. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the promise of peace.

This is where it begins. This is the foundation of it. We could have no peace whatsoever apart from peace with God, accomplished through the cross.

peace. See, there's great substance in this. And I would say to you that the very foundation of our condition of peace in the midst of maybe some of the most horrendous things the world could throw at us, the very foundation of it is our salvation in Christ.

[41:05] That by itself, and that's not all that God provides in His peace, but that by itself gives us the courage to stand.

Because I have peace with God. Secondly, it also includes power. Not just salvation, but power. Let me give you a verse.

Hebrews 13 20. Hebrews 13 20, the Bible says, Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Think of the power of this peace that abides within us. It's the resurrection power. Resurrection power.

That's the promise of peace. The substance of peace. It's power abiding in you.

[42 : 22] Ephesians 1.19. Let me give you that one. Paul speaks of the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe in accordance to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

The power of God. See, it is the God of peace, Paul says, who will be with you in all of His power. Let me tell you something else about the substance of the peace of God. It includes victory. Victory over sin, over Satan, over self. that's the substance of this peace.

Romans 16.20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. It's the ultimate peace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Amen. Now, folks, listen, it is absolutely crucial that God's people know and experience His peace. This peace. Let me quote a great theologian.

[43 : 33] He said, each of us is placed in a position of great responsibility. Each of us is believers. The onward march and the resolute stand of the church in the world depends, in the final human analysis, on the state of the heart.

The state of the heart. God is the mighty indweller and the God who sets a supernatural mark on our lives. He is our guard and companion.

He gives us His peace. The task is great. The power is equal to it. So, you see, this peace, God promises, is more than just peaceful feelings.

It is a spiritual wholeness, a completeness. In fact, by the way, the word, the Hebrew word for peace is, as I'm sure you know, shalom, that means peace, but the root meaning of that word carries the meaning of wholeness.

So, it's not just a feeling, it's a completeness, it's a wholeness. It is the power of God abiding in us, giving us fulfillment, making us complete unto Him.

[44 : 52] And it is the mark of the supernatural on our lives that others see but cannot explain. It is not just a put-on when other people are looking, it's real.

Peace is who we are in Christ. We are the epitome of peace, or should be, and can be.

But by the way, it's not just on the inside either. this peace of God completes us in all directions. Upward, our salvation. Inward, that inner tranquility, that calm within us, but also outward. It's a peace that reaches outward. It's not just a feeling, it's something that reaches outward.

You know, Paul opened his discussion on this promise of peace with a reference to a couple of ladies in the church, Iodia and Syntyche, who apparently were at odds with one another.

[45 : 51] We don't know the substance of that. Now, we are going to consider some of that and the significance of it when we get to the precepts next time. But here these two ladies are at odds with one another, and this is the example that Paul uses to open his discussion on the peace of God.

Now, that's interesting. Because he wants to point out here that this peace of which he speaks provides a power that reaches outward as well as inward, what good would this peace be if it had the power for inner tranquility but was absolutely impotent to fix broken relationships?

Do you see? Do you imagine that Paul would have encouraged Iodia and Syntyche to embrace God's peace only as an inward guard on their hearts and not as a remedy to fix their broken relationship?

No. So you see, the peace of God is far reaching. It begins with salvation and our peace with God and it continues with sanctification, our growing in our faith and the ongoing peace of God and it reaches out into the entire community of God to the church.

how ridiculous that God would promise that we would have peace on the inside and not give the same promise that we could have peace with one another. So that's included in this promise.

[47 : 25] Shortly before Jesus finished His work on this earth and went to the right hand of the throne of God, He said to His disciples and to us in John 14 27, He said, Peace I leave with you, you all.

It's plural. He said, My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. It's not their peace, it's my peace that I give to you. And so let not your heart be troubled, He said, neither let it be afraid. This is a promise. It's something we need. The promise of peace. peace. Next time we're going to consider the precepts and there are six of them. And the promise of peace, remember, is conditioned on obedience to God's precepts, His rules of behavior. But let me conclude with this, these few questions. Soul searching question. Are you experiencing the peace of God in your heart and mind right now? [48 : 36] are you at peace with your brothers and sisters in Christ? Are you? I mean every one of them. And here's a crucial question. Are you at peace with God? In fact, I should have started with that question because that is the one you must answer first. And that is the one that quite possibly some of you cannot answer. Or if you can, the answer is no, not really. Really. But you can have that peace too. And it's offered by a gracious God. And it is granted freely through faith. [49 : 44] .