

Dealing With Anxiety

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if you'd all turn to Philippians chapter 4, we've been working through Philippians over the past few weeks in the evenings And we're in our second to last section in Philippians. So Philippians chapter 4 will be verses 2 to 9 Before we do let me just pray again. Lord we pray that you would indeed turn your face to us that we would know your blessing and your joy and Lord we pray that you'd indeed be speaking to us by your spirit cutting deep into us And building us up as we read your word now. Amen Philippians 4 from verse 2 I Entreat Yodia and I entreat and seat its inter key to agree in the Lord Yes, I ask you also true companion help these women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel Together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life Rejoice in the Lord always again. I will say rejoice Let your reasonableness be known to everyone the Lord is at hand

Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving Let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just whatever is pure Whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable if there is any excellence if there is anything worthy of praise Think about these things What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me practice these things and the God of peace will be with you Well, we're drawing to the end of the book of Philippians aren't we and you might have noticed that Paul Author is drawing together various themes that we've been seeing throughout the letter One of those big themes is how we think our mindset is something that Paul's touched again and again You could trace that word through the letter and see how important our mindset is

Just last week Paul contrasted two types of mindsets How on one hand we could have our minds fixed on the earth and on earthly things and Which leads to nothing or on the other hand Paul says instead imitate me and Paul urges us to instead be setting our mind on Christ be straining for him Straining for that goal and the life that awaits us as citizens of heaven. We've already been he's already set out those two types of mindsets Thinking that is rooted in this earth and thinking that is rooted in Christ However, just talking about you know, how we think and our mindset might sound I don't know rather Separated from real life might think okay. What does what does that practically look like?

You know, what difference does it make to have our minds set on Christ to be fixed on him? You know if you were to ask Paul that You might if Paul was here we might want to ask him that question. What does that practically look like?

Well, that's what he's gonna answer now in chapter 4. That's where chapter 4 is going now It's applying these truths and these themes that we've been seeing throughout the letter and two particular things He touches on two particular things we'll see tonight And two areas you might say which the Philippians were thinking with an earthly mindset rather than a heavenly one and that is conflict and anxiety those are two struggles that the Philippians faced Some of them that we've already touched on as we've gone through the letter and but as Paul addresses it He weaves in what we've learned about a mindset and we'll see just how important our mindset is as we both grapple with Disunity in conflict and as we seek to struggle with anxiety and instead look to the Lord So Mindset is important in both of these and we're gonna dive straight into the first section verses two and three as we look at as we see how a heavenly mindset affects conflict and division let me read

[4:12] Those verses again. I entreat Yodian and I entreat in C. Ticinti to agree in the Lord Yes, I ask you also true companion help these women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel Together with Clement and the rest of the fellow workers whose names are in the book of life Now throughout Philippians we've seen this theme of partnership, haven't we the letter Began by Paul began the letter by praising the Philippians for how well they were doing at partnership And he ends the letter in the same way. We'll see next week However, he's also been giving us hints that not everything is going well in Philippi and the beginning of chapter 2 He emphasized that they needed to be of one mind Which really suggests they're not very you know getting on well. He told them they need to start counting other people more significant than themselves So there were some issues with conflict clearly that the whole church had to deal with So that was general but now Paul closes the letter by almost zooming in on a particular

Conflict that was happening in the Philippian church between these two ladies Yodia and Sintiqi Now some people wonder if actually the whole letter is just is leading up and building up to this Confrontation this calling out of these two ladies I think rather I would lean towards those who say that Yodian Sintiqi I just maybe a prime example of some of the conflict and disagreement that has that was going on in Philippi And Paul is calling them out to instead show the difference That the gospel will make in their relationships when they follow through and what he's been teaching So let's think again. Let's look more closely at what's going on between these two ladies and Yodian Sintiqi seemed to be women that Paul knew well Verse 3 tells us that they used to labor side by side with him So you can imagine them with Paul when he was maybe at Philippi in the first place They were going with him in the marketplace answering people's questions encouraging people caring for people's needs

Looking for opportunities to speak of the hope that they had But at some point things had gone sour You know these ladies who had been a double act on door duty You know now don't even speak to each other as they come in they had been The dream team on Sunday school, but now that they make sure as they organize the rotor that they're never on at the same time We don't know that they're falling out might have been public it maybe everyone in Philippi Knew that things had got a bit icy, but it seems that no one wanted to have anything to do with it No one wanted to get involved. I just imagine them listening to the letter so far You can imagine them listening as Paul says Imagine them nodding along as Paul's telling people to get on in chapter 2 You can imagine maybe Yodia is listening to this and she's thinking you know, I really hope that Sinti is listening She's always grumbling and Sinti he's listening to and she's thinking you know Yodia better listen to this She's always counting herself as a better than everyone else. She needs to remember to humble herself a bit

Imagine there's a prize then for everyone as Paul calls them out by name I entreat Yodia and I entrench each entreat Sinti to agree in the Lord He doesn't say look Yodia. I know that Sinti he's treated you unfairly, but you need to be the bigger person and get on He doesn't say Sinti key. Look, you know, you need to just make things right. I know I know she's hurt your feelings He just says agree in the Lord He cuts completely across any kind of any excuses Yodia and Sinti key two real women who lived 2,000 years ago But they could just these as easily be two people in here tonight. Couldn't they?

And maybe they are two people in this room tonight. Maybe there is a Yodia and Sinti key here That's the situation. Let's look at the problem then. Why does Paul call them out?

[8 : 14] We're given two reasons first look with me at the end of verse 3. Do you notice what Paul says about them? Paul says about them He says that their names are written in the book of life. These are sisters in Christ. This is why it's an issue They're fellow citizens of heaven You know if we were to use the language of chapter 2 we could say that the Christ the glorious son of God Left aside his majesty and became a baby for them both The one who is Lord of all became a servant for them both the one who is to give the ruggiver of life Lay down his life for them both the one who Rains on high and is interceding at God's right hand He intercedes for them both and when Christ returns to make a new creation guess who's gonna be there Yodia and Sinti key You know that this is a problem this division is a problem Because they're meant to be they have one Lord one Savior one father one spirit and yet they don't get along

The simple fact is that these two women are united in Christ and yet they don't want to get anywhere near each other And that's a really important truth for us to remember You and I anyone in this room who is trusting in Jesus. We are united in Christ Now we might not always feel like it. We might not always act like it But that's just a fact That we need and even if whether Yodia and Sinti he liked it or not that didn't stop it being true It just meant that we're really they were just out of touch with reality and we'll see a bit more of that later Their names are written in the book of life. So they shouldn't be divided But the second reason this is a problem is because when followers of Jesus quarrel and divide it completely cripples Gospel work Again see verse 3 Paul says these ladies Were laboring side by side with him in the gospel You know last time we saw that phrase labor side by side It actually only comes up one other time in the New Testament and that's in chapter 1 verse 27 where he Paul gives his like main command in the letter where he tells people to

Where is it? 127 we says live let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you I'm absent. I may hear that you are standing firm in one spirit and with one mind striving side by side or laboring side by side for the faith of the gospel in other words Yodia and Sinti he were a Prime example in the past. They were a prime example of doing what Paul wants all the Philippians to do They were really good at partnering together for the gospel And that just makes all of this even worse you know these you know these You know they they had probably been models of Praying together for their friends and neighbors and they'd been prime examples of looking for chances to speak about the hope that they have But now that that's all in the past, you know the verb that Paul uses is suggests

That all this laboring side by side no longer happens whatever happened that caused them to disagree He's now just completely shot any kind of gospel work a Few weeks ago. We compared that striving side by side to people, you know in a rugby scrum Shoulder by shoulder arms around each other pushing for it We said that if people aren't united if the guys in the scrum aren't holding on to each other that scrum is either gonna collapse or veer into the side That's exactly what's happened here. They were divided and as a result the advance of the gospel just went into the floor I hope we see then that gospel unity is important and And division is really serious. It was serious enough that Paul called it out because he was crippling the work in the church It was hindering the church's ability to advance the gospel You're the insyntia key were a shining example of layer at laboring side by side they then became an example of the crippling effect of of crippling for a fact of

Conflict on the gospel But Paul isn't done with using them as an example. I don't think You know Paul calls them out not to shame them But because he intends them to be an example of the transforming work of Christ he intends them to be an example of God reconciling people and once more using them To be using them to advance the gospel working side by side So what's the solution what needs to be done first an individual level Paul very simply just tells them to agree To get on to be of one mind to stop quarreling Now we don't know the depth of the division or the hurt that was being caused We don't know whether there were really good reasons Paul I think the reason Paul doesn't tell us the exact issues because we could be tempted to say oh that was just a little thing There was only a little thing that divided them the thing that's stopping me from talking to someone that's that's far bigger Paul it's not it's not as simple as saying agree in the Lord

[13 : 45] But he does he just says agree As far as Paul's concerned there's nothing that can't be repaired by the reconciling power of God But he doesn't just say agree he chooses his words carefully in the NIV and it translates it as quite literally As being of one mind in the Lord. This is where that kind of thinking thing comes in Because we've seen that one mind phrase come up before that was again That phrase came up in chapter 2 where Paul was telling the Philippians to be of one mind And the reason was you saying you could have you should be of one mind So that you have the mind of Christ Jesus who didn't count who Who counted others more significant than himself and lay down his life on the cross for our sins In other words Paul's saying the solution to all this division is to stop to stop thinking in an earthly way stop looking at to your own interests And saying I gotta I'm this life is what matters. So I need to grab what's mine and defend it

Paul says rather you need to start thinking like Christ. That's heavenly thinking Which means saying it doesn't doesn't matter what my own preference is It doesn't doesn't matter what my own preferences are doesn't matter if I've been hurt In some ways, I'm gonna put those things aside For the sake of Christ for the sake of the gospel It's that contrasting mindset Brothers and sisters if we're not of one mind Then the solution is that we need to start sit thinking like citizens of heaven And now help us to stop Thinking just in terms of what divides us. Well, he thinks like this. She thinks like that. He did that he did she did that If we think with a heavenly mindset, we're gonna be instead focusing on what Christ has done on who he on who he is and On the things that unite us that we're together citizens of heaven That we're together ones those who have our names written in the book of life

Paul said Paul's solution isn't just on an individual level though, is it as a corporate problems require Corporate solutions and in verse 3 he says I urge you true companion to help these women There's no such thing as a private dispute We might feel like I mean feel free to disagree with me after the service if you want but you know When there's when people don't get along other people are dragged in and pretty soon There's sides whether that's in a family or in a community or in a church And that's really serious the church is the body of Christ and if two members Of the church I use member in a member part of the body way as Jesus does But if two members are divided well that means the whole body of Christ is divided You know a problem between two people is a problem for the whole body of Christ So the whole church has the obligation to help with the healing Now that doesn't that doesn't mean that 50 people should suddenly pile in on two people who don't get on

Rather we need to do that along lines of relationship don't we? But if we do can I encourage us that? To be prayerfully thinking if we do if we do know those who are not getting along if we do know that where there's division and quarrel can I encourage you to Preferably think how you can draw alongside someone how you can be that true companion that helps people to agree in the Lord It's a wonderful thing to be a peacemaker. It's so easy to talk about other people and talk about other people's disagreements It's much harder to try to think how to help people to reconcile But I think Paul deliberately leaves that true companion Ambiguous he doesn't put a name to it because he intends us to put our names into it where we see the times of conflict I Hope many of us though. I hope there isn't any quarreling. I hope there isn't any division And that's where verse 5 comes in. It's so important or verse 4 rather 4 and 5

Rejoice in the Lord always again. I will say rejoice let your reasonableness be known to everyone The solution to guarding against this unity is the same as fighting it. It's focusing on the Lord Rejoicing in him rejoicing in all that he is If we want to be on our guard against the vision, we need to focus on our Savior the one who unites us Rejoicing the Lord heals and guards against conflict. However, that isn't the only part of life That it brings peace. That's why I think Paul moves from talking about conflict in verses 2 and 3 to then talking about anxiety In a verses 4 to 9 that's our second point anxiety That we need to rejoice in the Lord in the face of anxiety with minds set on him Anxiety and peace are a major theme you'll see running through verses 4 to 9 and as I've said we can't cover everything in what?

[18 : 55] the half-time that we have left So my aim is not to be comprehensive here, but really just sketch some thoughts and teaching about what the Bible has to say From Philippians 4, but I do hope we can return to that topic in the future Anxiety something that will all have faith so though for some people it's crippling Some people it means it completely affects many parts of their daily life whether they can come out and meet people As they just try to contemplate the future It also comes and hits us in waves in life situations happen In our lives that completely knock us off our feet and we think at one point we think I've never struggled with anxiety in the next moment We think it's the only thing I can think about At its most basic anxiety is on the spectrum of fear, isn't it from worry to anxiety to outright terror?

Maybe you could say anxiety is there There's a very helpful book. I was just reading as I was preparing for this called feelings and faith by Brian Borgman I'll be happy to lend it to anyone But it's very helpful. He just takes us through the fact that our feelings aren't always in line with the truth One area that he touches on is anxiety, but in this book he explains Anxiety in this way and fear in this way. He says there's good fear on one hand. We know this Fight or flights is is a good if we if we hear a I don't know if we smell gas if we Stand too close to the edge Something goes in our heads and we're afraid and that's good. It keeps us safe. There's some good types of fear There's also the fear of the Lord that the Bible tells us is the beginning of wisdom and it's the heart of godliness There's so there's good fear on one hand but sometimes our emotions of fear and anxiety and worry are negative there can be a fear of others and that can easily dominate the decisions that we make whether that's peer pressure at school to

Or fear of disapproval in someone from someone in the church or in the community There can also be anxiety about the future whether that's the next day the next year We can fear losing our health losing our money Losing a relationship we can fear getting old and forgetting things fear getting hurt Fear getting hurt emotionally or physically or many ways Anxiety hits us in so many ways What does anxiety come from then?

Well now we live in a world that is that's broken by sin. We live in bodies That bear the scars of this broken world as well. And so we've got to say that anxiety is sometimes medical And that's something that I'm not qualified to speak on But we have to recognize that that is an important area and And it's something that that's why we need medical professionals as well to help us and sometimes But the Bible does also have a lot to say about anxiety Nevertheless our broken world is scary and we're prone to fear and it could be tempting though in this world That is there where there are so many things outside us That cause us to worry to think that the problem is always out there However scripture consistently shows us that the seat of our emotions where our emotions come from is our hearts our emotions reveal our values and our beliefs and So when we drill deep down in our hearts, we drill deep down into our anxious thoughts actually what we'll find

It's normally that and very often that they're a result of putting at something else in the place of God You see giving something else ultimate value because the problem is Nothing else is stable enough to take such a foundational position in our lives As the late David Paul is and who has written a lot in the area of Christian counseling explains it like this He says if what you most value can be taken away and destroyed Then you set yourself up for anxiety I think he's right You'll all need to look at your own hearts, but I can personally say In for myself that when I've put too much value on some a certain future I want then that's what rules are And that's what rules my mind And that's the thing that becomes that's the thing that really takes the throne in my heart When I care too much about someone's opinion or affirmation It's and their word becomes like the word of God. I you know and that causes me to be anxious about what are they thinking?

[23 : 42] What are they will they approve will they disapprove? Again, that's someone else taking that seat in my heart of ultimate value And it's in response to this kind of anxiety that Jesus in Matthew 6 and Paul in Philippians 4 Say do not be anxious Such anxiety is wrong and for one thing it doesn't achieve anything I think it's just so helpful that Jesus points that out and he says which of you by being anxious can add a single span to the hour of his life It achieves nothing we feel like it does we feel like the more I think about something I can fix it because we want control But it doesn't it achieves nothing and in fact it's worth the nothing because it drags our gaze away from God And he's the exact person that we need to be looking to He's the exact one we need to hold on to when we're struggling and when we're afraid We must remember one other thing that when Jesus and Paul say do not be anxious

They don't say it because they don't understand You know Paul's not just being harsh Jesus isn't just being harsh and blunt when he says do not be anxious He does understand how difficult it is You know most of the people Jesus was speaking to lived each day on the wage that they earned on that day He was literally hand to mouth give us this day our daily bread So he understood that Paul likewise wrote to the Philippians who are facing frightening situations Frightening opponents You know, maybe they were worried about the situation of division in the church as well So Jesus and Paul understand they care and that's why Paul doesn't just say do not be anxious He gives a promise and he gives for habits to help us Help us to fight anxiety and walk one day at a time the promise brackets versus five to nine It's right at the beginning. He says the Lord is at hand and it's right at the end He says the God of peace will be with you In the face of anxiety the promise we need to remember is that God is with us

And the God who is with us will grant us his peace And the presence of God is really the best promise that an anxious heart can hear When we're anxious we feel too weak to face what lies ahead And so it's helpful to remember that the Lord Almighty is with us when we're Anxious when the future is filled with many unknowns The thing we most need to be reminded of that time is that the God who knows everything is on our side He knows all the unknowns that cause us to stay up late at night When we're weighed down with worry because we don't know what to do It's the God who is with us who is in control So can I encourage you brothers and sisters in those times to look to him when the pillars of our life feel like they're gonna crumble We've got a savior who is immovable He's immovable, but he understands as well, you know, I think the best thing is that Jesus walked this earth, but he wasn't anxious now that doesn't mean he can't understand

But that means he's perfectly able to bear that full load of our anxieties If Jesus was anxious then he would We'd he'd get knocked down By all of our fears and he wouldn't be able to help us But he walked this life. He walked this path of suffering and he wasn't bogged down He was able to every time look to God to always cast his cares on him Think how hard that would have been think about as he walked to Jerusalem facing the cross as he was in Gethsemane So he's perfectly qualified to take our fears. So why he says come to me all you who weary and heavy laden and I'll give you rest That's the God who is with us That's the savior who is for us if we hold on to that promise it will That's the promise we need to hold close to our hearts and Paul gives us four habits I'll go through very quickly to help us hold that promise. He tells us to rejoice. He tells us to pray He tells us to think and he tells us to practice. I'll just run through those quickly first

Rejoice in the Lord in verse 5 Rejoice in the Lord again, I will say rejoice When we as I've just been saying in the first one we rejoice in the Lord we turn our attention on him That's exactly what we need to do When we're feeling anxious when our focus is on other things that are gnawing away at us and causing us to despair Focusing on the truth is what will unseat the anxiety that's in our hearts But a vacant heart will very quickly just become worried again if we're simply trying to you know look away That worry will return and that's why we get that wonderful promise that the peace of God which surpasses all understanding Will guard our hearts and our minds In other words God saying you know as you look to me and as the worry is driven out I'm gonna garrison your heart against it returning Second pray to him The Lord is at hand do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God

[29 : 00] As we rejoice in God we're to be casting all our anxieties on him because he cares for us. He has the power He has the compassion. He's perfectly able to bear our burdens All the things that are troubling us all the thoughts that are weighing us down We could take all that to God in prayer. It's the only safe place for it As we're casting those thoughts on God they need to be replaced Which is why Paul then goes on and says in verse 8 to think about these things to think about whatever is true Whatever is honorable and just and lovely and excellent We need to in as we throw out all those anxious thoughts and cast them on God we need to replace them with a new focus You know constantly reading that if I'm feeling anxious about I don't know situation with the Of living and how my wallet's gonna get squeezed from constantly reading the news and hearing about all of these new things That's just gonna drive that anxiety that circle of anxiety that spiral

Rather we need to focus on what is true and good and excellent. We need to focus on Christ. Read his words, see the promises that God gives us. If I'm feeling anxious about my identity, my appearance, all those things well constantly going on social media is just gonna fuel that. Rather need to focus on what is true, look to Christ and whom I we find our identity. Finally Paul says practice these things. Whatever we have you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you. We need to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ and this really just brings us full circle back to where we started because Paul last week is was again saying follow my example. Not the example of those who have their mindset on earthly things. So we need to think if we're feeling anxious we need to ask ourselves who am I imitating?

Who's our example? I'm for am I following who am I aspiring to be who are my role models because? Believe it that those people were aspiring to. We're gonna adopt their idols as well their gods will become our gods if they if we're aspiring to be you know I don't know someone who's at the top of their field and earning a ton of money or someone who's I Don't know very famous then actually the gods that they worship to get to that position. They're gonna be the ones that sit in the seat of our heart. And all those anxieties that come with it are gonna cut our gonna weigh down on us. We don't need a dodgy foundation. We need a firm found our hedation, which is why Paul says imitate me. Paul rejoices in Christ. He looks to Christ. Because Christ is that only firm foundation. Rejoicing in him is what guards and preserves us. It's what helps to heal the disunity that you're in syndicate face.

It's what helps to Guard our hearts and give us the peace of Christ Jesus that we see here. Well, let's just let's do that now as we come to God in prayer.