

Transformed To Enjoy Peace

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[0 : 00] Welcome to the last in our series on transformed, being transformed, living our new life, living our new life in Christ. And today we're going to look at being transformed to enjoy peace.

Now peace is one of those elusive things in life. I don't know if you find that. I certainly find that. It would be so lovely just to live in that constant zone of chillness.

But obviously it's more than just that. Peace is that old Hebrew word, shalom. And it means that every relationship in life is working well.

My relationship with God is working well. My relationship with others is working well. My relationship with myself and the physical world is working well. But you know, it's that elusive thing.

It's so, it's almost, you want to grab it and when you've got it, it almost disappears. And it's because we're in this constant situation of flux, of change, of things that come into our life that kind of spoil whatever peace we can find.

[1 : 08] We've got constantly new things thrown at us all the time. I don't know how you felt this weekend, having the electricity on. Oh man, it was such a joy. And then the weather was lovely.

And then Adrian reminds us about the crime that's going on. But that came from a prayer from the presiding bishop. It was like, guys, this is heavy stuff. And it happened around the corner from a church up in Soweto.

And they're dealing with 16 families with, I mean, just out of the blue. They're probably watching the rugby for all we know. Although that happened earlier in the week. The petrol price, oof, that's enough to stress one out.

Escom, okay, the electricity's on right now. We never know how long it's going to last. Living in South Africa's got its challenges. Our own family throws us our own challenges with our kids.

They do strange things we didn't think we'd taught them to do, teach them to do, and then they just do their own thing. Jobs can cause stress. Our partner can cause stress.

[2 : 21] Our past, the things we've done, and the things that have happened to us that we can't quite put to bed. How do we find peace?

How do we live lives so transformed by the grace and the power of Jesus that no matter what comes our way, no matter what causes us anxiety, no matter what causes us upsetness, or causes us worry, how do we do what Paul says, which is make our gentleness known to all, and then to be content?

So have a look at verse 5. He says, rejoice. Okay, it's a command. We'll look at that in a minute. But let your gentleness be evident to all.

In your response, he's going to talk about to not be anxious, and he wants us in any response to show gentleness, to show... The other part of that word is restraint.

It's not to fly off the handle and be triggered, but to handle things with... not with ease, but with the right appropriate level of response. How do we get there?

- [3 : 28] What about being content? At the end of our reading, Paul says, yeah, thanks for your help, guys, from the church at Philippi. Paul is in Rome. He's not there on a holiday. Okay, he's in prison, and he's about to die. He was in... He established the church in... Philippi... Well, early 50s.
- Paul is writing from Rome in the mid-60s. That's 15 years. And they heard about it, and they sent him a gift, and he said, thanks, but I actually don't need it, because I'm in jail. I'm going to die, but I'm content, because I've got Christ, and I've run the race.
- I've done the things that God has wanted me to do. I've learned the secret of being content. That would be a very cool secret to have, don't you think? How are we going to get there?
- Well, in our passage today, Paul tells us to do three things. Three things. Three things. Take three actions that will help us respond in transformed ways to the pressures of life.
- [4 : 35] So we're going to look at three different areas of life that we can mold our responses on that will help us show the world that we're transformed, and we're not filled with anxiety.
- The first thing is to not be anxious, but to rejoice. But it's not just rejoice, okay? It's not just a general, okay, I want you to rejoice. Don't do that. Just do that. Just stop it.
- Rejoice. We must rejoice in a specific thing. So the first thing we're going to look at is don't be anxious, but rejoice in the lordship of Christ. The lordship of Christ.
- You know, anxiety is such a horrible, silent enemy, a robber of joy. It keeps us up at night. It makes us feel sick.
- You know, when you get that anxious feeling, it churns in your stomach. Your palms get sweaty. That's my heart beating, just in case you know.
- [5 : 36] Panic attacks, if you've ever had those, are terrible. You feel sick with worry. You're paralyzed with anxiety. You don't know which thing to do, what not to do, what to do. You know, you face those situations where you just don't know which way to turn.
- Runs around in your head. Anxiety is one of the things we tend to struggle for as just part of living in a broken world. And we sort of learn to live with it as a more or less constant companion.
- We find it difficult to fight anxiety off. But Paul says he doesn't want God's people to be anxious about anything. And the implication is also at any time.
- And it's actually a command. It's not an optional extra. It's not saying, hey, it'll be really good if you do this. Here's a suggestion. It's you have to do this. We need to take our fight against anxiety seriously.
- But thankfully, Paul gives us lots of ammunition to fight that particular fight well. Let's have a look at verse 4, just for the command. Rejoice in the Lord always.
- [6 : 45] And then I repeat it. Rejoice. I will say it again. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.
- So just notice that Paul says, I want you to have joy, or I want you to rejoice in the Lord. He doesn't say in Jesus. He's got the Lordship of Christ in view here.
- And then you can rejoice. You can let your gentleness be known. You can respond with gentleness, with restraint, to the things that life throws at you, because the Lord is near.
- This is Jesus' Lordship that's in view. Now, Jesus is near us in two ways. Firstly, he's near in proximity. Near means right here, next to me.
- It really means with me, close with you, next to you. A good thing to remind ourselves of when we're going through a tough situation is we're not doing it alone.

- [7 : 46] Jesus is right there with us. A passage in Hebrews reminds us of this. Very helpful passage when we're struggling with stuff in our life.
- Hebrews chapter 4. The writer says this, We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. The high priest there is Jesus.
- It's not just any ordinary priest. He's the high priest. In fact, he talks about Jesus is the high priest in the order of Melchizedek, which is this hugely powerful but mysterious figure in the Old Testament.
- Paul is saying, the writer to the Hebrews is saying, Jesus is this guy. And this high priest is up in heaven. We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted or tested in every way that we are, yet was without sin.
- So Jesus knows what it is to live life in this broken world and to be pulled apart and have things thrown at us and deal with the stuff that life throws at you.
- [8 : 50] Okay, he knows about that and he knows it more than we can ever experience. I mean, he ended up on a Roman cross. None of us are going to go through the stresses that he went through.
- So yes, he can totally understand what you're going through. And because of that, this little passage in Hebrews ends with, this is going to help us with prayer. Let us then approach the throne of grace because we know that we've got a high priest who knows our weaknesses, can sympathize with us because he knows what it feels like.
- Let us then approach the throne of grace. Let's pray with confidence. So that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- So the one thing is Jesus is near us and he's gone through the same things that we've gone through so he can understand and help us. Does that make sense? But Jesus didn't just suffer as a human and die as a human in humility and end there.
- He rose again as the Lord of life and he rules now from heaven and will ultimately return to earth.
- [10 : 08] So his return is also near. So what Paul says in Hebrews, the Lord is near, it's a double meaning. He doesn't tell you which one he's talking about.
- He's near with me, but his return is also near. Paul has got those, he's got a sort of bifocal vision here. He's got both those things in sight. Why does that help us?
- Well, what is going to happen when Jesus returns? What's going to happen to all the pain in the world? What's going to happen to all the evil in the world? What's going to happen to all the pain in my body?
- What's going to happen to all my broken relationships and my past regrets and my worries and my concerns? When he returns, in a flash, in a blink of an eye, it's all gone.
- When he returns, he's going to banish all the tears, all death, all pain, and he's going to make all things new. That just gives you that little bit. Maybe it gives you a lot.
- [11 : 10] If it gives you a little bit, that's fine. For me, it gives me a lot. I'm sure it does that for all of us. That just gives us the power to power through the pain, as it does with Paul. Anyway, one of the main things that Paul often has got in view is the return of Christ.
- It's one of the main things he looks forward to. Do you remember we did our series in Revelation? Not in detail, but do you remember we did a series in Revelation? And the thing that Revelation looks forward to is for Jesus to come back.
- Because that's when everything gets sorted out 100%. It's not looking for us to go to heaven. It's looking for Jesus to come from heaven to earth and then do the things on earth that we've always wanted but couldn't quite get hold of.

Just have a look at, if you've got your Bibles, we're still in Philippians, just turn back to chapter 3. End of chapter 3 from verse 20.

Paul says this, Our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[12 : 25] It's the Lordship of Christ in view, but notice, our citizenship is in heaven and we're not eagerly awaiting to go there, we're eagerly awaiting from Jesus to come from there, meaning to earth.

And then he's got this, because there's this power, because he's this Lord, because he's beaten death, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control.

So the Lordship of Christ is about Jesus' control and power. He's got, Jesus is currently in heaven, but that doesn't mean he just rules in heaven or worse yet, just rules in some sort of spiritual place in our heart.

Jesus is the ruler of, he's the Lord of heaven and earth. He's ruling from heaven over earth. Again, that series in Revelation helps us understand that.

Who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, all the things that we are going through, all the situations we face, are all under the control of Christ. And he knows us, and he loves us, and that helps understand the mess that we find ourselves in sometimes.

[13 : 36] I'm not saying it sorts it always out, but it definitely helps with that. But the power that he's got, the control that he's got, look what Paul is also looking forward to, will transform our lowly bodies so that we will be like his glorious body.

A lot of anxiety in our life comes from sickness and health, sickness and not health. Whether you get, I don't know, migraines, your eyes are giving out, your legs are giving out, your brain is giving out, and if you're young, and you think, you don't know what I'm talking about, all the old people didn't look like, always look like this, you know.

And yes, I'm one of the old people at that illustration. And all the old people are like, you know nothing, just wait. My mom is 75, in the last five years, and she's a fit 75.

Oh, four, five, six, major ups, and the recovery is heavy, and she's healthy. And when you're not healthy, oh my goodness, the pain. So what have you got to look forward to?

This is the ultimate transformation. Having our lowly, or broken, or humble bodies, bodies that don't work. Minds that don't work. Minds that dwell on negativity so easily.

[15 : 00] Imagine, in the new heavens and new earth, not worried about, not worried about worry, nothing to worry about. You're never going to have a regretful, worried, anxious thought.

It's always going to be productive, and thinking about beauty, and growth, and development, without anything pulling you back, at all, ever. Whew, peace.

Peace like a river. And then we will be like, his glorious body. We're going to be, as glorious, as the Son of God, shining in all his glory, with all the angels, as he is now in heaven.

We're going to be that glorious. You want to find that out? 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 1, Revelation 5, Revelation, just get those pictures of Jesus in your head, those shiny ones.

You know, the glorious ones, those glorious passages about Jesus, and let that, filter through your thinking. We can respond with joy, in all circumstances, because of the Lordship of Christ.

[16 : 09] We combat anxiety, by replacing it with joy, rejoice, but because of the Lordship of Christ, knowing that Jesus is the ultimate Lord of time, and space, and evil, and pain, and death, and suffering.

And because Jesus is the ultimate Lord, those bad things, no longer have the ultimate, and final say, in our lives. Yes, they do speak to us.

They're there constantly harping at our joy, and our happiness, eating away at our peace, and contentment.

But in Christ, they become little yappy dogs, and we can just tell them to keep quiet. And, because we've got a bigger guard dog, Jesus, but we've got to listen to him, to his voice, not to the little yappy voices of the things that hinder us.

Does that make sense? Yes. Now, but you can be going through serious pain. It's not to diminish the pain that we're going through, but it puts pain in its proper perspective.

[17 : 18] Does that make sense? All right. Number one, don't be anxious, but rejoice in the Lordship of Christ. Number two, don't be anxious, but be thankful in prayer.

Don't be anxious, but be thankful in prayer. What I'm really saying is you must pray. But Paul, there's a point that Paul makes about being thankful when we do pray.

So, the second tool in our anti-anxiety toolkit is prayer. And this is where a lot of people fall asleep in the sermon. You know, if you haven't already fallen asleep, then you're not welcome to do so now.

Because, yeah, prayer is going to tell us to pray again, blah, blah, be in there, done that. Okay. But, the thing about prayer is it's an easily overlooked tool or thing to use, but it's one of the most powerful tools we've got at our disposal.

It's the one way, it's one of the ways out of being stuck in anxiety. And it's easy to miss because it's easy to do. I think that's part of the, part of the issue there. Paul is saying, instead of working yourself into a ball of anxious stress, by mulling over the problems in your mind and trying to find your own solutions and not coming up with a solution that works particularly well because we're all, our minds don't work that well and we're all finite in our ability to do stuff.

[18 : 44] Or if you're, like most people, you can think of the perfect answer and retort in your mind to any situation that comes your way. And then you're faced with a situation and you just, ah, you don't quite get there.

They always seem to be winning in their conversations with you and you always seem to be losing. Don't mull over the stressful situations in your mind. Talk to God about it.

Take them to God. Don't keep them mulling over and not take it to the Lord in prayer. So, the best thing to do here is, you've got to realize what you're doing.

You've got to think about your own thoughts. That's another thing we're going to look at in a minute. But, as stress begins to climb, just, okay, well, there's no point in me thinking about this in my mind.

Lord, I'm beginning to stress about this thing. I know you don't want me to stress, but it's there. Let me just tell you what's happening. Okay, and immediately, it begins to help with this, at least the anxiety and the stress.

[19 : 44] I'm not saying it takes it all away, but it's part of the things that helps. It takes all things to God, especially the situations that are causing you stress. So, have a look at verse 6. Don't be anxious about anything.

Okay, it's a command. Do not be anxious about, not just some things, about anything. There's nothing in your life that you're allowed to be anxious about.

And of course, now what happens now is we get anxious about being anxious, so that's part of the problem. But, but Paul gives us reasons why we don't have to be. But, in everything, here's the antidote, in everything, in all things, in all circumstances, in all your feelings, in everything that happens to you, in all your thoughts, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. A petition, here, is an urgent request, to meet a need. And it's aimed at God. A petition, is something that, we do, in our sort of civic duty.

It's when citizens, send a message, to those in power, to get the help that they need, in an emergency. So, we've started making petitions, at church here, for various political things.

[20 : 59] You know, when you sign a petition, it's like, hey, we really don't want this to happen. We really need your help, because this is happening, and we can't fix it ourselves. Come and help us. Okay, but the thing about petition, and prayer here, is it's not a vague, or something general, that we're doing.

It's not just, repeating the Lord's prayer. It's not a rote thing. This petition thing, it's specific to your needs. It's you taking your problems, to God.

It's a very personal, it's that personal thing, because you know God, and He knows you. He's your father. You're His daughter. You're His son. You've got a living relationship with Him. You go to Him for help.

It's not an Eastern type meditation. It's not, um, just zoning out, and reminding yourself, that you're a leaf, and the wind is blowing, and, however that works, or you're a leaf, on a river, the river is flowing.

It's not, it's, it's also not name it, and claim it. Declaring what you think, God is going to do. Telling God, what you think, must happen in the situation.

[22 : 05] It's, asking, God, but, being as forthright, and as specific as you can, and leaving it up to God, to do His will.

Now that forthright, and specific thing, if you need to learn, how to do that, my feeling is that sometimes, we're a little bit polite, in how we pray to God. I could be wrong. I mean, look, there's going to be times in your life, man, you're on your knees, and the, it's not in trana, that's when you're real.

At church, the prayers are beautiful. One, you know, if there's one, uh, criticism, it might be just, it's elevated though, but, but we're praying for God, to forgive our sins, and we need to mean it.

We can't just be polite here. We've got to mean these things. And we've got to take it to God. Lord, please, please, please help. Go to the Psalms. The Psalms are, a fantastic example, of people taking things to God, in prayer, and they say, Lord, if you don't help me, these guys are going to die.

I'm going to die. These guys are going to kill me. In fact, Lord, if you don't mind, if you can kill them, that'll be great. Um, that Psalm we read, Psalm 27, uh, Adrian Psalms, Psalm 33, all the Psalms, the, the, the Jews have a, a, a very direct way, of praying to God.

[23 : 31] Um, because, I think, because they've got that, that trust, that living thing, God has said he's going to do stuff. Hey, you said you're going to do this. What's the deal? Help.

So, all right, so take that thing to God, and pray. Jesus in Gethsemane provides, perfect pattern of this kind of deep wrestling with an issue, but still trusting in the will of God, as the only way to bring about true release from anxiety.

So in Mark chapter 14, we did that when we, we looked at it in our series in Mark. Jesus is not playing games here. Okay, he's faced with his, with imminent death.

This is not polite pretending. This is genuine. Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take, this cup, from me.

Please, take this cup from me. And he's sweating blood, and tears. Yet not what I will, but what you want.

[24 : 38] That's, that's a powerful prayer, man. To trust him, to trust God, in the face of your own death, and, but to ask him, and to say, but you need to do the right thing.

You do what you want. I'll follow. Yeah, but that's the secret of contentment. To give it all up for God. That's the secret of sacrifice, which we've looked at as well.

Okay. Okay. Prayer and petition. But we've also got to be thankful. We've got to be thankful. In all things, by prayer and petition, sorry, verse six, don't be anxious about anything.

The antidote, take it to the Lord in prayer. With thanksgiving, present your request to God. With thanksgiving. Thanksgiving here means the giving of thanks for God's grace. It's a specific giving thanks for something.

Thanks, give, say thank you to God for the stuff that he's done for you, for his grace in your life. Okay. Primarily, because of what Christ has done.

[25 : 49] But also, the millions of other things that God gives us in our life, in our daily life, that we can be thankful for. Okay. When we take our praise to God, we don't just dump a shopping list on God.

It mustn't turn into a complaint session. It's specific, we need your help, but Lord, thank you for what you've done for me in Christ. Thank you for the Lordship of Christ. Thank you for the people you've got in my life that have helped me.

Thank you for the change I've seen in my life, et cetera, et cetera. We don't just go with a shopping list. Think of, it's the same way we have our relationship with our parents, with our dad.

God is our father. We're in a living relationship with him. We need to make the effort of saying thank you for all the good things and the blessings that he's given us in our life already. It starts with the incalculable grace we've received by receiving Christ, and then all the innumerable other graces that God gives us every day.

One of the commentators says this, only by praying with thanksgiving in every situation is it possible to stop being anxious about anything. So don't be anxious about anything.

[27 : 00] That's a lot of things not to be anxious about. So in everything, take it to God in prayer. Does that make sense? The continuous positive focus of praying with thanksgiving to God in everything breaks and replaces the habit of worry.

But it's a progressive thing. It's not just a, I've done the prayer, and now I'm not anxious about anything in my entire life. No, you're anxious about the situation. You're not anxious about the situation you've taken to God. Guess what? Tomorrow, the next hour, the next 25 minutes, you're back being anxious because another thought pops in your head.

Okay, we'll do the prayer work that you need to do to get rid of it. Do you know who Joni Eriksson Tada is? Many do.

A Christian lady who's a paraplegic. She was paralyzed when she was 17. She dived into a lake after high school, broke her neck, and is paralyzed from the neck down.

Paraplegic. Arms and legs. She did, that happened to her when she was 17. She's now in her 70s. She's been in a wheelchair her entire life. And then, she gets cancer.

[28 : 09] She's still alive. Beats off cancer twice. And then she gets COVID. Okay, so if anyone is having a hard time, and be like, you know what, this really sucks, and I just don't need this in my life, she's the one. And she's written books about joy.

You want to listen to her. In fact, Paul, in verse 9, says, hey, listen, whatever you, Philippians, whatever you've seen in me, I'll do that. Well, we've got the same. Paul is saying, listen to Christians. If you've got Christians who struggle with stuff, listen to them.

See how they do it. Follow them. They're a great example. Anyway, so she's got COVID. This is what she says. Being a quadriplegic is so hard.

It gets hard to breathe, especially at night, paralyzed in bed. At first, when they told me that I had COVID, I thought it was a death sentence. So she's flooded with anxiety. But decades of quadriplegia, decades of quadriplegia have taught me how to carry even a COVID cross.

Because when I yielded myself absolutely to God, this is, Joni is recounting this, how she did it, and trusted him to take care of my situation, I could almost feel God take gentle, firm possession of this strange new affliction and use it to work a true crucifixion in me.

[29 : 32] I could feel the Lord press and push me, saying, Joni, come on. Do you believe in me that I will never leave you or forsake you, even in this?

That I'm ever-present, that I'm an ever-present help in trouble, even in this? I'm not going to abandon the work of my hands here. Do you believe it that my grace is sufficient?

So it's a challenge, it's a challenge to grab onto those things when you're struggling with the problems in your life. And in the dark, in bed, at night, I cried out, I took her to the Lord in prayer, Lord, where am I going to go?

You've got the words of eternal life. And then in the ensuing hours, I felt this wonderfully strange calmness, almost an indifference as to how much it might hurt or how long the COVID would last or what would happen.

And I felt perfectly still under the hand of God. He became a shelter, like I was in his shadow, the shadow of the Almighty, and I felt blessed.

[30 : 37] End quote. That would be worth fighting for? I think so. So don't be anxious, but be thankful in prayer, constantly thankful in prayer.

And then, lastly, don't be anxious, but think true thoughts. Don't be anxious, but think true thoughts. For people stuck in anxiety, thought life is perhaps one of the most difficult areas to control or to deal with.

you feel like your thinking is out of control. It's not under your control. The thoughts just happen to you and we just sort of let them, we just let them do that. And then, of course, what happens is the worst case scenarios tend to pop into our minds and then they wreak havoc with our emotions.

I don't know why we do that, but we go to the worst possible case scenario and play the what-if game and it always ends with someone's death. Mostly mine. Or worse, ending up in a wheelchair for 70 years.

But there's hope. Just like earlier, with anxiety, Paul is going to give us a command. We are to think certain things.

[31 : 48] So have a look at verse 8. If you've got your Bibles, Philippians 4, verse 8. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, let's slow down a bit. Whoa.

Okay. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, that's an interesting thought I've got to place my mind on, nobility, how to respond with nobleness to stuff.

Whatever is right, I want to do the right thing. Whatever is pure, not warped or strange. Whatever is lovely, what's beautiful, not ugly.

Whatever is admirable, what other people would say, hey, that's good. Not something I want to hide away. If anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.

Here's another command. Think about those things. That means don't think about the things that make you anxious because those are the things that pull you down. Think about things that lift you up.

[32 : 49] The command to think requires Christians to be intentional about cultivating the life of our minds, to be attentive, to be reflective.

That happened. Why did that happen? Did I do it? Did they do it? How did that go wrong? Can it be better? How do I bring God into it? That's reflection. Meditative, deep thought. We must control what our minds think about and how long we let them think it.

That's the key here. We must control what our minds think about and how long we let them think it. Yeah, thoughts pop into our heads all the time. But the aspect of control here, what Paul is saying is think about these things.

That means stopping the thought that pops in your head and let it stay there. It's like, whoa, I'm having a conversation with a... Do you guys have whole conversations with people that aren't there?

I mean, they're not even there. Listen, yes, I told them off, but we all know it's not going to happen in real life. And anyway, most of the time they tell me off in my own conversation. I lose my own conversation with the people in my life.

[33 : 55] I mean, it's ridiculous. Well, I don't know, if you start talking to someone in your mind, stop it. They say, okay, you know what? I'm going to have this conversation. I'm going to go think about something that's a bit more noble than how I would, you know, my response to you and your...

Because most of the time our response is when we think of ourselves in our own anxieties, I mean, we... They're not good responses. We want to do the stuff we're not allowed to do. Kick them in the shin or slam the door or tell them to get lost or shoot them or shout.

Let them know how we really feel. Those aren't noble. Those aren't admirable. Those are the bad responses. God is saying, don't do that. Do the good ones. You've got to talk back to ourselves. Think what is true, what is noble, what is pure.

Some interesting things that Paul mentions here, what is true. That's the main one that controls all the others there.

Whatever is true because we're so good at lying to ourselves. We lie about the situation is worse than we think. We lie about how we didn't do anything wrong in the situation.

[35 : 06] It's all their fault. We lie about the fact that nobody loves me, everyone's out to get me. None of those things are true. Normally, truth lies in a slightly more nuanced, you're part of the problem and they're not that bad.

In fact, who knows why they didn't say hello to you when you walked past them in the passage. Maybe they were thinking about something else. Oh, they must hate me. They weren't even thinking about you. But you don't know the truth, but you've got to tell yourself, I don't know what the truth is.

But don't convince yourself you know what the truth is. It's not true that nobody loves me. I'm not alone in a fight. God is on my side.

We've just seen that. We take it to the Lord in prayer. Telling ourselves the truth will help us fight off unnecessary thoughts of gloom and depression and anxiety.

Another thing that Paul mentions here, what is noble, what is lovely, what is beautiful. We often think in right and wrong categories. Paul is expanding and he says whatever. So just notice that.

[36 : 08] He says whatever a few times in that passage, right? Whatever is, whatever is, whatever is. What he's doing there is he's opening up the whole world of God's creation for us to think about good things.

Yes, it starts with God and it starts with Christ. But it's also the stuff that we see on an everyday basis. Whatever is lovely in creation, think of sunsets, and landscapes and art and architecture and music and people like Joanie, Eriks and Tata or a family member that has helped you or about past victories you've had over problems in your life.

We are free to use what we can in God's creation to combat anxiety or worry or depression. If you feel in your mind beginning to churn over something that's going to bring you down, a helpful thing to do, yes, take it to the Lord in prayer.

You know what? Go for a 20 minute walk outside. Go watch a beautiful sunset if you can or a beautiful sunrise. Go down to Seapoint. Find a park. Walk down the road. Make a phone call and talk to a friend.

It's not about the problem. Say, hey, I just wanted to check in how you're doing. But then tie whatever you, listen to some music, but then tie it in with who God is and give thanks to Him for the blessings that He's given you.

[37 : 38] Life on earth is a whirlwind of events and people, sometimes positive, very often negative. Life is hard, but we are not, we do not need to get caught up in the chaos.

We are called to a higher order of living. Think about what is noble. Think about what is admirable. Aim for those things. It's not just putting them in your thoughts. It's living out those responses in your life.

Live out noble responses. Live out admirable responses. Say noble and admirable things. Make things lovely or beautiful. Don't live in the muck and the mire.

We're called to live lives transformed by the lordship of Christ, taking everything to God in thankful prayer, focusing our minds on whatever is excellent and noble and true. By doing that, Paul says, we begin to experience the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

Let's pray and ask him to help us to do that. Dear Lord Jesus, we are in such need of your help.

[38 : 43] These things that you call us to seem out of our reach and yet they're not, Lord. You are constantly transforming and changing us to be more and more like you in our responses to the things that we experience in this life.

Lord, thank you for the victories that you do give us, both small and great. Thank you for the examples of our brothers and sisters in Christ that we can follow above all, Lord. Thank you for your love and your sacrifice and your example and for your power and the Holy Spirit that helps us and enables us to do these things in increasing measure.

In Jesus' name, Amen.