

TSA • Philippians 4:8-9

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Read Vs. 6-9

B. Peace / God

1. The problem with sermons is that we often have to chop up things that go together.
2. Such is the case with what we looked at last week in the ***Prescription for Worry***.
3. Paul says, “Don’t worry, Pray!” Then, v. 7 . . .
and the peace of God . . . will guard your hearts and minds.
4. Though ***we*** ended there last week, ***Paul*** doesn’t.
5. He goes on in the next verses & ends v. 9 with -
the God of peace will be with you.
6. The ***peace of God*** is wonderful, but better still is to have ***the God of peace***.
7. In vs. 8 & 9 we learn how to walk in closer fellowship with Jesus.

II. TEXT

A. Thoughts First, Then Actions

1. V. 8 tells us what to think about. V. 9 is what to do.
 - a. ***First thoughts, then actions.***
 - b. That’s the outline for many of Paul’s letters: ***First doctrine, then doing.***
2. This is a crucial to spiritual growth.
3. The path to maturity follows this trail; A ***renewed mind*** precedes a renewed life.
4. The Word & Spirit of God renew our minds; from that base comes a fruitful life.
5. Just as a forest comes from an acorn – our entire lives flow from a truth.
 - a. The ***first truth*** is the Gospel of Christ which saves us.
 - aa. But that truth unfolds to impact an entire life over many years.
 - b. Think of a woman. She’s born & raised by a single mom who has to work 2 jobs just to get by, so she rarely sees her. She’s raised by neighbors & relatives.
 - c. The neighborhood where she grows up is pretty rough & she hangs out with a tough crowd.
 - d. She’s introduced to drugs, alcohol, & sex at a young age.
 - e. She looks to be headed toward becoming just another statistic in a crime report.
 - f. But one day she sees a poster on a telephone pole for a free concert.
 - g. She goes. The music is good & at the end a guy gets up & talks about a God who loves her & has an amazing plan for her.
 - h. He tells her how this God became a man & died to pay for her sin & rose again to give her a new life.
 - i. If she will turn from that sin & believe in Him, everything can change.
 - j. When he calls people to come forward for prayer, she goes & with tears & mascara streaming down her face, she prays the prayer he leads, She means every word of it!
 - k. She starts going to the church that sponsored the concert.
 - l. She learns God’s Word & meets people who love & accept her & unlike the streets, all they want ***from her*** is ***for her*** to grow in grace.
 - j. She’s never experienced love like that, & it transforms her.
 - k. A couple years later, she meets a guy at church whose story is similar to hers.
 - l. They fall in love & get married & start a family.
 - m. She’s determined her sons & daughters will be loved & raised in the knowledge of God & will see what a great marriage looks like.
 - n. 20 years later, her eldest son goes to Bible college to be trained for ministry.
 - o. He’s a gifted teacher & realizes a call to be a pastor.
 - p. When he graduates from Bible college he comes back to their church where he becomes the youth pastor.
 - q. Dozens of teens get saved & changed through his ministry & when the senior pastor retires the church asks the youth pastor to take his place.
 - r. He does, and the church explodes under his ministry.
 - 1) Hundreds come to Christ. // 2) Marriages are healed.
 - 3) People are delivered from addiction. // 4) Lives are put back together.

5) Missionaries are sent out.

8. And it all began with a truth being planted in a desperate teenage girl at a concert many years before. ***That was the seed*** that birthed a mighty harvest.

9. That ***first truth*** opened the way for ***more*** truth; the things Paul lists here in v. 8.

B. V. 8

⁸ 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* anything praiseworthy—meditate [ponder, roll them over in your mind & examine them] on these things.

1. Our ***minds are the battlefield*** in spiritual warfare.

2. That's why in 2 Cor. 10 Paul speaks of ***taking every thought captive to Christ***.

3. Proverbs 23:7 says – ***“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”***

4. Satan is the prince of the power of the air who pulls the strings of this world's system.

a. He has a carefully calculated plan to barrage us w/images & sounds to distract us from the truth.

b. He wants to ***dominate our attention & co-opt our thoughts***.

5. So Paul calls us to ***pay attention*** to what we're paying attention to.

6. ***BECAUSE*** what we think ***IS*** the ***seedbed for what we do***, we need to ask what's being ***planted*** in our hearts & minds.

7. The avenues of communication used by the media are in themselves ***morally neutral***.

a. Television, Radio, Movies, the Internet are just vehicles for information & entertainment.

b. They can be used either ***for good or evil***.

c. Wisdom calls for ***caution*** in our use of media because this world is hostile to God & wrapped in deceit.

d. Satan will use the mediums of media to pump out his lies.

e. But they can be used for good as well. They can be powerful ways to communicate truth.

8. The point is to exercise caution & be discriminating in how we use media.

9. When you go to the airport to catch a flight, you go thru security run by the TSA – ***Transportation Security Administration***, part of the Department of Transportation.

a. After you've checked in you have to pass through extensive screening on your way to the departure gate.

b. You take off your jacket, cap, belt, shoes; empty your pockets.

c. You take out your laptop & put it all in gray bus-trays for the x-ray machine to look through.

d. Then you step through a metal detector & sometimes get a wand run over you.

e. All of this to make sure you're not carrying a bomb or weapon onto the plane.

f. It's a lengthy but necessary process to make sure flying is ***safe***.

10. Paul lists 6 safety inspectors to run what we allow into our minds by.

11. Think of it as a spiritual TSA, a ***Thought Security Administration*** run by the ***Department of Transformation***.

1st - Whatever is ***true***.

a. Satan's primary weapon is deceit.

b. So we have to ask if what we're seeing & hearing is true -

c. Or is it a mask the enemy hides his lies behind?

d. The Greek word for truth carries a flavor English misses.

1) It's the idea of ***permanence***, constancy.

2) If something is true – it ***endures***; it ***lasts***.

3) What's untrue fails & disappears. It may last for a time but it can't endure because time will reveal it to be false.

e. If we could step 20 years into the future, we'd see that much of what's in play today is forgotten because the mask will come off & people won't be fooled by it any longer.

f. Just as today, we look back on past ages & wonder how people could believe the silly things they did.

g. But truth ***endures***. It lasts because it's real.

h. The truth people believed a thousand years ago still stands.

i. The best, most reliable source of truth is right here & in knowing He who IS truth – Jesus.

j. When you hear or see something, before you allow it to influence your thoughts, ask, “Is this true?”

2nd - Whatever things are **noble**.

- a. That’s not a word we hear much anymore—unless it’s Christmas & we’re buying a tree.
- b. Too bad, because it’s a great word!
- c. If something is noble, it’s **worthy of respect**. It’s **honorable**.
- d. Something is noble when it **helps us become** what we were created to be.
- e. If it builds character & helps us successfully negotiate the journey of life, it’s noble.
- f. Think of an athlete headed for the Olympics.
 - 1) His goal is a medal. So he evaluates everything choice he makes based on that goal.
 - 2) A good trainer is allowed in. Exercise & sleep are allowed in.
 - 3) But 3 lb. brownies sundaes & jelly-filled donuts aren’t.
 - 4) Sitting on the couch watching soap operas 4 hours a day is out.
 - 5) Those things would **hinder** his pursuit of a medal.
 - 6) They aren’t **noble to his cause** of standing on the victory stand.
- g. We’re headed for the Victory stand of Heaven.
- h. Our **goal** is to be conformed to the Christ’s image & become His beautiful bride.
- i. We must be on the lookout **for** what helps us along the way, & **on guard against** that which would disqualify us or slow our pace.

3rd - Whatever things are **just**.

- a. Fair, right, proper.
- b. The Fall has plunged the human race into a quagmire of **selfishness**.
- c. Everyone wants their piece of the pie. The problem is, their piece is a little bigger than everyone else’s – & they want a scoop of ice cream on it too.
- d. People expect everyone **ELSE** to be fair, but that rule doesn’t apply to them.
- e. We often see or hear something & say, “Oh-that’s just not right!”
- f. And while we’re so quick to say it as we look at **others**, we rationalize the same behavior in ourselves & **our group**; the people we identify with & call “Us.”
- g. Paul says, “Don’t play favorites or pervert justice.”
- h. Don’t write a speeding ticket for a stranger while letting your friend go free.

4th - Whatever things are **pure**,

- a. **Morally** pure.
- b. This doesn’t mean perfect, because nothing in a fallen world.
- c. By pure, Paul refers to its basic makeup – its core reality.
- d. Is its main purpose to honor what is good & true?
- e. Or does it aim at promoting sin?
- f. Friends, we need to take a good, hard look at what we allow ourselves to be entertained by.
 - 1) I am going to say something that may at first sound a little controversial; please hear me out.
 - 2) This doesn’t originate with me. Good theologians & scholars have made this point many times.
 - 3) There are some great stories that have been written or filmed by unbelievers.
 - 4) Fallen as they are, they still bear the image of God & truth beckons them.
 - 5) Sometimes they create powerful stories that are **echoes** of that truth.
 - 6) But Hollywood also produces a lot of stuff that’s nothing but propaganda for evil.
 - 7) As you are walking in the Spirit, read & watch in the Spirit too.
 - 8) If your spirit is uneasy, if the HS is warning you, waving you off from something - Drop it like a live skunk!

5th - Whatever things are **lovely**,

- a. Attractive, admirable, winsome. But the attraction here isn’t external.
- b. This isn’t about **appearance**—it’s **substance**.
- c. It’s a **beauty of character** age & environment can’t touch.
- d. We all know people who aren’t much to look at but are **gorgeous** nonetheless because of who they were inside.
- e. As you get to know them, they **become** beautiful.

- f. It's said that beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes all the way to the bone.
- g. The opposite is also true; Sometimes ugly is only skin deep but beauty goes all the way to the heart.

6th – Whatever things *are* of **good report**,

- a. Worth telling others about.
- b. When we discover something new we like, we can't wait to tell others.
- c. But if we don't like it, we start looking for things to criticize & pick at.
- d. Then we share our brilliant analysis with anyone who'll listen.
- e. Paul says we ought to cultivate an ability to discern what's commendable, & forego the rest.

12. Having listed these 6 things, he adds -

if *there is any* virtue and if *there is anything* praiseworthy – fill your minds with that.

13. Now Note the word that begins each of the 6 thought-inspectors – “Whatever”

- a. Then he finishes, “If there is **any** excellence in these things, **anything at all** to commend Ponder **that**.”
- b. If Paul had written, “Think ONLY about these things” – we'd have to pack up & move out to the wilderness somewhere – alone.
- c. He's not calling us to go live in a cave, isolated from the world.
- d. He's saying that as citizens of heaven, living in a fallen world, we need to exercise wisdom in what we allow to become the fodder for our thoughts.

14. Don't just sit back mentally & accept everything the world throws at you.

15. Instead, actively engage the world by reviewing what it says, what it wants to show you.

16. **Look for the good** & focus on THAT!

- a. If you're watching TV, don't put your mind in neutral & let yourself be informed or entertained by **whatever** is on.
- b. Engage! Evaluate. Ponder.
- c. Ask, “Is this true? Is there **anything** in this that will further me along in becoming like Jesus?”
- d. Is there **any** excellence in it? **Anything** to commend?

17. If there isn't & all you're getting is an appeal to the flesh, shut it off!

18. Because what you take in thru your senses becomes the fodder your mind uses to produce thoughts.

19. And those thoughts are the fuel for what you do & say.

20. Proverbs 4:27 says

Keep [Guard] your heart with all diligence, for out of it *spring* the issues of life.

21. Think of all this like eating sunflower seeds.

22. But there's another way our minds work.

- a. Not only do thoughts flow from what **comes in** thru our senses –
- b. The mind produce its **own** thoughts thru **imagination**.
- c. Instead of an image coming into the mind thru the eye, the mind creates the image = **image-in-ation**.

23. Using what Paul says here about **meditating** on these 6 things, we ought to role-play in our minds how we will react to different situations.

24. World-class athletes do this before competition.

25. We can do it as we think about the challenges we'll face each day.

26. While some fantasize about sin; we can mentally practice & prepare for holiness.

C. V. 9

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

1. Faith in Christ isn't just an intellectual deal. Real faith is **lived out**.

2. So Paul called the Philippians to put feet to their faith.

3. Notice how he words it – “What you learned, received, heard & saw – Do.”

4. He obviously didn't have Nike's ad writers editing his letter. They'd have changed v. 9 to, “Just do it.”

5. Paul reminds the Philippians about the process of discovery God had taken them through.

- a. They **learned** the Gospel when it was first preached to them.
- b. They **received** it by faith, making it their own.
- c. They **heard** from Paul about the kind of life believing in Jesus produces,

- d. And they **saw** that life in his example.
- 6. Paul didn't roll into town, stage some big meetings, drive off in a limo to a swanky hotel, then move off to the next town.
- 7. After he preached the Gospel, he **showed** how the Gospel changes a life.
- 8. I just can't stress enough the **importance** of Christian community, of **sharing our lives** & spiritual journeys.
- 9. The cult of celebrity that's taken over the American church is a tragedy.
 - a. We elevate a man or woman's gift to a level that in effect removes it from the minister.
 - b. We turn what the Spirit of God intends to be something to edify & grow us into a form of religious entertainment.
 - c. Then these Christian stars get whisked from one venue to another & we never get a chance to **see how they live**.
 - d. Their message is divorced from who & what they are.
 - e. And the Body of Christ is impoverished because of it.
- 10. Paul **had lived** among the Philippians. They **knew** him up close & personal.
- 11. So much so he could say to them, "Follow my example, & you will experience the presence of God intimately."

III. CONCLUSION

A. Renew Your Mind - Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- 1. Paul gives excellent insight into **how to renew our minds** here in v. 8.
- 2. As our minds are renewed, we'll not only know, we'll **experience** how good God's will is.