

LOOKING BACK AT COVID 19

What did you feel during Covid 19? What was behind the feelings?

ANOTHER PANDEMIC

Covid 19 was a fuel for another pandemic already infecting America: fear and anxiety. These emotions have never been more problematic in our culture. A war is being waged against our minds to shut out peace, contentment, joy, confidence, and rest. The arrows of overexposure, comparison, 'what ifs' of medical websites, and a steady stream of bad news have so affected us, that even if nothing 'bad' ever happens, our minds and emotions are infected with fear and anxiety.

One of the great blessings of following Jesus as a disciple is the promise and power to live in His peace and joy. This week, we begin a new series entitled, "Courageous: facing our fears in a world full of them."

God has answers and solutions and can bring about real transformation. We will turn to His words to discover His ways, promises, and power. As we state in our Core Values: "The Bible is God's story, given to transform us and be the authority in our lives." God has also sent His Spirit to live in us to illuminate the Scriptures and work powerfully to grow us to be like Jesus. Lastly, God gave us each other to do life together. Praise God!

Our first week will focus on "Philippians" 4:1-9. In this letter, the author focuses on the importance of our **thought life**. Our thoughts affect every aspect of life. In Philippians, the grand command regarding our mindset (attitude) is in chapter two:

"Have this mind [mindset, attitude] among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped [unwilling to release] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (2:5-8)

LET'S LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

Pray and read through Philippians 4:1-9 while searching for what God says about fear and anxiety.

What words or topics are repeated or emphasized?

What kinds of issues or challenges are addressed? What wisdom is offered?

What is the general attitude or mindset that these two women needed?

How do the commands of vs. 4-5 address the situation?

Why do you think that “in the Lord” is referenced multiple times (1, 2, 4)? What does this mean?

What commands are given in verse 4-8? How might these practices (steps of obedience) bless our lives?

Verse eight directly addresses our thought lives. What do you notice?

What promises are made to those who obey and practice these commands?

Commentary notes:

v. 2 – The author begins with a word that means to “entreat, implore, urge”

2 – The word translated as “agree” in ESV literally means to “be of the same mind” as in under the Lordship of Christ. See also 1:27-28; 2:2-4, 14-16; 3:1.

3 – “true companion” (ESV) is literally “yoke fellow,” a play on words as two people in a yoke are also “side by side” as Paul labored with these women.

This companion of Paul’s was asked to “help” these women, a word that could be translated as “assist” or “take hold of together.”

5 – “gentleness” means not self-seeking or contentious

7 – “The peace of God” means “God’s peace”

8 – “think about” could be translated as “give careful thought” or “consider”

DISCUSS TOGETHER

This passage of Scripture is written to a church situated in a secular culture. What do we learn about God’s desires for His family and the world?

What does God teach us here about Himself and His ways that can change how we see and respond in life? Why is “in the Lord” and “The Lord is near” transforming?

What do we learn about dealing with fear and anxiety?

How does this passage help you as a disciple of Jesus? Is this something that we can share with those not yet in Christ?

APPLY IT THIS WEEK

OK, this all sounds good, but we all have life situations, habits, and attitudes that allow fear and anxiety to stress our minds and emotions. What can you believe and practice this week to live as a disciple under the Lordship of Jesus? What would it look like to walk through your days knowing that God knows, God controls, God cares, and I can talk with God about everything? What should I change to listen to God instead of the world and my worries? How can I live in the peace of God?