

CULTIVATE YOUR MINDSCAPE

Phil 4:4-9 | Dave Geldart | 2-21-21

1. Announcements
 - a. Welcome! -> who I am
 - b. Galentines- this tuesday
 - c. March Gladne\$\$
2. D101 refresh
 - a. testimony – Matthias Bieber and mike Dunn
3. Read Phil 4:4-9 → MIKE
 - a. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ 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. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
4. PRAY – Matthias
5. We're nearing the end of our Study together through the NT book of Philippians – fighting for joy
6. Started the first Sunday we got into BGC → Oct 18 2020
 - a. So about the last 4 months.
7. Joy has been hard to come by last year or so – or is it just me?
8. Last week we looked at one way to fight for joy: the discipline of gratitude
9. Today we're looking at how to fight for joy and against anxiety by cultivating our inner life peace
- 10. I'm not much of a landscaper**
 - a. Not my area of expertise.
 - b. Didn't really do much growing up.
 - c. I'd be that neighbor that has mediocre yard
 - d. It's not terrible.
 - e. I'll keep it mowed. May even put down some fertilizer in the spring if I think about it.
 - f. But not great. My front landscaping bushes are OK.... Not great. 3 barberry bushes are half dead. And my little decorative landscaping retaining wall is a good deal past plumb
 - g. And we have a broken sprinkler system, meaning there's a noticeable line between my greenish yard and my neighbor's deep green lawn.
 - h. However we do live on the edge of our neighborhood park/common area and everyone walks down a long sidewalk right beside our house..... a side of our house that has included no plants, cracking ground, and a small mound of bare ground that used to be covered in crabgrass but that succumbed to brownness after I sprayed weed n feed.

- i. So even I know I need to at a minimum take some steps here so I'm not a neighborhood eyesore.
 - j. **So I got some grass seed and fertilizer**, and reseeded that hill and a number of bare patches around.
 - k. I also got some monkeygrass from my parents to put along the side of our house
 - l. Anyone ever heard of monkeygrass? My grandma called them washstoppers.
 - i. They're a hearty ornamental grass with pretty little purple flowers.
 - ii. My parents came back to KC with boxloads of them from NA, SC after my grandma died. She had tons of them all over her yard
 - iii. So these plants have a bit of a sentimental value for me
 - iv. Reminds me of my grandma Geldart – Grandma annie
 - 1. Who our youngest child is named after
 - m. Anyways, if you give me a little more leeway with this story, I couldn't just put the monkeygrass in in the dirt next to my house.
 - i. I first had to till up the ground, pull out all the weeds to the roots!
 - ii. And add in some healthy topsoil.
 - n. So I got those in the ground
 - i. Finding out just how out of shape I was!
 - ii. Its quite exhausting to break up hard ground, remove all the weeds,
 - o. Got the grass seed spread on the dead hill
 - p. But was I done?
 - q. Of course not!
 - r. I had to faithfully water these 1-2x a day for a long while
 - s. And I also had to pay attention to the weeds that were happy to spring up in the midst of this well watered ground
 - t. For a while I was good at pulling up what I saw
 - u. But eventually I got lazy and stopped weeding
 - v. The hill did ok.... Not great but OK
 - w. But the side of our house quickly became OVERGROWN with weeds mixed in with the monkeygrass
 - x. Eventually the weeds got so thick they began to overcrowd the monkeygrass
 - y. And I had to do the hard work of hunkering down, letting my lower back show, and pull out the weeds carefully, one by one. Took hours and hours
 - z. But finally I got it all done! → then winter hit
 - aa. So, gardeners and blackthumbs alike, am I done? Is that flower bed good now?
 - bb. NO, in the spring I'll have to keep vigilant. Keep cultivating that bed to help the good plants flourish and the weeds at bay.
11. This is a lot like our lives
- a. in 1 Cor Paul says we are like a field!
 - b. Our inner world is like a field that COULD be a garden.
 - c. That requires constant cultivation, constant attention
 - d. If left unattended, even in part, the worry weeds grow by default and begin to choke the landscape

- i. The roots of bitterness go deep. Like weeds with deceptively small heads but thick deep roots
 - e. Ever since Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God and were banished from Eden into the wilderness, thorns and thistles grow by default.
 - f. And things aren't easy
 - g. Don't work right.
 - h. The default isn't a garden, it's overgrowth
 - i. And the same is true for our minds and hearts
 - i. Our inner lives no longer default to peace
 - ii. But are bent towards anxiety, and fear, cynicism, and negativity of all sorts
12. But the Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus is the NEW ADAM
- a. He's done what Adam didn't – and what all his descendants couldn't
 - b. JC entering the Garden of Gethsemane, and was overcome by anxiety, and worry – so much so that he sweat blood in anticipation of what it would cost him to trust and follow the Father
 - i. But he follows Phil 4, and for the JOY set before him, walked to the cross, from the garden to a wasteland of death and offered himself in your place and mine.
 - ii. He overcame the power of sin and death itself so that by rising again, he could offer hope and peace to all who call on him.
 - iii. SO THAT he could in his great mercy, restore the garden without wiping away you and I in the process.
 - iv. And he's only begun his work. He's eventually going to pull out the weeds forever. No more sorrow or sin or shame or death. And only the good stuff will grow. Even the tree of life is back!
 - v. And he'll raise us to new life in the new earth. A whole world cultivated by God Himself and a redeemed humanity.
 - vi. In joy and peace forever
 - vii. THAT is your future, and your birthright if you've put your trust in Jesus.
13. But we're living in the meantime. Still in the wilderness of thorns and thistles and the sweat of our brow.
- a. We are anxious ppl. Broken, need peace.
 - b. This is one of the major pandemics of our age
 - i. More than covid
 - ii. Perhaps right up there with pornography consumption
 - iii. We're more affluent than ever, with access to the greatest amounts of comforts as ever, we're awash in technology and gadgets to help us with our work and play and connection.
 - iv. But we're also more anxious and depressed than ever.
 - v. 5 STATS About Anxiety Most from the Anxiety and Depression Association of America
 - 1. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older, or 18.1% of the population every year.

2. In a 2020 survey, 62% of respondents reported experiencing some degree of anxiety. (SingleCare, 2020)
3. An estimated 31% of all adults will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their life. (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2020)
4. Women are twice as likely to be affected with GAD and panic attacks and major phobias as men
5. Anxiety disorders affect 25.1% of children between 13 and 18 years old. Research shows that untreated children with anxiety disorders are at higher risk to perform poorly in school, miss out on important social experiences, and engage in substance abuse. Anxiety disorders often co-occur with other disorders such as depression, eating disorders, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
6. <https://adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics>
<https://www.singlecare.com/blog/news/anxiety-statistics/>

c. Me and anxiety

- i. As Ive shared before
- ii. I have struggled with anxiety especially over the last 10 years or so
- iii. I'm firstborn, a bit of a details guy
- iv. The more I've experienced pain and difficulty in my life, the more I'm recognizing my struggle with anxiety
 1. And its connected issues: depression (the flipside of anxiety)
 2. And insomnia → a particularly FUN aspect of it that's that's emerged over the past 5 years
- v. I tend to feel it as a tightness in my chest
- vi. And a worried distractedness.... Hard to be really present with people in the moment, always thinking through issues im anxious about
- vii. When it gets really bad, I literally shut down, a few times nearly unable to move
- viii. I've noticed that it's the things I CANT CONTROL that I get most anxious about
 1. Especially if I think people are frustrated or disappointed in me
 2. Or being seen to fail..... For others to seem me fail, have weighed me and found me wanting

d. What about you?

- i. **What are some of your biggest anxiety triggers?**
- ii. **What's it like for you when you're anxious?**
 1. Some of you are anxious right now!
 - a. It's become your new normal, your resting rate is at +11
 2. Put your hand on your chest and apply slight pressure
 - a. And breathe deeply and slowly through your nose.
- e. Yes we are anxious people, living in neighborhoods of anxious people. Scrolling through social media posts by anxious people. And sitting at church next to anxious people – who love Jesus, and yet still struggle with anxiety.
 - i. Our world AND OUR CHURCHES are in desperate for hope, and healing here

14. So as we come to passages like this, we must ask
- a. WHAT exactly IS God's peace
 - b. How do we get it? How do we CULTIVATE IT?
15. What IS God's Peace?
- a. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 - b. the God of peace will be with you.
 - c. ^{John 14:27} "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."
 - d. Different from the peace offered us by this world
 - e. This was written in the midst of the Pax Romana – THE ROMAN PEACE!
 - i. Under the rule of Rome, there were Far fewer wars that at any other period in Rome's history. Significant political and economic stability.
 - ii. Arguably the most unprecedented 200 yrs of peace the world had yet known --throughout the Empire, which spanned from England in the north to Morocco in the south and Iraq in the east. 27BC-180AD
 - f. If the world had a peace to offer, it would be THIS!
 - i. Strong leadership, political consolidation, military might, economic boom.
 - g. "While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from (anxiety), grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace."
 - i. Epictetus (Greek Philosopher 55-135 AD), cited in Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, p. 112.
 - h. Our world AT BEST can offer us spurts of relative external peace
 - i. But can't offer us what we most crave → Deep internal peace in our hearts.
 - ii. Peace from anxiety, grief, and envy.
 - i. Jesus offers us something different → peace that germinates IN OUR HEARTS no matter what may be going on in our external world. The maintained, cultivated Garden.
 - i. ^{John 16:33} "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
 - j. Biblical Definition of the Peace God offers us: *Personal assurance from God's Spirit that He loves you, is with you, and that He will see you through – even when your world is being rocked*
16. HOW CAN WE GET GOD'S PEACE?
- a. In our analogy, our internal world is like a cultivated garden, freed of worry weeds and roots of bitterness, and filled with good things, beauty, rightness, a garden of eden recreated not in our external world, but in the internal world of our very minds.
 - b. ^{Romans 15:13} May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Joy and Peace from God are predicated on our trust in Him
 - d. INITIAL TRUST -> PLANTING THE MONKEYGRASS!
 - i. All of us at some point (and possibly still currently) struggle with INITIAL trust in God
 1. Not just a general concept of God.
 2. But specifically the God of the Bible revealed in Jesus Christ

- ii. The continual invitation to you is to put your trust in Him for your life and salvation NOW

1. JC says *Revelation 3:20* "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and share a meal with him."
2. If you've not taken that first step to open the door and let your Creator come in and be your highest trust, why not take that step now?

e. ONGOING

i. Phil 4

1. V4 – REJOICE in the Lord always
2. V6- prayer and supplication – humbly and earnestly asking -- with thanksgiving
 - a. Let your requests be made known to God
3. V 8 – think about GOOD things
4. V9 – practice these things continually

ii. Keep practicing in an ongoing way, cultivating a garden of peace

1. We have a part to play in this, we're not just zapped with peace

iii. Be transformed by the renewing of your minds (ROM 12)

1. BE transformed → it's a command to us (God provides the power and does the transforming, but we also have to actively participate to BE transformed in our minds).

iv. Paul in 1 Cor says of the church and Christians,

- v. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ... ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field

vi. God will provide the growth! But you must do your part, cultivate and maintain the garden entrusted to you.

vii. Keep planting the good plants, and pulling up the weeds, and pouring out fertilizer!

viii. PLANT WEED FEED repeat

ix. 1) PLANT

1. Rejoice & THANKSGIVING -
2. PONDER GOD'S GOOD GIFT OF SALVATION and thank him for it
3. Talked about this last week
4. How regularly do I do this? How genuinely thankful am I?

x. WEED:

1. Respond properly to anxious thoughts
2. 6-7
3. Practice active weeding.
 - a. Worry weeds, roots of bitterness
 - b. They will take over a garden!
4. Identify the weed
 - a. Tell Jesus what you've found OR ASK HIM TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY THEM
 - b. List of common weeds
 - i. Anxieties about life

1. Covid
 2. Finances
 3. Job
 4. Will I ever get married
 5. Will my spouse ever change? 😊
- ii. Annoyances with people
 1. Type of person
 2. SPECIFIC FACES
 - iii. Messages about ourselves
 1. I'm worthless
 2. I'm a failure
 3. I'm unlovable
 4. I'm stupid.
 5. Ugly
 6. Not good enough
 7. OTHERS?
- c. Many of these thoughts come to us from our own brokenness
- i. Sinful natures
 - ii. Painful experiences
 - iii. Things done or said to us in the past
 - iv. But not every thought in your head comes from you!
 - v. SATANIC WARFARE
 1. We're constantly assailed by a real and personal spiritual enemy
 2. He doesn't primarily attack us physically
 3. He attacks us in the most potent way, in our minds
 4. Our thoughts
 - vi. **2 Cor 10:3-5**³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ
 1. **The battle is literally in your mind.**
- d. ASK HIM for help, be as specific as you can
- i. Identify the weed – the negative thought
 1. State its truth claim
 - ii. Using God's word if possible, state what GOD SAYS is true instead
 - iii. Then choose to trust/believe God's word over the negative thoughts, pulling out the weeds manually
- e. What weeds are growing in your mindscape this week?

- xi. FEED—fertilize the good things in your garden
 - 1. FOCUS ON the many evidences of God’s goodness
 - 2. V8- 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
Think about.... DWELL ON THESE THINGS → COUNT up, accounting term
 - 3. *“What do I tend to ‘count?’ Is there a connection between my answer and how much I experience God’s peace?”*
- xii. Repeat
 - 1. V9 -- Practice these things over and over.....

17. So God’s Word teaches us that the landscape of our mind needs constant attention if we want peace

- a. The Weeds of worry and cynicism and mistrust and lies will grow up BY DEFAULT – we live in a sinful broken world, and our very selves bear the brokenness and bentness toward sin
- b. Unless we are diligent to cultivate our minds with trust in God by planting what is good, and weeding what is not.
 - i. And THEN, if we do that work, God promises to make the garden GROW into an Eden of peace in our hearts and minds
 - ii. PROMISES the THIS PEACE will GUARD our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus
- c. We need protection in BOTH our minds (thoughts) and hearts (emotions) !
- d. As we continue to live and work and relate in a world that’s not yet redeemed. In which we can live in a profound inner peace from God that goes beyond what would be expected.
- e. Not for yourself only, but for them as well, so they might be drawn to Christ and find rest for their souls.

18. **2 REFLECTION QUESTIONS – both for right now, and as homework this week in journaling:**

- a. What is the current state of your mind and heart? What would it look like as a landscape?
- b. What’s a next step for you to cultivate a renewed mindscape filled with God’s peace?

19. Resource: MINDSCAPE: What to think about instead of Worrying by Timothy Witmer