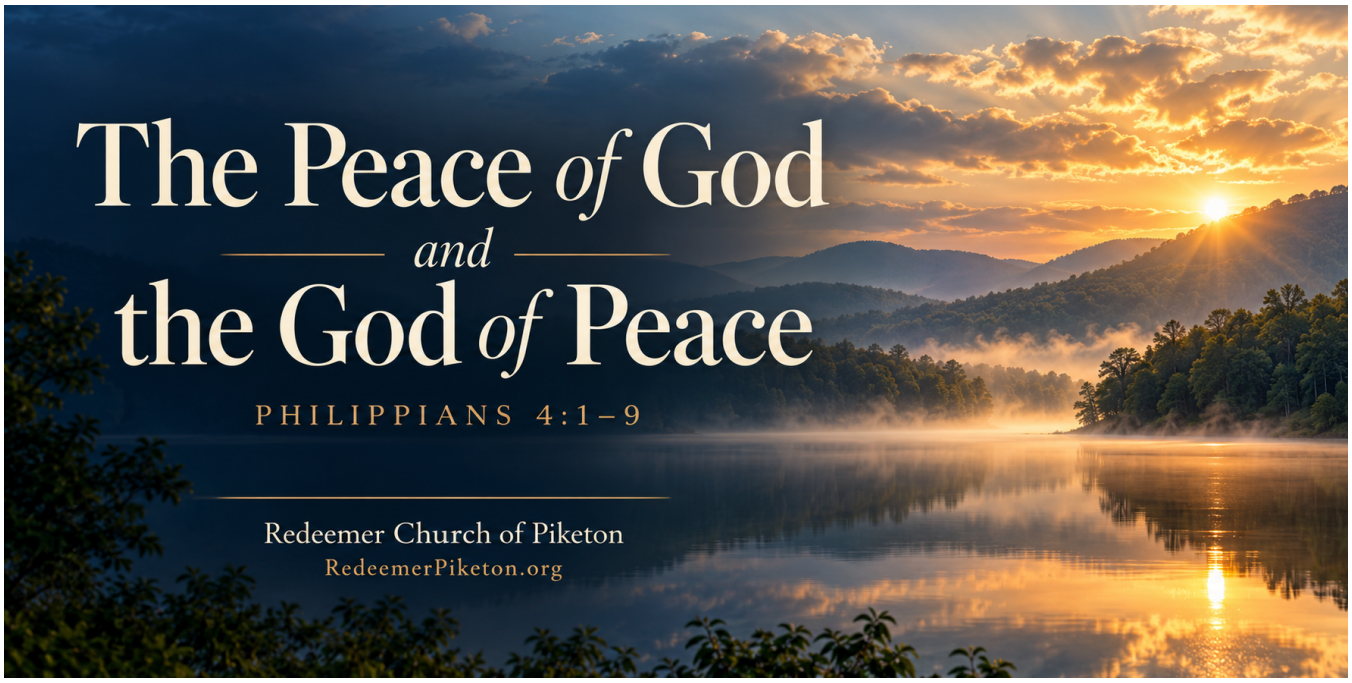



# Standing Firm in Christ When Life Feels Unsettled

By Pastor Jason K. Boothe | Philippians 4:1–9

Some burdens are difficult to set down. A conversation keeps replaying long after everyone has gone home. A concern about a child follows us through the workday. We turn out the lights, but our thoughts remain busy with questions we cannot answer.

Sometimes the burden involves another believer. We share the same confession of faith, worship in the same gathering, and yet find ourselves separated by hurt feelings or unresolved conflict.

Philippians 4:1–9 speaks into these ordinary, painful realities. Writing as a prisoner, Paul calls the church to stand firm, pursue peace, rejoice, pray, and practice what is good. Throughout the passage, he directs our attention to Jesus Christ. The Saviour who has secured our eternal future also sustains us through the troubles of the present.

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## “The God of peace shall be with you.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:9 • KING JAMES VERSION

## Solid Ground for Trembling Feet

Paul begins with affection:

> “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” **Philippians 4:1**

The word “therefore” points back to the promise closing chapter three. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we await the Saviour who will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body. Christ's bodily return gives His people a sure hope beyond suffering and death.

That promised future strengthens us for today's responsibilities. We can stand firm because we belong to a faithful Saviour.

Earlier in the letter, Paul abandoned confidence in his own religious attainments. His hope was to be found in Christ, clothed in the righteousness God provides. The command to stand firm rests upon that same foundation. Our acceptance before God is secured by Christ's obedience and sacrifice.

When feelings fluctuate and accusations trouble the conscience, the believer returns to that finished work. There is solid ground beneath our feet, even when our knees tremble.

## Grace in Our Disagreements

Paul next appeals to Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Scripture leaves the cause of their disagreement unnamed. It does tell us that these women had laboured alongside Paul in the Gospel. Their service mattered, and their strained relationship needed attention.

Faithful Christians can wound one another. Years of service do not remove our need for humility, repentance, and forgiveness.

Paul addresses both women and asks a trusted companion to help them. Reconciliation is a concern of the church. We serve one another well when we help restore fellowship, speak carefully, and refuse to feed the gossip that makes a disagreement harder to resolve.

The humility Paul calls for has already been described:

> “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” **Philippians 2:3–4**

Those words invite uncomfortable but necessary questions. Have I listened fairly? Have I assumed motives I cannot know? Have I been more concerned with defending myself than seeking my brother's good?

Sometimes obedience begins with a simple admission: “I spoke harshly. Will you forgive me?”

Paul remembers these fellow workers as people whose names are in the book of life. Their disagreement must be addressed in light of their shared belonging to Christ. The believer across the room is precious to the Saviour. That truth should shape our next conversation.

## Joy That Makes Room for Tears

> “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” **Philippians 4:4–5**

The ground of Christian joy is found in those words, “in the Lord.” Circumstances change. Christ remains faithful.

A believer may grieve deeply while taking comfort in the resurrection. He may mourn his sin while rejoicing in the mercy of his Saviour. Some days joy is expressed in strong singing. Other days it sounds like a quiet confession through tears: “Lord, Thou art faithful, and I am Thine.”

That confidence should also soften our dealings with others. “Moderation” carries the sense of gentleness and reasonableness. It describes a person who can yield personal claims where faithfulness permits, answer calmly, and resist turning every slight into a battle.

“The Lord is at hand.” In the context of Paul's expectation of Christ's return, these words encourage patience. Our Saviour will judge rightly. We may leave the final settling of accounts with Him while treating our neighbours graciously today.

## Bring the Burden Again

> “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” **Philippians 4:6–7**

“Be careful for nothing” addresses anxiety. Paul directs the troubled heart toward the Father with everything that weighs upon it.

We may be specific. We can name the difficult decision, the strained relationship, the financial concern, or the fear that keeps returning. Our Father already knows, yet He invites His children to speak.

> “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” **1 Peter 5:7**

God's sovereign rule and His fatherly care belong together. The One who governs all things cares for His children personally.

Paul also calls us to thanksgiving. As we ask for help, we remember mercy already received. Christ has redeemed us. God has carried us through days we once dreaded. His promises remain trustworthy while we wait.

The promised peace guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. We may still have unanswered questions and difficult responsibilities. Yet God sustains His people with a peace whose depth exceeds what their circumstances can explain.

If fear returns after prayer, bring the burden again. Receive the help of fellow believers. A long inward struggle calls for patient care, and our assurance rests upon Christ even when our experience of calm is uneven.

> “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” **Romans 5:1**

Peace with God is the reconciliation Christ has secured. The peace of God is His gracious provision for troubled hearts. Because we are reconciled to the Father through His Son, we may approach Him freely with every care.

## A Mind Shaped by Truth, a Life Shaped by Grace

In verses eight and nine, Paul turns to our thoughts and habits. He directs our attention toward what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable. What we dwell upon matters.

If we continually rehearse another person's faults or spend our evenings feeding upon outrage, those habits deserve examination. Are our thoughts true? Are they fair? Have we made room to remember God's faithfulness and recognize His good gifts?

Paul then calls us to practice what we have received through his apostolic teaching and example. Make the apology. Speak honestly. Give thanks. Open the Scriptures. Help someone carry a burden.

Such obedience grows from God's gracious work within His people:

> “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”
> **Philippians 2:13**

The passage closes with a precious promise: “the God of peace shall be with you.” God's peace guards His people, and the God of peace Himself accompanies them.

Some difficulties will remain unresolved today. We can entrust them to the Saviour while taking the next faithful step. His righteousness is sufficient for our acceptance before God. His mercy welcomes us when we have failed. His presence sustains us as we learn to walk in His ways.

You can leave tomorrow in His hands while obeying Him today.

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## About the Author

Pastor Jason K. Boothe serves as pastor of Redeemer Church of Piketon, Ohio, where he has ministered since 2001. His preaching and writing proclaim God’s free and sovereign grace in Jesus Christ and seek to encourage readers through the faithful exposition of Scripture.

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Adapted from Pastor Jason’s sermon, “Stand Firm in the Lord: The Peace of God and the God of Peace,” on Philippians 4:1–9. All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.