

- I. Introduction: The Problem of Drama
  - A. My talk today is part of a series. The series is called: **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't**
  - B. And if you want to know what I'm going to talk about today, you've just seen a major hint. The title of my talk today is:
    - 1. **Quit Letting Drama Run Your Life**
  - C. Let me get right into the Bible today, and it's going to sound weird.
    - 1. *"I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life."* (Philippians 4:2-3)
  - D. These are two people in a church who are fighting.
  - E. You need to understand who these women are. These aren't spectators. These aren't people sitting in the cheap seats complaining about the music.
    - 1. Paul says in verse 3 that they "labored with me in the gospel."
      - a) These are MVPs.
      - b) These are the star players.
      - c) They have been in the trenches.
      - d) They have taken hits for the team.
      - e) They helped build the ministry.
      - f) These are key women and key leaders in the church.
  - F. But right now, they are going at it in needless drama.
    - 1. Saved, yes.
    - 2. Loved by God, yes.
    - 3. Going to heaven, yes.
      - a) He even says, "their names are in the Book of Life..." which is the heavenly roster of saved people, all of whom have a home in heaven.
  - G. But when St. Paul talks about 2 people by name who are fighting (and this one must have been pretty serious), he does this with a deeper understanding of what's going on.
    - 1. Everybody has conflict. Conflict is a normal part of a healthy life.
      - a) But conflict that spreads is not healthy.
      - b) Being a conflictual person is not healthy.
      - c) And having enough conflict to get called out on it in the Bible, I don't think that's gonna be very healthy.
  - H. So it's not just a well-reasoned fight, this is a breakdown in human psychology. It's a breakdown in love, and therefore in peace and in joy.
  - I. Their fight is so bad that it reaches St Paul.
    - 1. These people live in a town called Philippi, a Roman colony. Paul is a prisoner in Rome.
    - 2. That's a thousand miles by road and would take a month and a half of travel.
      - a) That is one nasty fight going on.
  - J. So Paul writes a letter and sends one of his assistant coaches (he calls him true companion) to help get these players on the same page.
  - K. Which brings me to a bold claim today.
- II. The Foundational Claim: The Bible is a Handbook for Wholeness
  - A. I want to argue that:
    - 1. The single most successful handbook on human dignity and mental health in history is the Bible.
    - 2. It's not the DSM5. It's not a textbook. It's the Bible.
  - B. The idea that you matter—that you have dignity, worth, and rights—didn't come from science. It didn't come from government or philosophy. That idea came from the Bible.
  - C. Here is my point:
    - 1. Because the Bible is the only reason we understand human dignity, it is therefore the only guide that understands human sanity.
      - a) If it provided the foundation for our rights, the case is really strong that it therefore provides the foundation for our peace.
    - 2. God didn't just give you a rulebook. He gave you a roadmap for the human soul. And when you look at the design specs, we see three highly desirable qualities that define mental health:
      - a) Love, Joy, Peace.
    - 3. They are interconnected, really they are aspects of the same thing: wholeness and health in every category. If you give a human being those three things, that person becomes unbreakable. If you take them away, then no amount of medication can fill the hole that is left.
- III. The Core Conflict: The Battle for Dominion
  - A. But there is a deeper quality here that we need to understand.
    - 1. Dominion/Agency
  - B. If I ask you the question, who runs your life, you would probably say, "I do."
  - C. That's great. But think harder. If people were being honest, there are a whole lot who would say:

1. My mountain of debt runs my life. My fears run my life. My whole life has been me trying to prove my father wrong, so my father runs my life, and he's been dead for years. My depression, my anxiety, my ex-, my anger, my addictions, my sex drive, my jealousy... did I miss anybody?
- D. All those forces and so many more are trying to take over. They are little usurpers of the throne of your life.
- E. This is not God's plan for you. God's plan for you is love, joy, and peace.
- F. To establish and maintain that love, joy, and peace, God gave you certain powers.
  1. When God created Adam and Eve, he made them in his image. As part of being in his image, God made them the rulers of their dominion, the rulers of earth.
  2. That means free-will agency. Adam and Eve could stand tall and proud and say, I run my life under the mighty Lordship of my God.
  3. Then something really bad happened.
  4. Sin came in and wrecked their dominion. Then death came in and made it worse. That's why the Bible uses words like bondage and slavery to indicate that you're not really running your life, your dark side is.
    - a) You've become a slave to:
      - (1) Sin, Romans 6:17
      - (2) The Flesh, Romans 5:17
      - (3) The Devil, 2 Timothy 2:26
      - (4) Death, Hebrews 2:15
      - (5) Deception, John 8:44
      - (6) Lust, Titus 3:3
    5. And the expression of all of that is basic: you don't run your life... Addiction, dysfunction, fear, anxiety, all of that runs your life. Your dominion is broken.
  - G. The minute they sinned, Adam and Eve lost their love, their joy, and their peace.
  - H. And they stepped into a lifelong tug of war over the question of who's going to run my life.

**IV. The Solution: Salvation Restores Dominion**

- A. Well God came down. He promised a Savior to fix this situation and to restore their dominion. And then to symbolize that Savior, God himself offered the first sacrifice, and clothed their shame with coats of skin, instead of fig leaves, long story... But what it means is that salvation gave them their dominion back.
- B. Salvation fixed that.
  1. On the day you got saved, God gave you back your crown, your throne, and your scepter and he says: you rule and you reign in your life (Romans 5:17).
  - C. By the way, speaking of getting saved, we were just able to close the books on 2025.
    1. And I can report to you the number of people who told us that they received Jesus as their savior last year. But first, let me say that this is for thankfulness and gratitude not for boasting. God gets all the credit. Jesus gets all the glory. And also for comparison, let me tell you the number for 2024.
    2. In 2024, the number of people who told us they received Jesus through our ministries, our services and other people, was 1,502. That is remarkable.
    3. But wait till you hear 2025. Ready?
    4. In 2025, the number of people who told Pathway Church that they received Jesus was 2,503.
      - a) 1,001 increase. That's a 67 percent increase.
    5. And it works out to almost 7 people every single day.
  - D. Getting saved is a really big deal, and getting people saved is what church should be all about. It's definitely what we're all about at Pathway.
  - E. But...

**V. Salvation Is Just the Beginning**

- A. But we don't stop there because salvation is what gives you your dominion back.
- B. But after salvation, you still need healing and restoration of damaged emotions. You still need a kind of rehab for your soul.
- C. If you want proof, look at Euodia and Syntyche. These women are saved. Their names are in the Book of Life. They're going to heaven. They labored in the gospel with Paul himself.
- D. But they need rehab.
- E. Paul needs to send them help because even though salvation restored their dominion, they haven't learned how to exercise it yet. They haven't learned how to protect their love, joy, and peace.

**VI. The Disease of Me**

- A. Paul is essentially the General Manager of this operation, and he spots something dangerous. He sees the "Disease of Me."
- B. He knows that you cannot have a dominant team if you have a divided team.
- C. He knows that chemistry isn't about everyone holding hands and singing songs; it's about everyone respecting the mission and doing their job.
- D. And right now, these two heavy hitters are off mission.
  1. If you've ever played sports, or worked on a high-stakes project, or lived in a chaotic family, you know exactly what this feels like.
  2. It starts small. A side comment here. A cold shoulder there. But suddenly, the air in the room gets heavy. You walk on eggshells. The mission gets lost because drama takes over.
- E. Paul calls a timeout from a prison cell to address this. Why?

1. Because when love, joy, and peace are broken, rehab is not optional, it's required.
- F. Paul looks at these two women and he doesn't say, "Oh, take your time, work it out when you feel like it."
- G. He grabs his players by the facemask, gets in their faces, and says:
1. "Get your head in the game. You don't have to like each other. You don't have to go to dinner together. But you will love each other, and you will respect the mission."
- H. He even sends an assistant coach to make it happen.
- I. Why? Because the mission of getting people saved is bigger than any one person's ego.
- J. Here's the script for that:
1. *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."* (Philippians 4:4-5)
- K. Now, I have to stop right here. Because when we hear "gentleness," you think "weakness." You think "doormat." You think "soft."
- L. That is not what this Greek word means. Not even close.
1. True gentleness is not the absence of power; it is the restraint of power.
  2. Gentleness is the emotionally advanced inner commitment to respect the agency of the other person.
- M. Think about God's design. He gave you Dominion. He gave you a will. He respects your freedom so much that He lets you say "no" to Him.
- N. If the Creator of the Universe refuses to bulldoze your free will, who are you to bulldoze your spouse's will? Who are you to dominate your neighbor? Or your growing children
- O. Gentleness (Respect)—is looking at a difficult person recognizing that they are a crowned ruler of their own life.
1. Euodia, Syntechē has dominion over her life. Syntechē, Euidia has dominion over her life.
    - a) Honor each other's boundaries. Respect each other's right to make their own choices. Focus on your own performance on the field, and you make sure you play to win.
- P. This kind of gentleness or respect is you refusing to play the domination game.
- Q. You cannot have peace inside if you are waging a war for control outside.
1. Once you release your need to control others (Gentleness), you are finally ready to deal with the chaos inside yourself.

#### VII. Phase 1: The Upload (Transferring Custody)

- A. So, how do we get back to this place of love, joy, and peace? Paul gives us a two-step system: An Upload and a Download.
1. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:6-7)
- B. This is The Upload.
- C. Most of us treat prayer like a wish list. Paul treats prayer like a data transfer.
- D. He is telling you to take the raw data of your anxiety—your fears, your "what-ifs," your debts, your broken relationships—and upload them to a server that can actually handle the processing power.
1. You cannot carry the weight of the world; you were not designed for that level of traffic.
  2. Supplication means you get specific. Don't just say "I'm stressed." Upload the file named "Financial Ruin." Upload the file named "Cancer Diagnosis."
  3. Thanksgiving is the validation code that the upload is complete. It's saying, "God, I trust you with this file."
- E. And here is the promise in Verse 7: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
1. That word Guard (phroureō) is not poetic; it is military. It describes a garrison of Roman soldiers standing watch at the city gate.
  2. When you complete The Upload, God doesn't just give you a warm feeling. He deploys a S.W.A.T. team to the door of your mind.
  3. You can tell your Inner Nanny to stand at ease. Your Past Self, with all its fears, can stand down. You've got the Peace of God guarding your soul.
  4. This is Peace as a Fortress.
  5. This peace stands at the threshold of your consciousness. When a toxic thought tries to break back in, when the anxiety tries to re-download itself, the Peace of God stops it at the door and says, "Access Denied. You do not have clearance here anymore."
    - a) It guards your Heart (your desires/affections) and your Mind (your thoughts/logic). It holds the line so you can stand fast.

#### VIII. Phase 2: The Download (Reprogramming the Machine)

- A. But you cannot just empty your mind; you have to fill it. A vacuum will always be filled. If you don't program your mind, the world will program it for you.
- B. This leads to The Download.
1. *"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 on these things."* (Philippians 4:8)
- C. This is the algorithm for your soul.
1. You have cleared the cache of anxiety. Now, what are you downloading? Are you downloading the 24-hour news cycle of doom? Are you downloading the comparison trap of Instagram? Are you downloading the gossip of your office?
  2. If you upload prayers but download garbage, you will crash the system.
  3. Paul is giving you the filter settings for your mental feed:

- a) Is it True? (Or is it a fake scenario you made up?)
  - b) Is it Noble? (Does it have dignity?)
  - c) Is it Just? (Is it right?)
  - d) Is it Lovely? (Does it bring joy?)
  - 4. "Meditate on these things." That word implies deep, repetitive thinking. It means you chew on it. You install it. You let it run in the background.
- D. The Result: The Shift
- 1. And look what happens when you complete the cycle. This is the detail everyone misses, and it is the most important part of the text.
  - 2. In Phase 1 (The Upload/Verse 7), you get the Peace of God. But look at Phase 2 (The Download/Verse 9): "  
*a) "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."*  
(Philippians 4:9)
  - E. When you pray, you get the attribute of God—His Peace. When you change your mind, when you reprogram your thinking to align with His truth, you get the Presence of God—The God of Peace Himself.
  - F. You go from having a gift from Him to having intimacy with Him.
  - G. This is how you stand fast. This is how you regain your dominion. You respect the agency of others (Gentleness). You upload your anxiety to the only One who can handle it. And you download the Truth that rebuilds your world.

**IX. Conclusion****A. The Unbreakable Life**

- 1. So here's what I need you to see.
- 2. When you do this—when you upload your chaos and download His truth—something shifts in the core of who you are.
- 3. You are no longer ruled by your fears. You are no longer a slave to your past. You are no longer held hostage by people who hurt you. You are no longer defined by the opinions of small-minded critics.
- 4. You stand up. You take your throne. You put your crown back on.
- 5. And you look at the chaos that used to own you, and you say:  
*a) "You don't run my life anymore. Jesus bought me back. God gave me my dominion. The Peace of God is my garrison. The God of Peace is my Commander. And I rule and reign in this life through Christ Jesus."*
- 6. That's not arrogance. That's authority. That's not pride. That's identity. That's what salvation did for you.
- 7. And when you live like that—when you walk in love, joy, and peace—you become dangerous to the kingdom of darkness.
- 8. Because people look at you and they say, "How are you not falling apart? How do you have peace when your world is chaos? How do you have joy when everything is going wrong?"
- 9. And you get to smile and say, "Let me tell you about Jesus."
- 10. That's why Paul wrote this letter from a prison cell. He's chained to a Roman guard. He can't go anywhere. He can't do anything.
- 11. But he has love, joy, and peace. And that peace is so loud, so undeniable, so unshakeable that it echoes across a thousand miles and reaches two women who are fighting in a church in Philippi.
- 12. He says, "Stop the war. Upload your mess. Download His truth. Get your peace back. And get back in the game."
- 13. Because there are 2,503 people who got saved last year because we refused to let our drama destroy our mission.
- 14. And there are millions more who are waiting for us to show them what it looks like to be unbreakable.

**X. The Call**

- A. So here's what I'm asking you to do.
- B. If you have lost your love, joy, or peace, I'm asking you to take it back.
- C. Right now, in this moment, I want you to do The Upload and The Download.
- 1. I don't care if you're sitting next to someone. I don't care if you think it's weird. I'm going to give you 60 seconds of silence, and I want you to talk to God.
  - a) Tell Him what's eating you alive. Tell Him what's stealing your peace. Tell Him what's robbing your joy. Tell Him what's running your life.
  - b) Upload it. All of it. Right now.

**XI. Now, here's The Download.**

- A. I'm going to give you the truth. And I want you to let it sink in. I want you to install it. I want you to let it overwrite the lies.
- B. Ready?
  - 1. You are not a victim. You are a victor.
  - 2. You are not a slave to your past. You are royalty in the kingdom of God.
  - 3. You have been given a crown. You have been given a throne. You have been given dominion.
  - 4. And the Peace of God—the fortress-level, garrison-strength, Roman-legion-at-the-gate Peace of God—is standing watch over your heart and your mind right now.
  - 5. And the God of Peace Himself is with you. He is on your side.
  - 6. And when you walk out of here today, you are walking out as a crowned ruler of your own life under the mighty Lordship of Jesus Christ.
    - a) So lift your head. Square your shoulders. Take your throne.
  - 7. You are loved with an everlasting love. You have been given a joy that no one can take from you. You have been granted a peace that transcends all understanding.
  - 8. And you are unbreakable.