

Philippians 4:6 - Be anxious about nothing; but in all things, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, bring your requests before the Lord. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

How many of you have ever scratched a mosquito bite? I would be surprised if it were not 100% of us, for it's entirely natural to try to find relief for something that irritates us. But what happens is that the relief is completely temporary, lasting perhaps a few seconds, and then an even deeper irritation sets in as not only the insect bite but the entire area surrounding it becomes inflamed.

I suspect that most of us tuned in to the presidential debate on Monday evening and witnessed irritation growing between the two candidates as each one in turn scratched their itches. As wrongs were rehearsed, as injustices from the past were evoked, as character flaws were probed, the entire atmosphere became charged with accusation and bitterness. There was very little talk of unity but a great deal about diversity. There was no evidence of justice, mercy and humility, but of vying for position and power.

That night after we turned out the lights, the anxiety provoked by the debate remained with me. I said to Philippe, "I can't think of this any more; I have to focus on those things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and worthy of praise." With that, I fell asleep.

Yesterday morning, we had been asked to pray via Skype with a ministry leader in another country, and when we saw him on the screen, agitation was the theme. This gentle, humble man had been wounded by his flock and uncharacteristically launched into a recounting of each offense, scratching those nasty verbal insect bites. After several minutes, the Holy Spirit impressed on me that we needed to shift the atmosphere from the rehearsal of wrongs to a focus on the One who made us His righteousness.

We began praying the truth of the Word: that love is patient and kind; it does not envy and is not proud; it does not dishonor others; it is not self-seeking or easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

As the Word washed over our friend, I could see the Shekinah glory of the Lord actually appear like a cloud over and around him. The hurt, anxiety, and burden gave way to the light and love of Jesus.

When we as the Body of Christ bring our requests before God with thanksgiving, His peace is able to guard our hearts and minds in Jesus. As we deposit our cares with Him and He carries the burden for us, we are freed to be vessels of His love and healing in this world and to build up the Body of Christ so that we can be one in Spirit and of one mind. Then our nation and the nations of the world will see how we might one day be able to dwell together in unity.