

“The Cure for Worry”
Philippians 4:6-7
(Preached at Trinity, July 2, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verse 4** begins the conclusion of the letter, but as I've pointed out, Paul divides it into several parts.
Verses 4-9 seem to be the logical close to the letter, but suddenly Paul inserts his great gratitude to them for their generosity – **Verses 10-19**. – It's almost as if he is saying in **Verse 10** – “But before I close . . . “
Then, finally, he brings the letter to a close in **Verses 20-23** with his customary greetings and benediction.
2. As we've seen, in **Verses 4-9** Paul gives a bullet list of things to do; duties set before the Philippians as followers of Christ: Rejoice, be gentle, don't worry, pray with thanksgiving, think on good things, practice good deeds. These are duties for us as well.
3. The Bible is very practical. Paul wrote in **Chapter 1:**
Philippians 1:27 NAU - "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"
 - a. Modern Christians too often read their Bibles devotionally, but then run to their local Christian bookstore for a book on how to live the Christian life.
 - b. The Bible gives us all that we need to live in this world.
2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
 - c. Our Confession says, (LBC 1:1) – “The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.”
 - d. We need to read the Bible as God's Word to us. It carries absolute authority. It must be read with a heart of obedience.
Psalms 119:4-5 NAU - "You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep *them* diligently. ⁵ Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!"
4. So far, we've looked at two of these Christian duties:
 - A. Paul gives a command to be joyful:
Philippians 4:4 NAU - "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"
For the Christian our joy rises above our earthly condition. In Christ we discover joy that is inexpressible.
1 Peter 1:8 NAU - "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory"

- B. Then Paul commands us to display a character of gentleness before all men because Christ is near.
Philippians 4:5 NAU - "Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near."
 a. The best way to interpret this word is “forbearance” or “graciousness”
 b. It is the character that doesn’t insist on one’s due.
 Paul is saying that this is the kind of life we must display before this world.
4. Now, Paul turns our focus to a subject that often seizes our heart with paralyzing fear. He addresses the subject of worry.
Philippians 4:6 NAU - "Be anxious for nothing"
 A. Consistent with the others in this list of duties, Paul uses a verb in the imperative. It is a command, a duty to be followed.
 B. The word for “anxious” at its root means “care” or “concern.”
 KJV: “be careful for nothing . . .”
 In a positive sense, the word can refer to a concern for the welfare of others. This is always a good thing. Paul uses it this way in **Chapter 2**.
Philippians 2:20 NAU - "For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare."
 C. We all have many concerns or cares that are not of themselves a bad thing. We care for our families and homes; we care for our vocational labors. We are in this world and, as God’s stewards, we must give great wisdom in caring for it.
 D. Paul is referring here to cares or concerns that rise to the level of anxiety or fear. We use the word, “worry.”
 Jesus used it this way in **Matthew 6**
Matthew 6:31 NAU - "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'"
5. We don’t pretend that this world is free of danger. This world is full of dangers and uncertainties. We are so convinced of the dangers in this world that we spend huge sums of money to purchase insurance in an attempt to protect us from some of the risk. The only thing insurance can protect us from is the financial loss that accompanies the many dangers. Insurance has no ability to limit our exposure to danger. A person afraid of flying finds minimal comfort in knowing he has life insurance. A person diagnosed with cancer finds minimal comfort in knowing his medical policy is up-to-date. No amount of insurance can protect us from the worries of life.
6. In spite of the dangers and uncertainties of life, the command to us is, “Don’t worry.”
- I. We need to establish at the beginning this morning that worry is sinful
 A. Worry is caused by fear and fear is consistent with unbelief
 1. Fear presumes that God either does not know or He does not care
 2. It mistrusts God's Sovereignty
 It denies that God has a purpose for your life?
 a. Do you think you will die one second before God ordains?
 b. Do you believe that something will happen which God has not decreed?
 d. Are we willing to accept God's purpose? Are we willing to love God's purpose - His rule

3. Fear and worry are actually a demonstration of a hatred of God's sovereignty and purpose. It is sinful.
- B. Paul says "be anxious for nothing."
1. All of our fears and worries will not change God's purpose.
 2. Can worry relieve poverty, sickness, persecution? Will worry grow a church? Will worry turn away a storm or quench a fire? Will worry rekindle a broken relationship? Will worry keep you from being laid off?
 3. Sometimes people can be guilty of worrying when there is nothing in particular to be worried about—just a persistent anxiety.
Proverbs 28:1 NAU - "The wicked flee when no one is pursuing"

Where are we to turn when anxiety begins to seize our heart? Paul's solution is plain.

Philippians 4:6 NAU - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

- II. Paul's solution to worry is to look upward – "let your requests be made known to God."
- A. Faith turns our confidence towards God
Psalms 121:2 KJV - "My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."
1. Fear places all focus on the severity of the situation. Faith places all focus on God who rules the universe.
 2. Pride leads us to complain and murmur, as we suppose we are being treated unfairly or not getting what we feel we deserve.
Humility and trust leads us to cast ourselves before the sovereign will of God.
Psalms 18:2-3 NAU - "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."
 3. God's power is unassailable. His resources are endless. When the King of Aram heard that Elisha was hiding at Dothan he sent a mighty army with countless horses and chariots and surrounded the city.
 - a. Upon seeing the size of the army Elisha's servant cried out, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" (2 Kings 6:11).
 - b. That was fear speaking.
 - c. Elisha boldly declared: "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." – (verse 16)
 - d. Then he prayed - "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." – (verse 17).
 3. Faith doesn't mean inaction. It doesn't mean we sit back and trust God to solve every problem of life. It doesn't remove our responsibility. But we do not place our ultimate confidence upon our resources. Our trust is in God and so we look to Him.

- B. Paul commands us to pray - "let your requests be made known to God."
1. Paul describes three aspects of our prayers
 - a. Prayer – (προσευχή) – This is the common NT word for prayer – it means to make request of God. Prayer is lifting our voice before God.
 - b. Supplication – (δέησις) – It implies a particular address, a definite petition, a specific request.
"let your requests be made known to God."
Charles Spurgeon: "It seems to me that prayer should be distinct, the asking for something definitely and distinctly because the mind has realized the distinct need of such a thing, and therefore must plead for it. It is well not to beat around the bush in prayer, but come directly to the point."¹
 - c. Thanksgiving – (εὐχαριστία) – This implies fully casting ourselves upon the sovereign care of God. It is being thankful regardless of the outcome, recognizing God's goodness in all things.
William Hendriksen rightly states: "Prayer without thanksgiving is like a bird without wings: such a prayer cannot rise to heaven, can find no acceptance with God."²
 2. We must pray to God at all times – on every occasion – During all of life's situations
 - a. Notice Paul's contrasting charge:
In *nothing* be anxious. In *everything* pray.
Paul is saying, why would we be anxious and filled with fear and worry when we can take our worries before the throne of God and cast our cares upon him?
1 Peter 5:6-7 NAU - "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."
 - b. This is where **Verse 5** brings us particular comfort – Remember last week I stated that the phrase "The Lord is near" can go with what precedes or what follows.
"The Lord is near" can refer to both position and time:
 - In position or proximity, the nearness of Christ gives us comfort in every situation.
 - In terms of eschatological nearness, this present world will soon be over. We need to keep an eternal perspective. This protects us from becoming so earthly minded that we worry about every detail of this life.
 - c. Our daily circumstances are constantly changing. We must seek to maintain prayer on every occasion trusting in the nearness of our great God.

¹ Spurgeon, Charles H., *Spurgeon's Sermons on Prayer*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), page 36.

² William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Philippians*, New Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 5:196.

3. Prayer must be our first response to adversity. Too often it is our last response. We seek every other remedy before seeking God. And most often our remedies are of the carnal sort.
 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything (NIV – every situation) by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
1 Peter 5:6-7 NAU - "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."
 - a. It is one thing to recognize our need to pray during times of fiery trial but do we understand the need to pray during times of ease?
 - b. Our greatest danger is often during the good times
 This was the case with Job. His life was greatly blessed. He had a fine family and was wealthy beyond measure—yet he was about to come under intense spiritual warfare.

Conclusion:

1. Worry consumes us. It invades our mind with thoughts of doom.
 - a. As our minds are overcome with worry the stress begins to affect our bodies. It's a known fact that stress is a major contributing factor to many of our health issues. It contributes to heart disease, high blood pressure, and digestive disorders. It's even suspected as risk factor for cancer.
 - b. The added stress begins to take its toll on relationships. Consumed by our own troubles we lose the ability to focus on the needs of others.
2. What can calm this raging storm in our minds. Paul gives us the cure.
Philippians 4:7 NAU - "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
3. Paul says we must take every anxious moment to God in prayer. Next time we'll look at this inexpressible peace that God promises to give us as we bring our worries to Him in prayer.