

Subject: *Finding Peace in a Troubled World – Part 1*

Scripture: *Philippians 4:6-9*

Peace is a precious thing and hard to come by in this world. Peace is a gift from God. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), which means it is something that God produces in the believer. But that doesn't mean we are passive and do nothing to have it.

The customary greeting in the NT epistles is "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Peace is the birthright of every believer. We have peace with God and also the peace of God. Notice that Paul refers to "the peace of God" (vs. 7) and "the God of peace" (vs. 9). Having the peace of God is good, but having the God of peace is even better. Scripture speaks of God as "the God of peace" in Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:23; and Heb. 13:20). Christ is called "the Lord of peace" and "the Prince of peace."

Only God can give us peace in this troubled world. The bad news is the world can't give us peace, but the good news is neither can the world take it away.

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

In our text Paul tells us how to find peace in a troubled world.

1. WORRY ABOUT NOTHING

The phrase "be careful about nothing" means "worry about nothing." This is the same word that Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount (Gk., *merimnao*, lit. "to divide the mind"). To worry is to have a divided mind (maybe God will or maybe He won't...maybe He knows or maybe He doesn't know...maybe He can or maybe He can't...maybe this will turn out good or maybe it won't). We will never stop worrying until we see it for what it is.

A. Worry is disobedience to God

Jesus said, "Don't worry." Paul said, "Don't worry." These are commands, not suggestions. We will never stop worrying as long as we make excuses for it. Worry is a sin against God.

B. Worry is a disgrace to God

When we worry we are acting like God is not able or not willing to help us. In fact, when we worry we question God's wisdom, love, goodness, faithfulness, and power. We act like heathen people who don't even know God.

Matthew 6:25-26 ²⁵ *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* ²⁶ *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

Matthew 6:31-32 ³¹ *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?* ³² *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

How can we tell the world to trust in the Lord if we don't trust Him ourselves? Why would they trust Him to take care of their eternal souls if we can't trust Him for our daily needs?

C. Worry is a drain of time and energy

What has worry ever accomplished? Someone said that worry is like sitting in rocking chair. It give you something to do, but you won't get anywhere. Can worry ever change a situation? The story is told of a soldier in WWI who carried this thought on a piece of paper: "Of two things, one is certain. Either you are the front lines or you are behind the lines. If you are the front lines, one of two things is certain. Either you are exposed to danger or you are in a safe place. If you are exposed to danger, one of two things is certain. Either you are wounded or you are not wounded. If you are wounded, one of two things is certain. Either you recover or you die. If you recover, there is no need to worry. If you die, you can't worry."

D. Worry is a detriment to our health

As we learned, worry means "to divide the mind." Worry affects our mental and emotional health, and even our physical health. Worry can cause sleepless nights, headaches, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and ulcers. It is well known that ulcers are not only caused by what you eat, but by what's eating you. Dr. Charles Mayo of the Mayo Clinic said that "worry affects circulation, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly affects the heart."

Worry is sinful (disobedience to God); it is shameful (a disgrace to God); it is wasteful (a drain of time and energy); it is harmful (a detriment to our health), so worry about nothing.

2. PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING

Is it really possible to worry about nothing? It is possible as long as we have the resource of prayer. There was a man who hired someone to do his worrying for him. A friend heard about it and asked him how much it cost. The man replied, "He's going to do it for \$2000 a month." "How are going to come up with that kind of money?" "That's his worry."

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

This verse has two different words for care. The first is anxious care or worry and the second is the care of legitimate concern. So we could paraphrase this verse: "Cast all you anxiety and worry upon God because He is concerned for you." When something comes into your mind or your life and you feel a little worry, turn that into a prayer request and cast it on Him. Remember the old song, "Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." We can't pay someone to worry, but we can pray to Someone and turn worries into prayers.

There is no request too big or too little for Him. G. Campbell Morgan was greeting people as they left the worship service and a sweet little lady asked him, "Pastor, I talk to God about the big things in my life, but is it alright to pray about the little things?" Dr. Morgan looked at the lady with a gleam in his eye and said, "Ma'am, to God everything in your life is a little thing."

You can pray anytime (1 Th. 5:17, “Pray without ceasing”). You can pray anywhere (Jonah prayed inside the fish; Paul prayed in jail). You can pray for anything. Sometimes we ask God to calm the storms of life, but we’re better off to ask Him to calm the storm inside us and give us peace in the midst of the storm.

When trouble comes, we can remember the truth of this text (vs. 6-7), and it will bring a calm over the situation. Worry about nothing...pray about everything. Peace comes from a confidence that God is in control and He is able and willing to do what is right and what is best for us.