

Series: Striving Together For the Faith Through Prayer

BE CAREFUL FOR NITHING

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Text: Philippians 4:6-7

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

Introduction:

We live in a restless world. We live in an unsettled world, an unstable world, and an uncertain world.

The words that Job spoke many years ago are certainly true of mankind:

Job 14:1

¹ Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

We live a life full of cares, and troubles. All this tends to give us a restless spirit.

When you get right down to it, although the calendar says that there are seven days in the week, there are

really only three. Two of them should never cross our minds in worry. One of them is yesterday, and it can never be changed. The other is tomorrow and no man holds the power to affect tomorrow. Today is really the only day we have and with God's help, we can face anything that arises.

Philippians 4:13

¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Note:

1. A WORD ABOUT PROBLEMS (VS. 6)

Philippians 4:6

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Notice:

A. A Caution To Observe

Nowhere does the Bible ever attempt to downplay the existence of problems. In fact, it tells us quite plainly that problems will stalk us as long as we live in this world as we read a moment ago in Job.

Job 14:1

¹ Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Note these verses also:

John 16:33

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.

Ecclesiastes 2:23

²³ For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

Note not only “A Caution To Observe” but also:

B. A Command To Obey

When it comes to worrying over the problems we face in this life God has one word to say: Don’t! The phrase “be careful for nothing” literally means “Do not worry about anything!”

1. What is worry?

The word refers to “a troubled state of mind resulting from concern about current or potential difficulties.” It comes from an Old English word that means “to

strangle”. It was used to refer to the practice of wolves killing sheep by biting them around the neck, thus strangling their prey to death.

This is literally what worry does in your life. It will strangle you physically and spiritually. Worry will choke the life right out of you!

- “Worry is the interest paid on trouble before it falls due.”
- “Worry is the interest we pay on tomorrow's troubles.”
- “Worry pulls tomorrow's cloud over today's sunshine.”
- “Worry gives a small thing a big shadow.”

2. Why is worrying a sin?

It displays a lack of faith in the reality of God and in His ability to meet our needs.

Romans 14:23

²³ And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Worry calls God a liar; it doubts His ability and it says “God is dead!”

3. Why should Christians not worry?

- God knows what you have faced, are facing and will face

Proverbs 15:3

³ *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

Job 23:10

¹⁰ *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

Psalm 37:23

²³ *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

- God cares about what you face in life

Hebrews 4:15

¹⁵ *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

1 Peter 5:7

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

- God has promised to take care of you

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 13:5-6

⁵ Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. ⁶ So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Note not only “A Word About Problems” but also:

2. A WORD ABOUT PRAYER (VS. 6)

Philippians 4:6

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

If we can't worry, then what can we do? We can pray!

A. The Act of Prayer

Instead of worrying, the child of God is counselled to pray. When Paul talks about praying, he uses three words in this verse. He talks about prayer, supplication

and requests. An examination of each of these will help make his instructions more clear.

- Prayer

This word is the general word for coming into the presence of the Lord. It carries the idea of our acknowledging God for Who He is. It speaks of adoration, worship and devotion. It is the picture of a weak child seeking the attention of a powerful parent. It is the picture of our seeing Him for Who He really is. Prayer is the believer leaving the cares of the world behind to get lost in the presence of God.

When we get our eyes off our troubles and can focus them on the face of our Heavenly Father, then as He grows larger in our hearts, our problems grow smaller in our minds!

When trouble comes in your life or mine, one of the greatest sources of strength we possess is our ability to escape from our world into His. We can literally step into a realm where troubles, sorrows and worries cannot follow!

- Supplication

This word refers to an earnest sharing of our burdens, needs and problems. It speaks not of flippant prayer, but of prayers that arise out of the heart. Fervent

prayer about needs that move the soul is in view here. God wants His children to pray, but He wants us to pray with a passion about the things that move our hearts.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

- Requests

This word refers to detailed prayer about specific issues. We need to learn to pray specifically and not in generalities! Many times, we pray around and issue, but never prayer in a detailed specific manner. We should never be afraid to approach God with the specific needs of life!

Note not only “The Act of Prayer” but also:

B. The Atmosphere of Prayer

Paul says that we are to do this “in everything”. Big things and little things alike are to be the subjects of our prayer lives. Nothing is too big for God and nothing is too small for Him either.

Note not only “The Act and Atmosphere of Prayer” but also:

C. The Attitude of Prayer

Notice that our praying is to be done in the attitude of “thanksgiving”. As we approach God with the worries, fears and burdens of life, we should do so with a thankful heart. Why? We have a God Who cares about us; Who hears us; Who loves us and Who had promised to answer our prayers when we call upon Him. Besides that, regardless of how bad life becomes, God has directed our path to that point and He is actively working out His will in us.

We need to learn to be a thankful people!

Ephesians 5:20

²⁰ Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 3:17-20

¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. ¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

¹⁸ In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Note not only “A Word About Problems and Prayer” but lastly:

3. A WORD ABOUT PROMISES (VS. 7)

Philippians 4:7

⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

God wants us to know that there are some precious promises that can be ours, if we can come to the place where we refuse to allow worry to be our master; and we learn to bring our needs to him.

Note:

A. God Promises Us His Peace

We are promised His peace. What is peace? The best definition I have ever heard is this: Peace is tranquility of the soul!

This kind of peace “passeth all understanding”.

B. God Promises Us His Preservation

We are told that God’s peace will “keep your hearts and minds.”

When Paul mentions the heart, he is referring to the seat of the emotions. The heart is the place from which our feelings come. When Paul mentions the mind, he is referring to the place where we do our thinking. And, what is worry if it isn't wrong feeling and wrong thinking? When we see our burdens, our problems and our fears through human eyes, we will always develop wrong feelings and wrong thoughts about the things we face in life.

However, God's promise is that His peace will "keep" our "hearts and our minds." The word "Keep" means "to stand guard over". When Paul wrote these very words, he had a Roman guard on either side of him. They were "standing guard" over the man of God. Paul says that God's peace is like a guard that protects the heart from wrong feelings and the mind from wrong thoughts! I don't know about you, but I need that kind of help all the time!

Close:

Years ago, in the pioneer days of aviation, a pilot was making a flight around the world. After he had been gone for some two hours from his last landing field, he heard a noise in his plane, which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. He realized that while his plane had been on the ground a rat had gotten in. For all he knew the rat could be gnawing through a vital cable or control of the plane. It was a very serious situation. He

was both concerned and anxious. At first he did not know what to do. It was two hours back to the landing field from which he had taken off and more than two hours to the next field ahead. Then he remembered that the rat is a rodent. It is not made for the heights; it is made to live on the ground and under the ground. Therefore the pilot began to climb. He went up a thousand feet, and then another thousand and another until he was more than twenty thousand feet up. The gnawing ceased. The rat was dead. He could not survive in the atmosphere of those heights. More than two hours later the pilot brought the plane safely to the next landing field and found the dead rat.

Worry is like a rat in your heart and in your mind.

If left alone, it will gnaw at you until it destroys your life and until it steals away all your joy, power and energy.

But, the rodent of worry cannot live in the secret place of the Most High.

It cannot breathe in an atmosphere that is steeped in prayer and influenced by the Word of God.

Worry dies when we ascend to the Lord through prayer and His Word. What do you need to carry up to the throne of grace today?