

THE PRACTICAL REMEDY FOR ANXIETY

Philippians 4:6b-7

INTRODUCTION

Illustration – In a 1682 novel by John Bunyan entitled *“The Holy War, Made by King Shaddai Upon Diabolus, to Regain the Metropolis of the World, Or, The Losing and Taking Again of the Town of Mansoul”*. This novel tells the story of the town “Mansoul.” The town is deceived and rebels against the gracious rule of Shaddai and replaces it with the rule of Diablos. Shaddai sends his son Emmanuel to reclaim Mansoul.

In the allegory, the list of Emmanuel’s captains includes: Conviction, Judgment, Good-Hope, Charity, Innocence, & Patience.

Diablos’ Henchmen include: Ill-Pause, Incredulity, Lusting, Forget-Good, and Carnal-Security

If I could add to this allegorical list of Bunyan, I would say that the generals in this War for Mansoul are Peace and Anxiety.

READ Phil 4:1-6a

Stability –

Harmony – more external, unity is more internal

Ecstasy –

Humility –

Proximity -

Serenity –

Beloved, anxiety is not a disease. It is a faith issue.

Anxiety, worry, fear, depression ... same thing.

We are not victimized by our circumstances.

In reality, when we respond wrong before the Lord, we are not the victim of the sin. → We are the perpetrator of the sin.

Our text this morning is **Phil 4:6b-7 (READ)**

Proposition: 2 Ingredients in God's Practical Remedy For **Anxiety:**

- I. The **Cure**: The **Cure** for Anxiety – **Prayer**
- II. The **Comfort**: The **Comfort** against Anxiety – **Peace**

So That: If I were to ask you to raise your hand if you committed **murder** last week, how many hands do you think would raise? If I were to ask ... committed **adultery** ...?
→ Now ... If I were to ask you to raise your hand if you were **anxious** last week, how many hands do you think would raise?

So That: We will recognize anxiety, worry, fear, depression as sin and repent ... and ... repent with victory.

→ With God's prescribed cure and God's promised comfort

The **1st Ingredient** in God's Practical Remedy for **Anxiety** ...

I. The Cure for Anxiety – Prayer 4:6b

Point – Paul is never merely negative. In this text he sets before us the alternative, the cure, to anxiety → **Prayer**.

Prayer and **anxiety** are mutually exclusive.

These two cannot live together.

18th century clergyman and Greek scholar,

J.A. Bengel – “Anxiety and prayer are more opposed to each other than fire and water”

John Bunyan – “Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.”

Either the Anxiety is going to destroy the Prayer , or the Prayer is going to destroy the Anxiety .
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Anxiety, worry, is the delayed symptom of practical atheism. This grows from the neglect of prayer and the addictive belief in self-sufficiency. The remedy? **Prayer**.

Worship is divine deliverance from worry.

One result of coming to the living God in **prayer** is that the **anxiety shrinks and dies at the feet of Jesus**.

Proof –

“^{6b}**but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**”

(1) This is In Contrast

“**but**” – contrast with, “**Be anxious for nothing**”

(2) This is Encompassing

“**in everything**” –

• these commands are all encompassing

v. 4 → “**Rejoice in the Lord always**” –

v. 5 → “**let your forbearing *spirit* be known to all men.**” v.

6a → “**Be anxious for nothing**” – .

v. 6b → “**in everything by prayer ...**” – Paul says this categorically, with no qualification or exception whatsoever. **Polycarp** wrote to the Philippians about half a century later and said simply, “Don’t worry. Just pray.”

“**by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving**” –

“**prayer**” – προσευχή – umbrella term

“**supplication**” – δέησις – 1:4, 19 (“prayer”)

– an expression of hope

“**thanksgiving**” – εὐχαριστία – safeguard against idolatry

This is acknowledging God as Creator and me as creature.

This is dog theology vs. cat theology 😊

English Puritan, **Thomas Brooks** – “*The snow covers many a dunghill, so doth prosperity many a rotten heart.*”

Another man said – “*Swimming in a sea of plenty can drown a thankful heart.*”

Application - Beloved, don't be anxious about the qualifications of the Republican Presidential Candidate. Don't be anxious about First Lady Jezebel who is running for President. Don't be anxious about the plummeting spiral of degeneracy and perversion in the Western world and our society. Rather - be thankful! You live in a county where you can vote! We still have FAR more freedom of speech than a vast majority of humanity.

Illustration – We had a prayer meeting last Sunday night and we follow the outline of ACTS – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

I was graciously corrected by Mike Frazey that our Sunday corporate worship services do not begin at 8:30am 😊
They begin at 8am with the prayer time.

Then Gary wanted to get in the mix
→ and reminded us that setup is at 6am 😊

(3) This is Entreating

“let your requests be made known to God”

As with the other exhortations in this text, we see the present imperative → This is a command (to obey)

Illustration – Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect

prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, “Brother, the grass grows on your path.”

Application – Beloved, God tells us He is concerned with small things. Jesus says not a sparrow falls to the ground without His Father knowing. The very hairs of our head are numbered. He tells us to pray for our daily bread. He is concerned about these small things because they are vital to us. They are part of our lives.

Now, let’s answer some questions you might have ...

Question: Does God change His mind as the result of believing prayer? Answer: → **James 5:16** - “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

Question: How should we pray?

Answer: → **1 Thess 5:17** – “pray without ceasing”

Question: What does it mean “to pray without ceasing?”

Answer: → Prayer is always the right response for every Christian in every circumstance in every season of life.

→ *de facto* and *omnia facto*

→ according to the situation and in every situation

Anonymous Confederate Soldier’s Prayer

I asked God for strength that I might achieve.

I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked God for health that I might do greater things.

I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy.

I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men.

I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life.

I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

*I got nothing that I asked for--but everything I had hoped for...
I am among all men most richly blessed.*

Application – When we pray, we remember:

1. The Love of God that wants the best for us.
2. The Wisdom of God that knows what is best for us.
3. The Power of God that can accomplish it

From the 1907 book Power through Prayer:

“The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men ... What the church needs today is not more or better machinery, not new organizations, not more and novel methods. What the church needs today are men whom the Holy Spirit can use – men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men – men of prayer.”

William Cowper – *“Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”*

Robert Murray McCheyne – *“What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.”*

The 2nd **Ingredient** in God’s Practical Remedy for **Anxiety** ...
II. The Comfort against Anxiety – **Peace**

Point – Beloved, what God tells us here in our text, is that prayer eliminates anxiety-producing, peace-disrupting, love-destroying thinking. And God doesn’t just eliminate these, He replaces it ... with peace!

Proof – ^{“7}**And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

“**And**” → that’s the sure result!

<p>Prayer is a command to obey. Peace is a consequence of obedience.</p>
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Paul doesn't say, "[v.6b] and God will grant you your request."

"the peace of God" – Not merely the absence of conflict, but a healthy relationship enjoyed in the fullest.

1:2 – "Grace to you and Peace"

4:9 – "the God of Peace shall be with you"

Beloved, there are no distracting anxieties in God; no obsessive fears in God; no neuroses in God; no gnawing tensions in God. God is Peace. God has peace. And God gives peace.

Jgs 6:24 – "Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace."

Hendriksen – *"Peace is the smile of god reflected in the soul of the believer. It is the heart's calm after Calvary's storm."*

Peace is part of the "inner circle" of the Fruit of the Spirit:

Love, Joy, Peace

Believers are at peace with God.

Rom 5:1 – "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Isa 26:3 – "The steadfast of mind, You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You."

Believers have peace from God.

John 16:33 – "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

In the current context of Euodia and Synteche (v.2)

Those who are at peace with God naturally live at peace with one another → This is the unity and harmony we are all commanded to in v. 2.

Matt 5:9 – "blessed are the peacemakers ... sons of God"

Rom 12:18 – “so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men”

Rom 14:19 – “pursue peace and building up of one another”

Eph 4:3 – “be diligent to preserve peace and unity”

Thomas Watson – *“God the Son is called the Prince of Peace. He came into the world with a song of peace ... He went out of the world with a legacy of peace ... Christ’s earnest prayer was for peace. Christ not only prayed for peace, but bled for peace ... He died not only to make peace between God and man, but between man and man. Christ suffered on the cross, that He might cement Christians together with His blood; as He prayed for peace, so He paid for peace.”*

“which surpasses all comprehension” – literally means “thinking” (nouj)

Point – Beloved, God never tells you to do something that isn’t ultimately for your good. Each of the exhortations in this passage is designed so that in your hour of need, when all the lights go out, you’re ready to experience **“the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension”**

Another in a series of 4 superlatives, all forms of paj

v. 4 → “Rejoice in the Lord always” –

v. 5 → “let your forbearing *spirit* be known to all men.”

v. 6 → “in everything by prayer ...” –

v. 7 → **“which surpasses all comprehension”**

“shall guard your hearts and your minds” – keep watch over, hold in custody – **1 Pet 1:5** – “protected”

Illustration – Remember, because Philippi was “a Roman colony” (Acts 16:12), there was a Roman garrison stationed in Philippi to “**guard**” attacks from barbarian hordes and preserve the *Pax Romana* on the edge of the empire.

Application – In the same way, “the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds”

“**your hearts and your minds**” – your whole inner person

NOTE!! → Peace → Regardless of the answer of God. This is calm and contentment through the trial. Whatever the answer, it is for our good.

Illustration– The Master’s Seminary Alumni – closed group that just started on Facebook. TMS Alumni post updates on their year of graduation, ministry, and family. This is my entry:

“Graduated MDiv in 2001. On staff at Grace 2001-2003. Pastored in Delaware 2003-2007. Currently Pastor-Teacher of San Tan Bible Church since 2008. On board of Lincoln Global Group. Delaware felt just shy of getting sawn in two. My beloved San Tan Bible feels just shy of heaven.”

I continued, “Blessed beyond measure to be married to my most beautiful and beloved Margie for 28 years before the Lord called her home in 2015 after a courageous five year battle with cancer – horrific physical suffering coupled with rich blessing and deep worship. I plan on wearing my wedding ring to the grave. My beloved and I have two fine strapping sons, Zachary and Jadon, and a daughter, Rebekah, just like her mother, stunning on the outside and even more beautiful on the inside.”

Now, this is old news to some. How is it possible both are true? How can there be rich blessing and deep worship during horrific physical suffering ... culminating in death?

Because my beloved Margie and I, and our children ...and you, our beloved family of God ... have “the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension” guarding our hearts and minds.

Illustration – One of the characters in Bunyan’s Holy War was Mr. Godspeace. Mr. Godspeace was in Mansoul on patrol. His job was to guard the town.

Bunyan writes – “*Nothing was to be found but harmony, happiness, joy, and health so long as Mr. Godspeace maintained his office.*”

When Mansoul rebelled against Emmanuel. Emmanuel left and Mr. Godspeace laid down his commission. The result? Chaos.

Application – Anxiety, fear, doubt, depression? How do we deal with these? Again, really all the same faith issue.

We begin with:

→ A biblical view of the Word of God:

Inerrancy, Authority, and Sufficiency of Scripture

→ A biblical view of Man: – both before and after salvation

Application – What is wrong with taking drugs for spiritual issues?

(1) When you have a disease, is it ever a good idea to take the wrong medicine?

(2) You add a physiological issue to the root spiritual issue.

(3) You are not dealing with the true root issue.

Application – Beloved, what does our loving Father say to us???

→ Let joy reign and let worry rot.

→ And by the grace and mercy of God, when we do that ... “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds”

“in Christ Jesus” – 7 times in Phil – 1:1,26; 2:5; 3:3,14; 4:7,19,21

3 times “in the Lord ” in 4:1-4 → that’s the domain.
He is both the **grounds** for joy and the **goal** of joy.
He is the reason for joy and the object of joy.

Question: Who can pray?

Answer: → **John 9:31** – “God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him.”

James 5:15 – “and the prayer offered in faith” - literally means “and the prayer of the faith”

→ Examples of Zaccheus and John 6 -

2 Ingredients in God’s Practical Remedy For **Anxiety**

The **Cure** for Anxiety – **Prayer**

The **Comfort** against Anxiety – **Peace**

CONCLUSION

Beloved, God wants you to comprehend this incomprehensible peace. He wants you to understand this **peace** that is beyond understanding.

And when you do that, the Holy Spirit gives you a direct testimony to your soul that God’s promise is true and will hold you up when there is nothing else in this world to hold you up.

Illustration – Do you remember the sad death of JFK Jr ... when he was flying by instrument although not certified in this type of flying ... and flew his plane right into the ocean? A pilot told me when he was being trained, a tent over him so all he could see were the instruments ... every fiber of his being was telling him the plane has hurtling towards the ground ... the instructor kept saying, “Trust the instruments.”

Application – Beloved, in the same way, when you trust the peace of God, which He has already given you if you are in Christ Jesus, then God will navigate your life through the zero visibility storms of life.