

Philippians

4:6-9

“Lost in the garden of worry”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 6-7 Personality

III. Vs. 8-9 Perspective

I. Intro.

I'm trusting that you all experienced a wonderful time of thanksgiving! I felt led by the Lord to take a week off from our study in Mark and address what most people this time of year experience more than any other time and the antidote to it. In the 4th chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians he writes concerning the number one thing that can rob us of our joy in Christ, ANXIETY. Summing up Paul's council on this you could say that he teaches his readers how to “*Turn our cares to prayers and our problems to praise!*” But before he does he first tells us of the three primary things that causes anxiety in our life:

1. Vs. 2-5 People
2. Vs. 6-7 Personality
3. Vs. 8-9 Perspective

Before he gives us how our standing in Christ will deliver us from the anxiety of all three.

There are over 19 million in the US with some form of anxiety and I don't believe Paul is speaking to those that suffer from some form of mental health issue. What he is addressing is that we have a tendency to be preoccupied with worry and anxiety. Though most of us go through

times of worry we need to see it for what it is, not trusting in God's word. Notice that the antidote for worry and anxiety isn't the removal of the circumstances that we think are creating the anxiety.

II. Vs. 6-7 Personality

Vs. 6 The very mention by Paul of being "*anxious for nothing*" suggests that he understands that people of a proclivity to worry and anxiety. The reason we ought to be anxious for ***nothing***, is because in ***everything*** we are making our requests known to God! **The use of the word "everything" by Paul suggests that there is nothing too small to God because there is nothing to God that looks BIG!** Prayer is our expression of our complete dependence upon His promises, our leaning upon His grace and power is already at work within our lives. You could say humans after the fall were born worriers! Yet with that said Paul doesn't serve up the platitude of "*Ah just pray about it.*" Instead Paul uses three different words to illustrate right communication! Anxiety and worry are not best served by bottling them up; they are best defeated by right communication. And **right communication has three aspects to it:**

- a. **Adoration**: The first thing we see in right communication is that it needs to be directed to the right person if you are going to defeat anxiety and worry. Not only does our communication need to be to the right person (God) but this word carries with it the idea of communication adoration, devotion and worship. In other words our communication to God is extremely personal and we are communicating to Him out of love knowing His greatness and willingness to hear what is troubling us. I've noticed something about this type of communication in my grandkids, when something has caused them to be anxious or worried they don't come to me with a **laundry list** they come and throw themselves in my arms just to

hold them. To Nater's and Hani the list will come later what they need immediately is to run to Ganpee who they believe is big enough to solve their problems. I'm afraid that too often when we are consumed with worry and anxiety we run to God shouting out our needs when what we need the most is just to run into His loving arms and by still!

b. **Supplication:** The second aspect of our communication is **the honest sharing of our worry and anxiety.** And it carries with it the idea of continuance, keeping it up over and over. You would think this is obvious but a lot of the time **folks spend all their time telling God what to do instead of telling God where they are at.** In Genesis 3:9 immediately after Adam and Eve disobeyed, the first question God asks them is "**Where are you?**"? Folks, remember God is all knowing so the question wasn't a hide and seek question. The question was what God wanted them to tell Him in verse 10 "*I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.*" **Our communication should not be a laundry list of what we want God to do but rather a time of honest confession to the question of, "Where are you?"** "*Lord, I've hid myself in worry and covered myself with the fig leave of anxiety because I lost my job. Lord right now I'm consumed in doubt and fear and because of this I'm not able to hear your voice as I've become lost in the garden of worry.*" Supplication is not about human energy it's about honest confession to "*Where are you?*" **God doesn't require from us the knowledge of how to fix the problem He requires from us the honesty to admit we have a problem that only He can fix!**

c. **Appreciation:** The final aspect of right communication is thanksgiving but **it isn't about God hearing a thank you after we have been given what we have asked for.** No, **the thank you comes before we have seen or heard the answer** because it has already found the **answer in the Lord!** Most of the time we come to the Lord with our shopping list and a stop

watch and both of those have to come out towards our expectation before we offer (if we even do) a thank you. **The right communication that Paul is suggesting is long on worship, confession and thanksgiving but missing telling God what the problem is and what to do to fix it to our expectations.** The reason for this is according to Jesus in Matthew 6:8 our heavenly “*Father knows the things we need before we ask Him.*” A lot of us act as if God is incompetent and forgetful as we tell Him over and over what our problem is and how we want it fixed.

Here is the great thing Paul says that we are to apply these three aspects of communication “*every time*” we are anxious or worried! We don’t have to save it for just the “*big things*” or wait until the “*little things*” have become big things instead we can communicate with God in those three things in everything that causes us worry and anxiety. This is not some sort of “*blab it grab it*” prayer that is suggesting that we should ask God for everything we want.

Vs. 7 The result of this threefold type of communication will be that the “*peace of God that surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.*” Paul isn’t saying that you will avoid the trial or circumstance that has taken your heart and mind captive to worry and anxiety; he is saying that the “*peace of God*” will stand guard over your heart and mind so that worry and anxiety won’t be able cause paralysis. Notice that this peace isn’t based upon us understanding why we have peace and as such it is outside of our understanding the outcome. What makes this great is that we don’t have to wait for the outcome to experience the “*peace of God*” we can enjoy the peace of God right now! How is that possible you ask? Well it is because the “*peace of God*” is “*through Jesus Christ*” and not through the understanding of the outcome.

III. Vs. 8-9 Perspective

Vs. 8-9 Paul finishes with the third and final thing that will cause you worry and anxiety which is **a loss of perspective**. The first thing we note here that having the right perspective involves two things the:

- a. Vs. 8 ***Right heart***: Paul says first we need to search our **heart** with regards to 8 things: “***True, noble, just, pure, lovely, good report, of virtue and praiseworthy***”. Oft times our worry and anxiety is because we have not placed our lives within those 8 things and because of it we have lost perspective on life. Refuse the negativity and chose to think about the positive relationship you have with Jesus.
 1. ***True***: One expert said that on average 92% of our anxiety and worry are on things that aren't true. Satan will try to rip us off of our joy in Christ by causing us to focus in on the 92% of things that aren't true.
 2. ***Noble and just***: Things that are not worthy of respect and are not right will cause us anxiety and worry. Paul is saying don't make your focus the things that are unpleasant as they can control your heart and your head.
 3. ***Pure, Lovely and of good report***: “*Pure*” means of moral purity, and “*lovely*” means beautiful and attractive where as “*good report*” means worthy of talking about. Paul is

saying that when our mind is in the gutter our heart will be filled with anxiety and worry, so don't let your heart go to those places or even engage in talking about those things.

4. ***Virtue and praiseworthy***: If something has “*virtue*” it will motivate us to do better and if it has “*praise*” it will be worthy of commending to others. Anxiety and worry will control our lives when what our heart is set on are things that don't make us better and we can't commend to others.

b. Vs. 9 ***Right head***: Then we are to meditate or **think** on those things. Paul mentions the balance between four things:

1. ***Learned and received***: Perhaps you have experienced that it is one thing to having “*learned*” something a quite another thing to “*receive*” it and make it a part of your life. “*Facts in the head*” are not the same as “*truths in the heart*”.
2. ***Heard and saw***: James said in chapter 1 verse 22 that we must be doers of the word and not hearers only. Effective teaching isn't just in what a person says, it's also visible in the way they live their lives.

How do you know if you have the right perspective in having the right heart and right head?

You will sense the peace of God being with you. Conversely if you aren't experiencing the peace of God then your perspective may be off. God's peace is the “*umpire*” that call us out!

Our faith in Christ was meant for life! When you read the words of Jesus while here on earth you never see Him speak about theology and religion, He spoke to people about living and enjoying what God attended. Jesus demonstrated the victorious life He desires to give each person. There was no sense of anxiety in Him, He wasn't concerned about where His next meal was coming from or where He was going to lay His head. Instead He said, look My

Father knows your needs before you ask, He sees every bird and we are worth more than that to Him.