

ANXIETY'S CURE

Phil.4:6-9

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Anxiety – or over-anxiety – often plagues man causing needless mental and physical miseries.
2. The New Dictionary of Thoughts, A Cyclopedia of Quotations, offers the following examples:
 - a. “Anxiety is the rust of life, destroying its brightness and weakening its power.” – Tyron Edwards
 - b. “Anxiety is a word of unbelief or unreasoning dread – We have no right to allow it. Full faith in God puts it to rest.” – Horace Bushnell
 - c. “Anxiety is the poison of human life; the parent of many sins and of more miseries.” – Blair
 - d. “Such anxiety is useless, injurious, and even exerts a mischievous influence on others.”
3. The Bible, both O.T. and N.T., often addresses the discouragement, weariness and over-anxiety of God’s own people. Examples:
 - a. The prophet Elijah in 1Kgs.19 is an O.T. example. See Vv.10,14. Cf. V.18.
 - b. Jesus addressing it in the Sermon on the Mount is a N.T. example, Mt.6:25-34.
 - c. Gal.6:9 is another example.
4. Overheard in an orchard:

Said he robin to the sparrow,
“I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about, and worry so?”

Said the sparrow to the robin,
“Friend, I think that it must be
They have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me.” -- Elizabeth Cheyney
5. Then our text, Phil.4:6-9, which not only cautions and/or warns against it, but advises how to avoid it, overcome it, with a promise of the exceedingly great promises resulting from our efforts. (Read it here)
6. We invite your attention to the following expository sermon on Phil. 4:6-9 pertaining to our topic of Anxiety’s Cure.

II. DISCUSSION

A. A CAUTION OR WARNING AGAINST OVER-ANXIETY, OR THE EVIL TO BE AVOIDED, V.6a.

1. KJV: “Be careful for nothing”; ASV: “In nothing be anxious” – Anxiety is the key word.
2. This does not mean we are to be stoically indifferent and just take life as it comes. Such an attitude would be the death of all holy ambition, and would mean “good for nothing.”
3. It is not common forethought and prudence that is here forbidden. For there is no warrant or justification for carelessness or indifferent inactivity.
4. This exhortation does not discourage economy and industry. For the same inspired writer who tells us to “be careful (anxious) for nothing” also tells us to be diligent (careful, showing care) in business, Rom.12:11; 2Cor.7:11 (earnest care); 1Th.4:11 (endeavor, strive earnestly; make it one’s aim).
5. It has reference to distracting care, concerns or anxieties, which have fastened themselves on the mind; cares that drag or draw one in one direction, another in the opposite direction. Cf. Jas.1:6-8.
6. The very causes of anxiety indicate why it is to be avoided. It’s caused by:
 - a. An undue value of, dependence on, influence by, and fear of, this present world, and evil men, Mt.10:28; 13:22; 19:22; Lk.10:41.
 - b. Practical distrust of God, or a lack of faith; it distrusts God’s wisdom and goodness. It is rebellion against God’s arrangements for man’s peace of mind.
 - c. Neglect of the spiritual privileges of sonship in Christ.
 - d. The essence of worldly-mindedness, with God and eternal things placed in the background.
7. But according to Job (14:1) and the Apostle Paul (2Tim.3:12; Ac.14:22), no man is without his earthly troubles and sorrows.
 - a. The rose, however sweet smelling, has its thorns.
 - b. What, then, shall we do with our sorrows? Our persecutions and troubles that bring problems? It is impossible to eradicate them!
 - c. Our text tells us in the next section for study!

B. V.6b OFFERS INSPIRED COUNSEL OR ADVICE AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE EVIL OF OVER-ANXIETY IS TO BE AVOIDED, OR THE PROPER COURSE TO BE PURSUED FOR ANXIETY'S CURE.

1. Take **everything**, not just some things, but **everything**, to God. Make your requests know to God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.
 - a. The emphatic word here is "**everything**". This describes the range or scope of our requests made know to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.
 - b. In everything pertaining to life and godliness.
 - c. In everything pertaining to life here and hereafter in service to God.
 - d. In everything that affects our soul and its welfare here and hereafter.
 - e. In everything pertaining to avoiding over-anxiety.
 - f. This places everything under God's will and government and leaves it there.
2. Let your requests (petitions) of God be made known to him by **prayer and supplication.**" Cf. Eph.6:18
 - a. The general idea is of an expression of dependence;
 - b. Primarily a wanting, a need; then, an asking, seeking, entreaty.
3. Let this be done "with **thanksgiving**"
 - a. This denotes gratitude; the giving of thanks for God's blessings.
4. In God's word, we are assured:
 - a. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find," etc., Mt.7:7,8.
 - b. "Ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas.1:6); "that, if we ask any anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1Jno.5:14,15); "and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1Jno.3:22).
5. Thus follows in our text:--

C. THE PROMISED RESULT OF FOLLOWING HIS COUNSEL OR ADVICE, OR THE SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS TO BE ENJOYED, OR THE ASSURANCE OF OVERCOMING ANXIETY, V.7.

1. The peace of God is thus assured on the basis of the conditions specified.
 - a. Anxiety is cured when we take it to God according to his will. The Poet wrote:

“By caring and by fretting,
By agony and fear,
There is of God no getting;
But prayer he will hear.”
2. The peace of God of which V.7 speaks: --
 - a. Is the peace of God because he is its source; it originates with him; he is its author; he gives it; he is the channel through which it comes. See Rom.5:1; Col.1:19-21.
 - (1) Cf. Rom.1:7; 1Cor.1:3; 2Cor.1:2; Gal.1:3; Eph.1:2; Phil.1:2; Col.1:2; 1Th.1:1; 2Th.1:2; 1Tim.1:2; 2Tim.1:2; Tit.1:4; Phlm.3; 2Jno.3, all of which speak of “peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Is communicated to us as a result of His justifying and reconciling us to himself by Jesus Christ by faith and obedience to the gospel of Christ, Rom.5:1; 3:21-26.
 - c. “Passeth all understanding”
 - (1) It excels; “lit., to have over (expressing movement or position or state above or beyond something stated or implied), is translated “excellency” in Phil.3:8, speaking of the ‘surpassingness’ of the knowledge of Christ.
 - (2) It is deep, precious, immeasurable.
3. V.7 declares the mighty effects of the peace of God: It “shall keep (guard, ASV) your hearts and minds.”
 - a. The peace of God experienced by the obedient believer is a transcendent good.
 - b. As a watchman keeps or guards a city, God’s peace shall keep or guard your hearts and minds or thoughts (ASV). See Col.3:15.
 - c. It guards the fortress in peace though the shafts of care or anxiety are constantly hurled against it.
 - d. It garrisons the soul from every distressing element: from fear of man; of the world; of death; of hell; from evil ambition; from strife and contention.
 - e. The heart and mind or thoughts are made the seat of the peace of God.

- f. Our sins breed our cares, our anxieties. God is ever willing to take up the burden of our cares if only we are willing to commit them to him. Cf. 1Pet.5:6,7.
- 4. This peace of God and its mighty effects come to us “through (in) Christ Jesus.” Cf. Eph.2:14-18.
 - a. He is our peace – both the primary and the continuous source of our peace with God.
- 5. However, this blessed result can only be experienced and maintained by the proper use of our powers to **think** and to **do**, according to the exhortations that follow in our text. Thus we have the : --

D. THE FINAL EXHORTATIONS PERTAINING TO THE REMEDY FOR OUR ANXIETY IN ORDER TO EXPERIENCE THE SURPASSINGNESS OF THE PEACE OF GOD, Vv.8,9.

- 1. First, it demands **thinking** – the use of our minds. But thinking on the proper things – the things specified in V.8.
 - a. The mind takes the stamp of what it thinks on. Thus we are **directed** to “think on these things” – the proper things. Holy thoughts lead to and maintain holy living.
 - b. Our thinking determines our character; or character determines our attitudes, words, and actions, with their results – which in this case is overcoming over-anxiety, experiencing the surpassingness the excellency of the peace of God, and having the God of peace with us, which in turn determines our eternal destiny.
 - c. We are **directed** to **think** on “whatsoever things are **TRUE**”
 - (1) Things “true to fact...of things conforming to reality,” Vine, IV, 158.
 - (2) Thayer, “lit. not hidden”
 - (3) Cf. Rom.3:4.
 - (4) Inspiration recognizes we have the ability to do this!
 - d. “Whatsoever things are **HONEST** (honorable, RV).
 - (1) This has reference to what is worthy of honor, venerable.
 - (2) Think on whatsoever things you can look on in persons and in circumstances that are worthy of honor.
 - e. “Whatsoever things are **JUST**”
 - (1) “It denotes righteousness, a state of being right, or right conduct,” Vine, II, 283.
 - (2) Thayer, 148, “upright, righteous, virtuous...that which regard for duty demands, what is right.”

- (3) See Ac.4:18-20; Eph.6:1.
- f. “Whatsoever things are **PURE** :--
- (1) Unsullied, clean, innocent; akin to holy.
 - (2) Vine, III, 231, “pure from defilement, not contaminated (from the same root word translated “holy”).
 - (3) Thayer, 8, “pure from every fault”
 - (4) Trench, “as there is no impurity like fleshly impurity, defiling body and spirit, so the word ‘pure’ expresses freedom from these.”
- g. “Whatsoever things are **LOVELY**”
- (1) Vine, III, 23, “pleasing, agreeable”
 - (2) Thayer, 550, “acceptable, pleasing”
 - (3) Worthy of being accepted.
 - (4) Any and all morality that is of the faith of Christ is ethically beautiful and is pre-eminently worthy to be loved.
- h. “Whatsoever things are of **GOOD REPORT** (gracious, RV, marg.)
- (1) Vine, III, 281, “primarily, uttering words or sounds of good omen”
 - (2) Thayer, 263, “things spoken in kindly spirit, with good will to others.”
 - (3) Lightfoot says, “fair-sounding” and so “winning, attractive”
 - (4) Meyer says, “that which, when named, sounds significant of happiness, e.g., brave, honest, honorable”
 - (5) Things that awaken the admiration of men of faith.
- i. “if there be any **VIRTUE**”
- (1) It is employed here by Paul in its widest and highest sense of moral excellence – seemingly signifying what best becomes a man – manhood, strength, or valor (personal courage).
 - (2) Thayer, 73, “...any excellence of a person (in body or mind) or of a thing...Used of the human mind and in an ethical sense, it denotes. 1. A virtuous course of thought, feeling and action; virtue, moral excellence. 2. Any particular moral excellence, as modesty, purity.”
 - (3) Vine, IV, 189, “primarily denotes whatever procures pre-eminent estimation for a person or thing; hence, intrinsic (inherent, essential) eminence (distinction or recognized superiority).” See 2Pet.1:3,5.

- j. “And if there be an **PRAISE**”
 - (1) Vine, III, 198, “of whatever is praiseworthy”
 - (2) It does not have reference to flattery or insincerity of any kind. For praise is worthy nothing if it is not founded on truth!
 - (3) The Apostle had often despised the praise of men, but here concedes that some consideration ought to be given even to what is worthy of praise among men.
 - (4) Commendation and praise is in order under certain conditions. Flattery never!
- 2. Secondly, the cure for anxiety demands, not only thinking on the proper things, but **doing** or **practicing** the proper things, with Paul, by inspiration, citing his own personal example and his inspired instructions, these believers are to follow, with the promise that “the God of peace shall be with you,” V.9.
 - a. The promised blessing of V.7, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” which “shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,” as well as the promised blessing of V.9, “the God of peace shall be with you,” is therefore transmitted from God through inspired men through Christ Jesus by means of the gospel of Christ to men of faith and obedience; that is, to men who by faith think and obey!
 - b. Both “the peace of God” and “the God of peace” is with that one!

III. CONCLUSION

- 1. In this great text on Anxiety’s Cure, we have: --
 - a. A divine direction for the proper way to make our requests known to God: by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.
 - b. A divine direction for proper thinking: “Think on these things”
 - c. A divine direction for the proper practice: “These things do”
 - d. A two-fold promise based on the performance of these things: “the peace of God,” and “the God of peace.”
- 2. This is the way, the only way, to ANXIETY’S CURE!
- 3. All anxious care is needless for the faithful.
- 4. Human remedies only result in more anxiety. Only the divine remedy will work, will cure needless anxiety!

