

Peace – The Fruit Of Faith

Text : **Phil. 4: 4-20**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. **Anxiety** is the most common illness in America as approximately 40 million adults are affected by it.
 1. **Anxiety Defined :** ^[2] It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern.
^[3] The root meaning of the word anxiety is 'to vex or trouble '; ... , anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness, and dread.
 2. The **symptoms** of anxiety include excessive and ongoing worry and tension, an unrealistic view of problems, restlessness or a feeling of being "edgy", irritability, muscle tension, headaches, sweating, difficulty concentrating, nausea, the need to go to the bathroom frequently, tiredness, trouble falling or staying asleep, trembling, and being easily startled.
 3. Insurances companies say the average annual **cost of treating** anxiety in 2010 was \$1900. That would put the total annual cost in the range of **\$77 Billion**.

- B. **Many in America don't know God and any life without God is a scary place.**
 1. Those without God live without security.
 - a. With today's technology, if your enemy wants to find you, he can do it.
 - b. There's no place one can go to escape that which he fears. (***GPS will find you.*** ☺)
** We have rockets that can reach the moon and bombs that penetrate deep caves.*
 2. Those without God have no hope for the future.
 - a. They are described as :
Eph. 2: 12 – ... having no hope and without God in the world.
 - b. Without God, one cannot anticipate Heaven after this life, so he must fear death.

- C. **Only faith in God can eliminate the fear people live with day by day.**
 1. Military might cannot take away the fear that grips man's heart.
 - a. Though only 6% of world's population, we make 40% of all military expenditures.
 - b. The American military is by far the strongest in the world.
 - c. Yet .. one out of seven Americans suffer from fearful anxiety disorders.
 2. Money cannot give people the sense of security they desire.
 - a. America is the richest nation in the history of the world.
 - b. 39% of all the wealth in the world is owned by Americans.
 - c. That which we define as poverty is very wealthy by world standards .. **YET, 77m\$**

D. The etymology of the word “anxiety “ is interesting.

1. It comes from an ancient Latin word (anxietatem) which means “to choke.”
2. “Worry” comes from an Old English word (wyrgan) which means “to strangle.”
3. **How accurate ...** anxiety and worry choke the life out of one’s spirit.
 - a. The anxious person can never be at peace within.
 - b. Anxiety drives out one’s joy and prevents its return.

Thus, anxiety is a weapon used by Satan in his spiritual warfare against our souls and against God.

God gives peace. John 14: 27– Peace I leave with you; **My peace I give to you;** not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Satan seeks to create doubt within us which in turn evicts God’s peace. Doubt and peace cannot live together in the same heart.

I. The problem of anxiety.**A. There is a difference between healthy concern and anxiety.**

1. Paul taught that it was a good thing to be concerned for the church.
 - a. **II Cor. 11: 28 –** Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.
 - b. **Phil. 2: 20 – (speaking of Timothy)** For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.
2. Christians are supposed to have concern for one another.
 - a. Husbands for their wife.

I Cor. 7: 32-34 But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; **33** but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, **34** and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.
 - b. Members of the church are to have concern for one another.

I Cor. 12: 25-26 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. **26** And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

B. However, there is a negative concern that grows into fear and trepidation.

1. It dominates, it controls, it rules over one's heart.
2. It produces a feeling of helplessness and often of defeat.
3. When this type of concern takes over, it destroys one's perspective.
 - a. Everything seems bad or problematic.
 - b. We begin to fear that God does not care.
 - c. One may even feel, *"Things are so bad, not even God could handle this for me."*
4. As apprehension grows within us, it dictates our view of the future.
 - a. We begin to imagine how things could go wrong.
(*Reality can never measure up to that which one can imagine.*)
 - b. Worries about what might go wrong lead to wrong thoughts about God.
(*These fears are fruit born from the seeds of doubt.*)
5. Jesus admonished us to trust Him and not to worry about tomorrow.
 - a. **Matt. 6: 33-34** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **34** So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own
 - b. Days will have troubles, **but** we must trust that God is in control and He loves us.

C. It's normal for Christians to experience stressors in the course of daily life.

1. Material possessions (lost, stolen, ... greed, envy)
 - a. They come and go. (*Job lost all, Paul had & also did w/o.*)
 - b. Solomon said that possessions were but empty folly. ... **Eccl. 2: 1-11**
2. Trials in our daily life
 - a. Life is not automatically easy for the Christian. (*We serve on earth, anticipating..*)
 - b. Satan will oppress us just because we are serving God. (**Rom 8: 18** .. *It's worth it*)
3. Uncertainty about the future
 - a. We can't control the future even when it seems to be headed in the wrong way.
 - b. PEACE can only come when we trust that God is in control and He loves us.

II. What's the answer ? How do we deal with anxiety ?**A. Just saying "Don't worry." won't make it go away.**

1. It's almost impossible to stop worry without God's help. (cf- **Jas. 2** .. **Go be warm** ..)

2. Look to God; the scriptures give us the only way to defeat worry and anxiety.

B. Believing prayer is the way to defeat anxiety and stop worrying.

1. When the world begins to close in on us we must call for God's assistance.
2. **Phil. 4: 6-7** Be anxious for nothing, **but** (*alternative*) in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
7 And (*result*) the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 - a. Notice it “**surpasses all comprehension**”, i.e., only the spiritual can understand.
 - b. “**But**” indicates that prayer is the alternative to anxiety, to fear, to worry.
 (*Turn it over to God and trust Him to take care of it. He is able and willing.*)
 - c. “**And**” indicates the result of using the alternative, peace.

C. We must be a supplicant before God.

1. We are instructed to bring our problems to God and ask for help.
 - a. Be explicit – Discuss it in detail explaining your concerns.
 - b. Take sufficient time to lay it all out before His throne.
 - c. Explain why it causes you concern and ask for guidance.
2. Surrender control and turn it over to God.
I Pet 5: 6-7 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, **7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.**
3. Leave it in God's hands and trust Him to take care of it.
 (We need the faith of Mary, “**For nothing will be impossible with God.**” **Luke 1:37**)

D. When we take our concerns to God we need to do so with “thanksgiving.”

1. Sadly, some Christians pout when they have problems. “**Why did God do this to me.**”
2. We have reasons to be grateful :
 - a. We know that God is there for us. **I Pet. 5: 6-10** (*We are never alone.*)
 - b. Come what may, we know that Heaven is our eternal destiny.
 - c. We can bring everything to God. – **Nothing too large or too small for God- He cares**
 - d. *Opportunity* – Thank God our character in the face of trials will bring glory to Him
 - e. Be grateful God will never turn us away. **God is ready, willing and able to provide.**
3. We shouldn't feel abused; it's a privilege to suffer for the sake of the gospel.
 - a. **Acts 5: 41**– **So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.**

- b. **Phil. 1: 29** – For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake,
not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

III. Our text offers a replacement for anxiety.

A. Do not say in your heart, *"If I pray God will work out everything in my favor."*

1. Many think God has not heard their prayer unless their problem instantly goes away.
2. The Apostle Paul prayed repeatedly for his thorn to be removed, but it never was.

- a. **II Cor. 12: 9** – *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."*

- b. Paul needed that thorn in the flesh to assist in his sanctification. (*pride problem?*)

B. Our text promises two things :

1. God will give His peace.

- a. **Vs. 9** ... Our God is the **"God of peace."**

- b. Christians are called to peace :

Col. 3: 15 – *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

- c. Thus, any time a Christian does not have peace in his heart,
he is living outside the will of God.

2. God's peace will **"will guard your hearts and your minds."**

- a. Philippi was an important Roman garrison city.

- b. The Philippians were familiar with the concept of guards.

- c. Peace exists in the absence of fear ... Our hearts are guarded to eliminate fear.

IV. Those outside Christ cannot understand the peace we have in Christ.

A. The peace of God **"surpasses all comprehension."**

1. There are times when people of the world cannot understand why the Christian is not filled with anxiety, fear, or even panic.
2. It makes you almost feel guilty for not being as distraught as are they.
3. They think such things as, *"They're just in denial."*

B. They have no point of reference with which to facilitate comprehension.

- * 1. *It's like trying to explain colors to a person who was born blind.*

2. We reason to higher learning from basic facts, but the unbelievers have no foundation with God.

3. Trust and God's peace are inseparable.
 - a. **Isa. 26: 3-4** The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace,
Because he trusts in You. 4 Trust in the LORD forever,
 For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock.
 - b. Thus, the one who does not trust cannot comprehend God's peace.
- C. There are certain proactive steps Christians must do to maintain their peace.
 1. Vs. 8 – We must discipline our minds to dwell on positive things. (*pure, lovely, etc.*)
 2. Vs. 9 – We must practice the things taught in the scriptures.

CONCLUSION :

- A. In order to have the peace OF God one must have peace WITH God.
 1. **Rom. 5: 1** – Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 2. Our sins placed us in a state of war with God, but Jesus made peace possible.
Rom. 5: 10 – For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
- B. God invites you to be reconciled to Him and on the basis of that new relationship to receive His peace.
 1. Will you not accept His offer today.
 2. Turn from sin and confess your faith in Jesus as the rise Savior.
 3. Solemnize your commitment to Him by being buried with Him in baptism.
 4. Arise as a new creature, born of the water and the Spirit.

INVITATION :

(As with many others, this sermon is a compilation of old handwritten outlines. I don't remember their origins.)

Lesson Text :**Philippians 4: 4-9**

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! **5** Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. **6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. **9** The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity. **11** Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. **12** I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. **13** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. **14** Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; **16** for even in Thessalonica you sent a *gift* more than once for my needs. **17** Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. **18** But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. **19** And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. **20** Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever.

The 46th Psalm teaches this same principle.