

Pray about everything \* Philippians 4:6-7

March 19, 2020 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

Well hello! I'm glad that you could all be here today. I hope that you've been able to settle into some sort of routine and I'm glad you've chosen to make this a part of it.

You may be wondering why I'm sitting in a rocking chair. Well, I'm sitting in a rocking chair because it's a good picture of worry. There's a whole lot of back and forth but you're not really getting anywhere. There's a whole lot of motion, but not a lot of action.

That's worry, isn't it? You feel like you're doing something, but you're really not. In fact, psychologists have found that worry can actually inhibit your ability to solve problems effectively.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-courage-happiness/202003/here-s-why-you-should-stop-worrying-about-covid-19>

And scientists are not the only ones telling us not to worry, are they? Jesus Himself says –

27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? [The answer of course is no one!]

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself (Matt 6:27).

And actually, if you go to Philippians 4:6-7 you see Paul saying essentially the same thing. And he really helpfully explains how we can do it. Now this is a verse that's been important to me for a long long time and so I'm actually going to use the translation that I grew up with because I think it puts it really well.

Philippians 4:6-7 says - 6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. 7 If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

That's a very important passage for us to remember, especially these days.

“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.”

You know, in my unguarded moments, I find myself worrying about coronavirus. I find myself worrying about who will get sick. I find myself worrying about whether or not I have enough toilet paper. And I subconsciously think, 'well, maybe this is big enough that I should worry about it.' As if I'm helping God by my worrying.

And what does Paul say? Don't worry about ANYTHING. It won't add days to your life; you're wasting your mental energy and God is more than capable of handling it. There is nothing so big that God can't handle it. So don't worry about ANYTHING.

Instead, pray about EVERYTHING. The virus, the cure, our families, our church, our children, our food supply – bring it all before God and leave it in His more than capable hands. The more specific, the better. Not, 'dear God, we pray for coronavirus,' but 'we pray that you would heal people from it and slow its spread and give our un-believing friends and family spiritual sensitivity to look with faith to You in this troubled time.'

Don't worry about ANYTHING but instead PRAY about everything. TELL GOD YOUR NEEDS – not as though He doesn't already know them – God knows what we need and delights to give it to us (Matt 7:11) - but when we tell God what we need, we're doing two things. 1. We're getting it off our chests so that we don't have to carry it anymore. And 2. We tune our hearts to rely on Him. We tell God our needs so that when they are met, we know they're from Him.

And when that happens (the verse continues) don't forget to thank Him for His answers. That's key. Sometimes I think we're quick to pray to God, but slow to thank Him for all He gives. I remember standing in a hospital room with Bert Cutler and him saying 'every morning I wake up and thank God for all He's given me' and that really needs to be our attitude too. And not just because God deserves it – I mean – He 100% DOES – but you know what happens when we give thanks for answered prayer? It gives us confidence in God for future prayer. When we gratefully remember what God HAS done, it gives us confidence to pray for God He WILL do.

So... 6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. 7 If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

This is a wonderful promise that God has given to us. When we come to God with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving, His all-surpassing peace will bloom in our hearts. It's like those little grow-in-water capsules. You put it in water over night and then it expands and gets real big – God's peace is like that. When we give our worries over to God and remember His sovereignty and His power and His faithfulness and His commitment to us - then the peace of God that goes beyond understanding will crowd those worries out as we trust in Him.

Now that doesn't that we won't feel stress. Our bodies will very naturally register concern and that's a very normal thing. Even believers will legitimately feel fear. The question is what to do with it? Attempt to deal with it ourselves, leaning on our own strength, fretting unnecessarily about what we are going to do? Or give it over to God, trusting that He knows what He's doing. When we do that, we will feel the peace of God – a confident assurance that God is working for good – in our hearts and minds.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything... let the peace of Christ guard your heart.

Now, one further note. I saw this week that Max Lucado is going to be hosting a Bible study called 'Anxious for Nothing' online based on this very text. It runs from now until May and I'll put links on our church Facebook page – [www.facebook.com/langfordcommunitychurch/](http://www.facebook.com/langfordcommunitychurch/) That's something that you might want to take advantage of.

Trust God, stay safe and remember – prayer and precaution, not panic.

This is why we stand tallest and strongest on our knees. Charles Stanley

When we are firmly rooted in a deep, intimate relationship with Him, we enjoy a tranquility that transcends explanation. Charles Stanley

Here is a medicine to relieve grief and every bad circumstance and every pain. What is it? To pray and to give thanks in everything. He does not wish that a prayer be merely a petition but a thanksgiving for what we have received.... How can one make petitions for the future without a thankful acknowledgment of past things?... So one ought to give thanks for everything, even what seems grievous. John Chrysostom, ACCS