

If I were to ask what it would take for you to have a **worry free** life, what would you say that would require?

- Most people's minds will go first to finances
- Maybe a certain career or position
- Perhaps next to health
- Relationships
- "If I could just..."

There are no guarantees concerning any of those things

- Even if you attain them... do the wealthy really worry less?
  - Jim Carey once said, "I wish everybody could get rich and famous, so they could know that it's not the answer."
- Can you control what happens health wise?
  - You can wake up one morning and you're 5 year old daughter has cancer... or you do.
- Relationships end, people die, disasters happen
- **And we live in the most stable society in the world with the most opportunities in the world!**

So, even a moment of honest thought would lead us to see that it is perhaps impossible to **create a worry free life for yourself**

And so accordingly, we all find ourselves worrying... about all sorts of things... all the time!

- It almost seems like we can't not worry (who doesn't worry?)

**And yet, the Bible says: Worry is a sin!**

- That's tough isn't it?
  - We associate lying, stealing, adultery, murder, coveting and the like with the word "sin"
  - It is strange to think that when we worry we are sinning
  - And yet, that is what Scripture says!
    - **Be anxious for nothing...** (v. 6)
    - Jesus also tells us not to worry (Matthew 6:19-24) (Luke 12:22-26)
  - **Because it is, at it's core, dishonoring God—His sovereignty and His goodness**

As with most sins, God has designed **tangible consequences** into worrying

- Extended periods of worry wreck havoc on our physical being, with symptoms ranging from headaches to high blood pressure.
- Chronic worriers are prone to heart conditions and as a general rule are not too much fun to be around<sup>1</sup>

So we would expect Scripture to tell us how to deal with worry and anxiety

- To instruct us how to be both obedient and well—this passage does

Think of Paul's circumstances when he writes this—that should make us listen (v. 9)

- The tone and tenor of the letter is that of joy in the midst of pain and tough circumstances

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.communicationsdoctor.com/articles/worry.pdf>  
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**Remember:** Joy is not merely a feeling, it is the deep down confidence that God is in control of everything for the believer's good and His own glory, and thus all is well no matter what the circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

**One of the greatest threats to our joy is our circumstances—the things that happen to us.**

It is in tough circumstances where we **find out what our faith really means** to us

- It is one thing to believe the truths of Christianity
- **It is another to believe them in a way that causes you to triumph and retain peace and joy when everything seems to be going against you**

So, when **everything seems to be going wrong** (and it happens to everyone at one point)

- What is your faith worth at that point?
- **Does it differentiate you from people who do not follow Jesus?**

This is here where our witness in the world is perhaps most crucial

- You can muster morals, good deeds, abstinence and things of the like (to a certain degree)
- **But you cannot manufacture or force joy and peace that abide and last**
- This is where we get to demonstrate the worth and position of Christ
- In a world full of realists and pragmatists—when they see this, it interests them

So, from the perspective of our **own peace and joy in the Lord** and **our witness in the world**, this passage is very important... and very comforting

**Be anxious for nothing...**

- Anxious = **nervous care, brooding over something, to over-meditate** (i.e. worry)
- It is a command—**Don't worry about anything**
- But, it is not a stand-alone command. It is followed by: **But...**

**But in everything by prayer and supplication... let your requests be made known to God**

- According to this verse: The way to be **anxious about nothing** is to be **prayerful about everything**
- It has been said that **anxiety and prayer** are as opposed to each other as **fire and water**
- The biblical opposite of worry is prayer
- Learn to pray! Nothing will yield higher dividends in strengthening you

We worry about a lot—do we actually pray about it all?

- What worries you these days? What keeps you from sleep?
- Have you actually talked to the Lord about those things?
- Have you actually laid the burdens of them on the Lord?
  - 1 Peter 5:7
  - Give your anxieties to the Lord because He cares for you**
- The issue here is time—do we actually take the time to do this?

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Philippians)* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 273.

There is a certain way that we are to do this:

With thanksgiving...

- The assumption of the text is that believers will cry out to God when they have a need or problem or fears, not with doubting, questioning or blaming, but **with thanksgiving!**
- **There is both a theology and a psychology here**
- Psalm 100:4

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

- Theology: The right way to approach God
- Psychology: Get yourself mentally thinking about the right things
  - Instead of what threatens you, think for a bit about what blesses you
    - There is much!
    - There is the Christ and salvation
    - There are the promises of God
- We can give thanx in hard times for:
  - 1 Corinthians 10:13  
No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
    - God will not give us more than we can handle with Him
  - Romans 8:28-29  
<sup>28</sup>And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.  
<sup>29</sup>For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son
    - God is working everything for good and conforming us to His image
  - 1 Peter 5:10  
After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.
    - God Himself will strengthen us
  - Romans 5:1-5 (NLT)  
<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.  
<sup>2</sup> Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.  
<sup>3</sup> We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.  
<sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.  
<sup>5</sup> And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.
    - God is accomplishing much in us
- All of these truths are ample reasons to give thanx in any circumstance
- They get us thinking about the right things and they foster faith rather than fear
  - **This was my survival mechanism when Daisy was first diagnosed (and Psalms)**

Our text then provides one of the most comforting **promises** in all the NT! (A sort of if, then)

But don't misunderstand, it is not saying that life is going to be easy, nor that God intends it to be

- Rather it assumes that it will be difficult and that there will in fact be much to be anxious about!

The associated promise is not that our problems will go away necessarily:

- Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- “**Make your requests to God and he will give them to you**” is not what this verse says (others do seem to say something like that though)
- **It seems to insinuate that you will continue in trial!**
  - **Will guard your hearts and minds...**
    - You only need guarding if there is trouble
    - A military term used of soldiers on guard duty
- You will be guarded in your thoughts and feelings through the painful circumstances

- Here we take another step toward developing a **theology of suffering**:
  - That God often allows us to suffer, but never alone and never without some supernatural resources
  - “**...and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension...**”
    - This peace is not human in origin—it is supernatural
    - It is not rational—it is beyond understanding
    - It does not make sense, but it is there
    - If your Christianity always makes sense—it ain't true Christianity

### **Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

- Peace is only possible **in Jesus...** no human source can provide it
- John 14:27 (NLT)  
I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart! And the peace I give isn't fragile like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.

### Isaiah 26:3

The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.

### Psalms 13:5

I have trusted in your lovingkindness; my heart shall **rejoice** in your salvation.

### Psalms 91:1-2 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Whoever **dwells** in the shelter of the Most High  
**will rest** in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”

### **Your hearts and minds...**

- These are responsible for states of anxiety
- A reference to our inner person
- **Worry stems from one's heart and mind, not from outside pressures**
  - **From what we believe about God!!!!**
- Most people believe that outside pressures cause worry
  - Our life circumstances, however, only **reveal the problems** of our heart. They do not make them.
- **That is why worry is characterized as a sin—because it really denotes a deficient, dishonoring view of God!!!!**

## What we think, is everything

- What we think about God
- What we think about period

## Verse 8

### Let your mind dwell on these things...

- Spiritual stability is a result of how a believer thinks!
- **dwell on** = *logizomai*
  - It means more than just to merely have thoughts, it means to evaluate, to consider or to calculate
  - The verb is in the imperative form which means it is **a command**
- The Bible seems to say that people's lives are a product of their thoughts:
  - Proverbs 23:7  
For as he thinks within himself, so he is.
  - Matthew 7:20-23 (Jesus speaking)
    - <sup>20</sup> That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.
    - <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
    - <sup>22</sup> deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.
    - <sup>23</sup> All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.
- If you think holy thoughts you will be holy... if you think garbage you will be garbage
- The only way to get rid of the trash in our minds is to replace it with new stuff
  - Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)
    - <sup>1</sup> And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.
    - <sup>2</sup> Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, **but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
- Here is why it is absolutely vital that we read the Bible—in our culture, you have no hope of being anything like Jesus without being in the Bible
- Thoughtful, meditative time in the Bible—careful and prayerful reading

### The list of these things and their opposites: SO CONVICTED!

- **True** (lies), **honorable** (shameful), **right** (wrong), **pure** (dirty, impure), **lovely** (ugly), **of good repute or admirable** (deplorable), **of excellence** (shoddy), **worthy of praise** (low)

### This list of things best describes Jesus!!!

- Let your mind dwell on Jesus!
- Isaiah 26:3  
You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, **all whose thoughts are fixed on you!**

We often mistake the challenge of life. We think it is to create a life in which we are free from trouble and unpleasant circumstances... this is an illusion and impossibility.

- The real challenge before us is to trust in the goodness and sovereignty of God in every circumstance... this is real and possible.
- When we do this we honor God. When we do this we experience the blessings of His perfect peace.