

ANTIDOTE TO ANXIETY

by Pr. William P. Terjesen

All of us worry. But before the Fall Adam and Eve didn't worry. Jesus didn't worry. We who are forgiven, redeemed and loved by almighty God through Jesus Christ shouldn't worry. But we do. Worry is the result of sin. Our sinful nature, the old Adam in us, is quick to set the works and promises of God aside with the result that we forget God's grace and power and worry about things that God has under control. Sometimes we even think that our anxiety accomplishes something. Surely all this care and thought must be doing something! Well, sure. It's making us sick!

God's good news reminds us over and over that it is well for God's beloved children; He has everything under control; whatever He allows is for our good; and our temptations are measured and temporary. There are many promises in the Bible given to move us to trust God and let go of anxiety born of mistrust. I'd like to present one of these precious promises to you here, and to explain it so that you will be confident in your Loving God through Jesus Christ, who's blood and death have saved you.

KJV Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The first thing that the Holy Ghost says to us through St. Paul is: "Be careful for nothing". Careful in this context means 'full of care'. You can almost see a worried person's furrowed brow in the words. God is urging us: "Be anxious for nothing", or "Be worried about nothing". It's true. God wants us to be carefree. Notice the word "nothing". That word is fairly comprehensive. All well and good, you may say, but it's easy to say, "don't worry"; it's not so easy to accomplish it. Listen, God's Word is not a silly platitude like: "Don't worry; be happy". God encourages us to "be careful for nothing" and then He reveals the foundation for our confidence and how we can use this good news to our profit.

Rather than worry, we are urged: "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Everything. Every circumstance, every event, every misfortune, every problem, every challenge, is an opportunity to exercise faith in God's promises by committing our concerns to God through prayer. Prayer simply means talking with God. Supplication means asking God for specific help or benefits. Christian prayer begins with the good news that we have unlimited access to God by the grace in which we stand. It proceeds in the knowledge that God wants, indeed, commands us to pray to Him, and that, further, He promises to hear and answer our prayers because Christ has made reconciliation for sinners with God. So every promise in God's Word encourages us to pray, and to pray specifically for specific needs in the assurance that we are heard and will be answered.

But you know, sometimes we turn our prayers into meditations on our problems and their magnitude. Our focus in prayer remains on ourselves on our needs rather than on God and His gifts. So St. Paul adds the words: "with thanksgiving". He wants to remind us that when we are anxious, we should pray for help from God in such a way that we think and pray about the many wonderful things God has already done for us and for others. We

should pray with thanksgiving, thus centering our attention on the good news of God's grace and mercy. When we are attending in prayer to what God has done and still does for us through Christ, our hearts and minds are open to His promises of help for the particular need in which we find ourselves. Then, you see, with the soothing Gospel of Christ in view, the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, shall keep or guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Don't worry; God loves you.