

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

Anxiousness is the destroyer of a cheerful heart. Worry is the enemy of calm and peace. But it seems like we can't escape them. They're always creeping around ready to pounce at any point of the day. There's another breaking news update. There's another text from your sister about mom's condition. For our youth, it's another notification on their phone with pictures of what they might be missing out on or who has said what about whom most recently. Anxiousness and worry creeping and crawling about usually because we don't know what's coming next or what the future might hold and here we have the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Philippians almost nonchalantly saying "don't be anxious."

How can he say that? Doesn't he know what we are daily facing? Well, yes he does. Considering the fact that St. Paul is writing in captivity in Rome and even calls himself an *ambassador in chains* (Ephesians 6:20) it is easily seen that if anyone has reason to be anxious it would be him. He could receive a terrible sentence, including death, at any time. And yet he seems confident. How could this be? How can he combat the anxiousness and worry that certainly his situation would allow? Thankfully, he lets us know. *In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* Prayer with thanksgiving.

This does two things. In the first place, it takes me outside of myself to realize once again that I'm not God and that I have a Father in heaven who is God and cares about me and has promised to hear my prayers. The second part about thanksgiving is to recall what our Lord has already done for you (the psalms are filled with "remembering the Lord's wondrous works") and what he has promised to continue to do for you (i.e. not leave you as orphans - John 14:18). In this way, then, we are drawn to dwell on what is known rather than what we might be unsure of which causes anxiousness and worry. And what we know, and what St. Paul knew and also commends us towards, is that which appears just before our verse above: *The Lord is at hand* (Philippians 4:5). The Lord is at hand, is near, to hear your prayers about anxious things, for you to be calmed by Him who has done wondrous works for you. Prayer and thanksgiving are St. Paul's practical admonition to you to combat anxiousness and be reorientated away from the unknown and toward the known love in Christ for you. *Evening, morning, and noon I cry in distress, and He hears my voice* (Psalm 55:17).

So Thanksgiving Day each November it's good to give thanks and pray - and we should for the Lord is near and has provided - yet our daily lives need these constants in them as well that we would be calmed and assured by our Lord Jesus who, thankfully, continues to provide all that we need to support this body and life. This includes daily bread and His peace which surpassing understanding. May God grant it that we know this always and learn to pray with thanksgiving and all earnestness. Think of Paul in chains or Daniel in wicked Babylon who prayed three times daily and know that the Lord is at hand to sustain you in all things.

In Christ,
Pastor Suggitt



LIFE QUOTE

The science is conclusive: Human life starts at fertilization. The Bible is conclusive: Life is from God, it begins at fertilization, and God's commandment of 'You shall not murder' (Exodus 20:13) certainly applies to the slaying of an innocent child in the womb. Because that little baby in the womb IS a human being. *A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

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