

Philippians 4:6,7

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

应当一无挂虑，只要凡事借着祷告，祈求，和感谢，将你们所要的告诉神。神所赐出人意外的平安，必在基督耶稣里，保守你们的心怀意念。

“Be careful for nothing” or *“be anxious for nothing,”* in other words, don’t worry about anything. Now, when we use a phrase like that, it’s usually because a problem’s come along in someone’s life, so we tell them, “Don’t worry about it.” And that’s a good thing to say as far as it goes, because we are reassuring them that we care about their situation, and we’re trying to comfort them, so that’s good.

Now, I don’t mean to be negative in any way, but it can be quite a silly thing to say too actually, because most of the time, we’ve got no basis whatsoever for saying it. It’s just a comfortable phrase to use in times of trouble. Most of the time we can’t actually give a reason *why* the person concerned shouldn’t worry. Maybe their fears will all come to pass. Maybe they will end up in the worst case scenario that they’ve always dreaded. Maybe their own nightmare will come true. But we don’t like to tell them that, because we simply want to comfort them in their affliction.

When we use the phrase, “Don’t worry about it,” without any basis for saying it, it’s rather like the person James talks about in His epistle:

James 2:15,16

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

若是弟兄，或是姐妹，赤身露体，又缺了日用的饮食，你们中间有人对他们说，平平安安地去吧，愿你们穿得暖吃得饱。却不给他们身体所需用的，这有什么益处呢？

“Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled.” Great, lovely, comfortable words. But if there’s no basis for saying them, in other words if we don’t give them the food and clothing they need, then the words are completely hollow.

Similarly, when we tell people, *“Don’t worry.”* If our statement has no basis behind it at all, it becomes a completely meaningless phrase. So, let’s make sure when we do use phrases like that, we can back them up with some kind of

action, if we can. Maybe we could help the person practically in some way. Let's do it. Let's not just sit there and use empty words all the time.

But when God says "*Be anxious for nothing,*" as He does here in His Word, then there's always a real reason behind it. God's words are never empty, hollow words with no basis behind them. God doesn't just say things for the sake of saying them. He always has a basis for saying what He says.

Isaiah 55:11

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

我口所出的话，也必如此，决不徒然返回，却要成就我所喜悦的，在我发他去成就的事上（发他去成就或作所命定）必然亨通。

Now there's a very important principle that we must understand. God is God. He's in control of all things, at all times, and knows what He's doing. He always has been in control, is now and always will be. Nothing, absolutely nothing is outside of His control. So consequently there's actually absolutely nothing for any of us to ever worry about at all.

Psalms 145:14-16

"The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

凡跌倒的，耶和华将他们扶持。凡被压下的，将他们扶起。万民都举目仰望你。你随时给他们食物。你张手，使有生气的都随愿饱足。

Luke 12:6,7

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

五个麻雀，不是卖二分银子吗？但在神面前，一个也不忘记。就是你们的头发也都被数过了。

And then there follows a phrase similar to the one we're looking at:

"Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

不要惧怕，你们比许多麻雀还贵重。

Once we've really understood this idea that God is in control of everything, worry and anxiety ought to completely disappear from our lives. Yet somehow it doesn't. We can't get ourselves to understand the providence of God fully in

our hearts, and that makes us anxious. How can it be that we can still get so worried about things in this world?

If we were truly living a holy life close to God, then we ought to be able to fully trust in His providence, and consequently live our life without any worries at all. Then we wouldn't need this instruction. But we do need it.

Many times it seems to us as though God isn't there. Many times we might ask, "Where is God in all this?" Where was God in two world wars? Why doesn't God stop suicide bombers blowing up innocent people? And more recently, what about the Paris terrorist attacks? Those events got the supposed spiritual leader of the established church of our country saying it made him doubt the existence of God. What kind of spiritual leadership is that? In China they were laughing at this "foreign pope" who doubts God's existence. And there he is sitting in Lambeth Palace thinking he's being super-spiritual when he talks about doubting God.

Such atrocities, far from making us doubt the existence of God, ought to prove to us even more that what the Bible says about the nature of man is absolutely true. We're all totally depraved and really do deserve eternal punishment.

Genesis 6:5

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

耶和華見人在地上罪惡很大，終日所思想的盡都是惡。

It's incredible that even after atrocities like these have happened, people, even many religious leaders, still go on about having faith in human nature.

Can you remember the Aberfan disaster? In 1966, 144 people, mostly children in a primary school were killed as a coal tip slid onto the school after heavy rain. Where was God? If God is in control of all things, why on earth did He allow that? A minister of one of the local churches was asked on the BBC News, "Where is God in all this?" (You don't get BBC reporters asking good questions like that any more). The minister said: "God made a mistake."

But God is in control. Even though we can't understand why God allows something to happen, we should still realise that He's always in control.

Romans 8:28

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

我們曉得萬事都互相效力，叫愛神的人得益處，就是按他旨意被召的人。

But there's something in our nature that gives us a tendency to worry about things. There's something about us that makes us unable to trust in God.

And that's because we're fallen creatures. God originally made man upright, but we have fallen into sin:

Ecclesiastes 7:29

"God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

就是神造人原是正直，但他们寻出许多巧计。

Romans 5:12

"by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"

这就如罪是从一人入了世界，死又是从罪来的，于是死就临到众人，因为众人都犯了罪。

So now, we can't naturally see God, or even detect Him with any of our senses. As a result, vast multitudes throughout the world simply don't believe He exists at all, and they live their lives completely apart from Him. And we're all born into that condition. So that's why anxiety has come into the world.

If we can't see God, why should we believe He's there, let alone the fact that He's in control of everything? Why should anybody believe in a God who allows all these "disasters" to happen, and seems not to be doing anything. So instead, people start believing that there's no God and that things must only happen by random chance. They talk about probabilities instead.

We say, "Chances are this will happen," or "That will probably happen." And because we think things happen randomly, and we don't know the future, so we become anxious and start worrying about it.

But, even under these circumstances, can you believe it, millions of people do believe in God. How can that be? Isn't that marvellous? How on earth can anyone believe in God, when all these terrible things are happening? Yet millions do. And this can only be God in action, changing human souls, from living in darkness to living in the light.

2 Corinthians 4:6

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

那吩咐光从黑暗里照出来的神，已经照在我们心里，叫我们得知神荣耀的光，显在耶稣基督的面上。

Acts 26:18

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

我差你到他们那里去，要叫他们的眼睛得开，从黑暗中归向光明，从撒但权下归向神。又因信我，得蒙赦罪，和一切成圣的人同得基业。

This is what God is doing all over the world today. And this is what we all need. We need our eyes opened. We need ourselves to be turned from darkness to light. And we need to receive the forgiveness of sins that only God can give. And God is there now for us to cry to, if only we would come to Him.

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

你们祈求，就给你们。寻找，就寻见。叩门，就给你们开门。

Cry to Him now, and you will not be disappointed.

But, notice that this instruction *“Be anxious for nothing,”* is given here mainly to believers. Many gospel messages call unbelievers to come to Christ and at least imply that if they do, somehow their worries and anxieties will be over, and everything will be plain sailing from then on. But that’s not true.

Oh yes, if we come to Christ, our lives will be changed for the better. We’ll receive a new heart. We’ll know forgiveness of sins. We’ll have the Holy Spirit in our lives to guide us into the paths of righteousness, which we couldn’t do ourselves. Please, I’m calling you now to come to know Him, for to know Him is life eternal. But I’m not going to say that everything will be plain sailing.

Outwardly, things will be the same. We’ll still not be able to detect God with our senses. We must now:

2 Corinthians 5:7

“Walk by faith, not by sight.”

因我们行事为人，是凭着信心，不是凭着眼见。

We’ll have renewed hearts, but now there’ll be a battle going on inside us, because as long as we are still living in these bodies, we’ll be continually dragged back into our old ways. We should trust in the Lord. We should trust implicitly in His providential control of all things, despite what appears before our natural eyes. The Holy Spirit comes into the heart of a believer to guide him in the right ways. We should follow Him in everything we do. But we don’t. We still have unbelief lurking in our hearts as well. And consequently there’ll always be worries and anxieties even in the Lord’s people.

So believers still need instruction as to how to be helped over these anxieties. And we have the answer in the text here.

“6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”

应当一无挂虑，只要凡事借着祷告，祈求，和感谢，将你们所要的告诉神。

Here's the solution to the problem of anxiety. It's not go to the doctor and get him to stuff you with happy tablets. That'll just cloud your mind even further. Prayer is the answer. And I mean real prayer.

What is prayer? The Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us:

“Q: What is prayer?”

A: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.”

And, apart from the subject of confession of sin, that's what we've got here in this verse. Now, I don't want to minimise confession of sin, too many people are doing that these days. Sin is never spoken about at all in some church circles. It's almost considered a sin to talk about it. Confession of sin is a vital, most important part of prayer. Would to God we all took confession of sin far more seriously than we do. But it's not connected with the subject we have before us today, so that's why it's not mentioned in the passage.

But look what prayer is. It's a real, living, heartfelt, true, relationship with our heavenly Father. No other religion in the world has this. This is the uniqueness of the Christian faith. All true Christians have a real living relationship with the one true living Creator God, Lord of heaven and earth.

In every other religion, people often talk about “saying prayers,” but they mean no more than simply reciting words. Buddhists have their prayer flags with written texts on them, and which they chant endlessly. Muslims recite the same old words in the same old way all the time, and think Allah is going to be impressed by that. Most Roman Catholics recite prayers. You can buy books of prayers from supposed saints of the past, and they think repeating them can help them get nearer to God. And many so-called Christians use the Bible itself, and recite what we call the Lords Prayer, using it purely as a chant, a recitation, a good luck charm, and nothing else. Whereas it's really meant as a template, for real prayers in our own words.

No other religion knows what prayer is. Real prayer is calling on the Lord of glory in a living, two-way living relationship. It was said of Moses:

Exodus 33:11

“And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.”

耶和华与摩西面对面说话，好像人与朋友说话一般。

Now that's real prayer. Speak to Him. Communicate with Him. Cry to Him. That's prayer. Not merely reciting.

The Lord is there for us at any time to call upon Him. We are not to be afraid of doing so:

Hebrews 4:16

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

所以我们只管坦然无惧地，来到施恩的宝座前，为要得怜恤，蒙恩惠作随时的帮助。

We are to pour out our heart to Him:

Psalms 62:8

“Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.”

你们众民当时倚靠他，在他面前倾心吐意。神是我们的避难所

1 Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

你们要将一切的忧虑卸给神，因为他顾念你们。

And we are always to pray *“with thanksgiving”*

One of the worst things we read about the wicked is that they were never thankful for God’s mercies:

Romans 1:21

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

因为他们虽然知道神，却不当作神荣耀他，也不感谢他。他们的思念变为虚妄，无知的心就昏暗了。

Now, if we’re true believers, that can never happen to us. But as true believers we should all the more have thankfulness in our hearts for the Lord’s mercies. He has given us everything we have. He gives us life, health, strength, food and clothing. Every breath comes from Him. Every heartbeat comes from Him. And above all else, He has given all true believers the most precious gifts of repentance and faith in Christ. We should never cease to be thankful to Him. We have so much to thank Him for. The psalms are full of thanksgiving.

Psalms 136:1

“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

你们要称谢耶和华，因他本为善。他的慈爱永远长存。

1 Thessalonians 5:18

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

凡事谢恩。因为这是神在基督耶稣里向你们所定的旨意。

Prayer consists of making our requests known to God, and that's what we're told to do here. But that's often all we do. Thanksgiving, along with confession of sin, are two very neglected areas of our prayer life. Let's be thankful for every blessing that God pours upon us, because we don't deserve any of them.

Lamentations 3:22

“It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.”

我们不至消灭，是出于耶和华诸般的慈爱。是因他的怜悯不至断绝。

“7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

神所赐出人意外的平安，必在基督耶稣里，保守你们的心怀意念

And if we pray to God in this prescribed manner, not in empty recited prayers, but in a real heartfelt relationship, our anxieties will be quenched. We will receive the peace of God in our hearts and minds.

Our spiritual problem is in our hearts and minds. That's where the battle takes place. It's in our hearts and minds that we get anxious about things. And it's also where the Lord works in us.

When we are spreading the gospel, we don't do it at the point of a sword, like Muslims do. And I have to say, many people who called themselves “Christian” have done in the past. The Crusades were the most horrific battles ever fought, and the world regards that as Christianity. But it's not. It was the pope trying to fight his battles with the sword. True religion is spiritual.

Ephesians 6:12

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

因我们并不是与属血气的争战，乃是与那些执政的，掌权的，管辖这幽暗世界的，以及天空属灵气的恶魔争战。（两争战原文都作摔跤）

the peace of God, which passeth all understanding

This is not talking about peace with God. If we're truly the Lord's people, we already received that when we first came to Him in repentance and faith:

Romans 5:1

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

我们既因信称义，就借着我们的主耶稣基督，得与神相和。

This is talking about the peace of God. This is a state of heart and mind that we can have. But we need to ask for it. It is something to attain.

Romans 15:13

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

但愿使人有盼望的神，因信将诸般的喜乐平安，充满你们的心，使你们借着圣灵的能力，大有盼望。

Isaiah 26:3

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

坚心倚赖你的，你必保守他十分平安，因为他倚靠你。

And we can't understand it. We can understand lots of things the Bible has revealed to us. But the peace of God is incomprehensible. It's impossible to explain what it is, especially to someone who's never experienced it.

1 Peter 1:8

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"

你们虽然没有见过他，却是爱他。如今虽不得看见，却因信他就有说不出来，满有荣光的大喜乐。

Notice that, it doesn't say wait for the answers to your prayers, then you'll receive the peace of God. It just says *"let your requests be made known to God"* and then you'll receive it. So we don't need to wait for answers, saying to ourselves, "I'll get the peace of God when I get the answer to my prayers." You'll be waiting a long time if you think that. This verse is teaching that we receive the peace of God as soon as we make our requests to Him.

But how can this be? If I ask you a question because I'm worried about something, I won't be able to find any peace in my mind until you've at least given me some sort of answer. If you just sit there and say nothing, my anxiety, if anything, is probably going to be increased. But with God, we get the peace in our hearts and minds before He's answered. Isn't that strange?

And another question that ought to cross our minds: What's the point of prayer, when God knows what we want before we ask anyway? Have you ever asked that question?

The answer to all of this is quite simple. Prayer, real prayer, is for our benefit, not God's. He knows what we want before we tell Him. God knows everything. In fact He knows far more about what we need than we do. Our prayers only scratch the surface of what we really need. The Holy Spirit prays for us:

Romans 8:26,27

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

况且我们的软弱有圣灵帮助，我们本不晓得当怎样祷告，只是圣灵亲自用说不出的叹息，替我们祷告。鉴察人心的，晓得圣灵的意思因为圣灵照着神的旨意替圣徒祈求。

And Christ is also praying for us:

Hebrews 7:25

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

凡靠着祂进到神面前的人，祂都能拯救到底。因为祂是长远活着，替他们祈求。

What a comfort it is to the Christian to know that both Christ and the Holy Spirit are praying for him. We need them. Our prayers are so shallow, even at the best of times. We feel so inadequate in prayer.

2 Corinthians 2:16

“who is sufficient for these things?”

这事谁能当得起呢？

through Christ Jesus

And then finally we see that all our prayers should be *“through Christ Jesus.”* These aren't just words to say at the end of every prayer. As though God will hear us better if we always say the magic words, *“In Jesus name, Amen”* or something. That's superstition.

But all our prayers should be through Christ. Christ is the one we must acknowledge in everything. He is the only Saviour. We can have no access to God the Father unless it is through the Son.

Ephesians 2:18

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

因为我们两下借着他被一个圣灵所感得以进到父面前。

Jesus Christ is absolutely central to our faith.

John 3:35,36

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

父爱子，已将万有交在他手里。信子的人有永生。不信子的人得不着永生，（原文作不得见永生）神的震怒常在他身上。

John 5:22,23

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.”

父不审判什么人，乃将审判的事全交与子。叫人都尊敬子，如同尊敬父一样。不尊敬子的，就是不尊敬差子来的父。

Acts 4:12

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

除他以外，别无拯救。因为在天下人间，没有赐下别的名，我们可以靠着得救。

If you don't know Jesus Christ yet, if you've got no relationship with Him, it's time now to make yourself right with God. We all need a real relationship with our Creator God, and we can only have this if we acknowledge that God has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the only way of salvation.

We may not be able to understand prayer. We may not know how God is going to answer our prayers. But we know that prayer works. We have promises and examples throughout the Bible that this is true:

James 5:16

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

义人祈祷所发的力量，是大有功效的。

Let us make sure that we are fervent in our prayers, and that we have a true, real relationship with Christ. He is the only one who can answer our prayers and lead us in the right way. And this, according to this passage, is the perfect answer to all our worries.

