

What Keeps You Up At Night?
Philippians 4:6-7

What keeps you up at night? For me, not much. Not that I don't have worries or concerns that too often consume me, but I am blessed that within a couple of minutes of my head hitting the pillow, I am asleep. Unfortunately many people do have problems falling asleep, and for some it centers on worry.

Today's Epistle reading from Philippians St. Paul notes, Philippians 4:6 (ESV) "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Some may ask the question, why? Why do we need to inform God of our problems, since in Matthew 6:28 Jesus states that you Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Because asking Him, Jesus Christ, in prayer, brings about benefits to you.

This does not mean we are following one song in the Walt Disney film "Lion King" which says,

Hakuna Matata!
What a wonderful phrase
Hakuna Matata!
Ain't no passing craze

It means no worries
For the rest of your days
It's our problem-free philosophy
Hakuna Matata!

The Bible actually notes that we will have problems and concerns. Jesus even states, "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake." Matthew 24:9 (ESV)

Pain, suffering, trials and tribulations, will come. This was not how God created the world, but this is how the world is because of the effects in sin. We look at Adam and Eve, not blaming, but noting that their actions have effect on our lives. We live with sinful bodies redeemed by Christ, and cleansed by Him through the Waters of Holy Baptism, but we still continue to sin, and suffer the many consequences of our own sin and the sins of others. However we need not live each moment in paranoia. For anxiety may be unavoidable but it is given a new direction, that is away from us.

Too often as humans we internalize our problems which may lead to sleepless night, stomach issues and even great struggles especially with anger. St. Paul tells us to externalize our problems, not by yelling at people, or punching a wall, but by bringing the concern of our anxiety to God in prayer. We are to take the anxiety that comes from life and give it to God, not

because God grants every wish, but because prayer grants freedom from care and because Christ Jesus tells us.

The Psalmist notes in, Psalm 50:15 (ESV) “Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you and you will honor me.”

This one statement from the Psalmist, has the command to call upon God and His deliverance which results in our honor of Him. Not to call upon God dishonors Our relationship with God.

Our Savior's words: John 16:24 (ESV) “Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

Jesus does invite us to call upon Him, and not internalize our anxiety. Actually Jesus goes one step further in Matthew 6:25 (ESV) 25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life,

Please note that the Scriptural use of anxiety, care, worry, doesn't mean that we don't have to do anything, but pray. Actually St. Paul reminds us that we have to work 1 Thessalonians 2:9(ESV) “For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.”

We are to work, be productive, which is actually a physical external response, not an internal one that chews up the body and mind. For we cannot secure life by entertaining anxious thoughts. Instead our thoughts and concerns must be for the kingdom of God. To care for the world is to fall victim to it. Jesus notes this in Luke 21:34 (ESV) “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life”

So we should be concerned, and a little anxious about the kingdom of God. For us personally and the body of Christ. So we focus on the one thing truly necessary. Luke 10:41-42 (ESV) But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

The one thing necessary is that faith which we received from Christ. We are concerned, not that it isn't complete, but that we continue to abide in the faith, and be attached to Christ, for Christ is our salvation and our strength in time of need. So we go to Christ as an individual, seeking His strength, we call upon Him.

Beside keeping ourselves attached to Christ, we need to be concerned for others in the Body of Christ, the community of believers, and especially the community of believers here at Trinity.

St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:25 (ESV) “that the members may have the same care for one another.”

Here St. Paul tells us to care for one another, but you can translate the word care for anxious. Be anxious for one another. Here in this community of believers, we are anxious for one another. Christ cares for us by putting us together in this community. This community encourages one another and help bear each others burdens. We pray for one another and this community is where Christ feeds us in this community with this own presence of Body and blood. This is a community of healing and peace. So we gather in prayer, we gather in support of one another, we gather to receive strength from the Lord.

This community focused upon the grace of Christ Jesus is a powerful community. For in the next verse we have the Bible passage that closes a lot of sermons.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7, ESV)

Notice the guarding of your hearts, and minds. The mind is the place where worry can do the most damage. Notice again that the peace which we share with one another at the end of the service, the peace of Christ will guard your hearts and minds. What a beautiful way to end the Divine Service and greet one another in this community of believers, but with the peace of Christ Jesus Himself.

The greatness of this peace is beyond us, for it comes from Christ Jesus, we receive this peace and guarding in our ears and on our lips, so that we are protected by the peace of Christ and then share this peace with those around us. A special peace that the world cannot give, but one Christ gives, so that our troubled hearts and minds are guarded and given true rest.

What keeps you up at night? If worry is disturbing your sleep, even if it isnt we are to bring our concerns to God, and not let it consume us. Instead let your prayers rise to Christ as insence, as the Psalmist notes, and let the peace of Christ dwell with you and through you. Amen.

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