

“Don't worry about anything.” Philippians chapter 4 verse 6

We might think, “Well, it's all very well for Paul to say that. He didn't have the things in his life that I have to contend with.” But of course, he did. He describes them to the Corinthian Christians. He speaks of being “completely overwhelmed – beyond our strength – so that we even despaired of life itself.” Later he wrote about suffering endurance, afflictions, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger. If anyone was qualified to talk about worry, Paul was.

But on what grounds does he tell us not to worry? He says that there is something that we can do instead, even in the most desperate situations. We can present our requests to God in prayer with thanksgiving. Instead of going fretfully into difficult situations, we can begin by dealing with them with God first, and getting a sense of his power to command and overcome anything we might face in our lives. This, he says, produces a peace which is 'beyond understanding' which will guard our hearts and minds.

Jesus says a very similar thing. “Don't worry about your life, what you will eat and what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear.” Like Paul, Jesus is very qualified to talk to us about worry and anxiety, and neither of them speak lightly.

What reason does Jesus give for us not to worry? He asks us to consider the world of nature, in which birds find food without even really thinking about it, and in which flowers are clothed with a splendour and beauty to rival kings. These things are not considered of great worth, yet God provides all that they need. How much more, asks Jesus, will God provide all that we need. They are things that non believers spend their strength and wealth pursuing, and yet God already knows that we need them. When we give our lives over to his rule, care and guidance, we open the way for the abundant provision of all our physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

When we make the kingdom of God and our relationship with him our priority and our first port of call, we will know the reality of Paul's assurance that “My God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Prayer

Father, there is nothing in my life that I need that you cannot abundantly supply. You know better than me exactly what I need to thrive in my life. Thank you for your desire to care for and guide me. In Jesus' name, amen.

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