



Pastor's Pen

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:6-7***

Dear Bethel Church Family and friends,

I hope this finds you well and resting in our Heavenly Father's loving arms. Much has changed around Bethel since we last crossed paths, hasn't it? Our children, teens, and teaching adults are once again hard at work in school. Fall sports are progressing. We've even sent many of our older students back to their various college campuses to continue their studies. As David Bowie sang many years ago, "Ch-ch-ch-changes. Turn and face the strange. Ch-ch-changes." Saints, the truth is that with any change, no matter how small, we face the temptation to allow circumstances to steal the joy we have in Christ. Since we are studying God's scriptural promises, I thought this month of change would give us a unique opportunity to look at the Lord's solution for worry.

Even this week we have had plenty of opportunities to become anxious about what is going on around us. Our nation has entered into another chapter of our tariff war with our neighbors to the north. Hello, more expensive makeup, perfumes, clothing, jewelry, furniture, cameras, and fabric, not to mention building materials. Data out of the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed that the current Ebola outbreak recorded more than 300 deaths in the past week, one of its worst weekly tolls yet. On the weather front, we're facing a super El Niño. This means the upcoming winter will probably be wetter and cooler in our neck of the woods, since a more active jet stream steers more storms over our area. Or perhaps your worries lean more toward personal health or employment. The question is: how do we react to these opportunities for anxiety? God's Word gives us wonderful guidelines to help us stay on the proper path.

The first thing we should do whenever we are tempted to worry is to pray. As Paul reminds us in his letter to the Philippian saints, we don't need to **"be anxious about anything."** And here's the key, Bethel. When the Apostle writes **"anything,"** he means it. Are you worried about being late to a meeting, about traffic going into the city, about high winds knocking trees onto your roof, about the results of the latest test from the doctor? Then, beloved, go to our good Lord and pray about these things. Yes, we are to come to him and ask. As James teaches in his epistle, **"you do not have, because you do not ask God"** (James 4:2). Now this doesn't mean we are going to get everything we ask for. Remember, sometimes His answer to our supplication is no. Other times, we ask the Lord for things with the wrong motives. Indeed, we often want our will, not God's, to be done. However, this promise assures us that God hears our prayers. And when we pray, it reminds us of how desperately we need Him.

Secondly, Paul tells us the attitude that should be evident in every interaction we have with God. And what is that mind-set? We should come to God with thanksgiving. So often we come to the Lord with our laundry list of needs. I need this. I want that. Heal this sickness. Fix that problem. But Paul reminds us that the attitude of our hearts as revealed by our prayers ought to be one of thanksgiving. This means that we show appreciation to God for everything we have, the things we enjoy and even the things we consider not so great, because **"we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"** (Rom 8:28).

And what result can we expect when we come to God praying with thankful hearts? The Lord says that His peace, the peace that absolutely exceeds our ability to comprehend it, the peace that we feel despite our circumstances, not because of them, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. May God help us to remember this wonderful truth when the concerns of the world threaten to unsettle our hearts and tempt us to become anxious.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Chris

this week	events		volunteer schedule
Sunday's sermon:	Youth Committee Meeting 8/30 at 4:00 pm	Circle #1 9/1 at 10:30 am	<u>Infant Nursery</u> Sheridan & Carter Miller and Amanda Brummett
<i>Populating the City</i>	Kids' Quest 8/30 at 5:00 pm	Men's Bible Study 9/2 at 6:00 am	<u>Toddler Nursery</u> Shirley Brackett and Renee Nix
Nehemiah 11:1-12:26	Youth 8/30 at 5:00 pm	GriefShare 9/2 at 1:30 pm	<u>Worship Training</u> Debra Kozak and Cullie Mounts