

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle  
Thanksgiving Eve  
21 November 2010  
Grace and Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita  
Philippians 4:6-9

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

*“Do not be anxious about anything...”* Paul says. (Phil 4:6)

Do not be anxious about tomorrow’s feast,  
or Friday’s shopping,  
or Saturday’s errands,  
or Sunday’s game.

Do not be anxious about Monday’s work,  
or Tuesday’s bills,  
or Wednesday’s meeting.

*“Do not be anxious about anything.”*

Not about the kids’ performance at school,  
or the bullying,  
or the cheating,  
or the economy,  
or the wars.

Do not be anxious about the house getting cleaned,  
or the gas prices going up,  
or the cancer spreading to the liver.

Not about the church or the pastor or the youth program or the food pantry.  
Not about growth or change or wealth or poverty.

*“Do not be anxious about anything.”*  
That’s what Paul says.

But how?  
Is it even possible?  
How can I let go?  
How will it all get done?  
How will the Church go on or the floor get swept or the Turkey get on the table?  
How?

There are a million things that stress us out.  
A million things we juggle, that at any point in time could all come collapsing down—  
crushing us underneath it all.  
So many demands come our way.  
So many tasks and chores and jobs and kids.

And what if I mess up? What if I fail?

If I don't worry about these things, then who will?  
 Who will get them all done?  
 Who will do the work and carry the baton and reach the lost and teach my kids to read?

Well, Jesus will.  
 Or better yet, Jesus has.

That's how Paul started this sentence anyhow:  
*"The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything."*

Our Lord will provide all that we need to support this body and life:  
 house and home,  
 love and companionship,  
 health and protection,  
 faith and love,  
 and maybe even Turkey and stuffing.

He does it all.  
 Or, again, better yet: *He has done it all.*

All is finished, all is paid for, all is accomplished already.  
 On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished."  
 Sin is destroyed Satan is banished, death is but a sleep, and fear is cast out.

In Christ every worry and care is taken away.  
 And for that there is much to be thankful.

Thankful that we don't need to carry it all.  
 Thankful that life is in His hand and not ours.  
 Thankful that food comes both to those who have much and those who have little.  
 Thankful that joy comes in the morning, even when the sadness seems so great.  
 Thankful that we don't need to be anxious about anything.

*"But in everything,  
 by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving  
 let your requests be made known to God."*

Every prayer, every request, every need made known to God is to be seasoned with thanks.  
 Because all our needs all our worries all are cares have already been met in Christ.

In Christ our children are safe.  
 In Christ our cancer and pneumonia is but a 24-hour bug.  
 In Christ our work is blessed our tests are taken and our car payments will come to an end.  
 In Christ the feast is already prepared:  
 The wine is already flowing.  
 The bread is rich and sweet and the carbs won't count against you.

In Christ the meat is far better than the juiciest turkey or the finest prime rib.  
In Christ all is set, all is done, all is prepared.

So with thanksgiving in your hearts, come and eat.  
Get a foretaste of what's to come.  
Hear of your forgiveness won on the cross.  
Rejoice in all things done well in Christ, despite our constant screwing them up.

And in the midst of all your fears all your anxieties all the stresses of your life,  
set your eyes on Christ the crucified.

*“Finally, brothers,  
whatever is true,  
whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just,  
whatever is pure,  
whatever is lovely,  
whatever is commendable,  
if there is any excellence,  
if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things.” (4:8)*

That is, think about Jesus.  
He is true and honorable and just and pure and lovely and commendable.  
His death and resurrection for you is more than excellent, more than worthy of our praise.  
Think of this.

And with your hearts and minds fixed on Jesus Christ and Him crucified,  
then *“the peace of God,  
which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (4:7)*

At the cross your anxieties pass away.  
At the cross your fear is removed.  
At the cross your stress and anger, your confusion and your sadness are taken away.

And that cross, that Jesus, comes to you.  
It comes in the feast we call the Eucharist—or more English sounding, the *Thanksgiving*.

This is *Thanksgiving* because here we receive the antidote to our anxiety,  
the cure for our disease,  
the life that will not die—  
here we receive Jesus.

*“And the God of peace [is] with you.” (4:9)*

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*