

November 19, 2023 (Thanksgiving Sunday)

**Philippians 4:6-7**  
**“Anti-Anxiety Medication”**

The statistics are quite shocking and, quite frankly, horrifying. The rates of people struggling with **anxiety** that meets the clinical definition of it – are shooting upward, quickly, and at a staggering rate. In 2019 people were talking about the increased rates because it had climbed to 8% of the general population. Well . . . by 2020 (thanks to COVID) it shot up to 26%, and today it’s almost 30% (that’s almost 1 in 3 people). And – it looks like it’ll continue to get worse as things in our country and across the globe continue to decline and degenerate into chaos and violence.

I’m not even going to touch the whole topic of medication / its effectiveness / the side effects / etc. *Because* – that is NOT my area of expertise. What I **do** want to talk about is a very power and very effective **spiritual anti-anxiety medication** that GOD has made available. It’s free of charge (like all His blessings) and comes with no strings attached, and there are absolutely no nasty side effects.

Even if you have no medical issues whatsoever and you take no medication at all – THIS is something we ALL could and should make use of. We ALL – to one degree or another – feel and experience stress and anxiety over things in life. If it’s not COVID / the war (in Ukraine / the Middle East / or both) / inflation or crime – than it’s something else. From our own personal guilt, failures, weaknesses, and foolish mistakes – to our relationship problems / problems at work or financial burdens, to health problems, diseases, pain and suffering – to what’s happening with those we love and care about. It’s always *something*.

What is God’s **prescription** for everything that’s stressing us out and filling us with ANXIETY? Well – it’s right here for us in **Philippians 4:6-7** (NIV). He says, first of all: **6 “Do not be anxious about anything . . .** That’s an imperative command from God Almighty! Stop it! Cut it out! Well I learned pretty quickly in marriage that I shouldn’t tell my wife how to *feel* – it doesn’t help, and it doesn’t end well. But, of course, GOD is different and He *does* have the right to tell us this – and He tells us WHY. The “why” is because we have the **medication / the cure** for it – right here in this text as He explains the command He has just given us: Verse **6b: but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

PRAYER is this huge and powerful gift God has given us – “*Here (He says) bring it ALL to me! I will take care of everything – all those things outside your control, and I’ll help you with anything you have to deal with!*”

THANKSGIVING is also a huge part of this medication. In our special Thanksgiving worship service this year we just briefly glanced around at ALL we have to be thankful for! Aside from all the physical and earthly blessings you enjoy – you have a **Savior** who died for you! He forgave (and forgives) all your sins so you can let go of all that guilt. He’s got a place in heaven with your name on it, and He already bought and paid for it. He’s promised that it will all work out for the good of His Kingdom plans for you and everyone He loves so much. He’ll never give up on you and He watches over you day by day.

And . . . what happens when we take this twin medication of PRAYER and THANKSGIVING? **Verse 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will [that’s a Divine Promise] guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**” Nothing can rob you of what you already have in Christ Jesus. Nothing is more *valuable*, and all the details will work themselves out just fine – because He is in control. The PEACE of God replaces the ANXIETY – and it works!

*So I can just put this passage up on my fridge and I’ll never have stress or anxiety ever again?* No – I realize it’s not necessarily that quick or easy. The problem, on the other hand, is with us and not with the medication. It may very well be wise to make use of doctors, medications, counselors, pastors, friends and family – if and when you need them – for they too can certainly be additional blessings God has given us. All I’m saying is – don’t neglect **THIS medication** too!

It’s handed out right here at Grace Lutheran every single Sunday. I had one friend recently tell me that she left her church (where the pastor was preaching on Revelation) and she walked out of there terrified and totally stressed out! Be wise and discerning – not every church around here handles the Word of God correctly or hands out His Gospel medication of God’s grace and mercy toward sinners. It’s found in the Waters of our Baptism, and there in His sacred Supper, and right here in His Word. As we study it – it flows TO us – and when we make time for personal devotions in Scripture combined with prayer and thanksgiving God gives us exactly what we need.

My friends – as we go forward, we’re going to need God’s **Anti-Anxiety Medication** more and more. The stats themselves don’t lie – but more importantly **Jesus** doesn’t lie. And He says the closer we get to the End – the worse it will get (Matthew 24:4-14). He knows what you need and He will (and has) provided it. His grace and His promises sustain and strengthen us. Give thanks for His blessings, pour out all your cares and concerns to Him – let His peace flood over you . . . then hang in there, and just keep going. The JOYS of heaven are not that far away!