

## **Divine Prozac: God's Prescription for Worry and Anxiety**

By Steve Lehrer

We all struggle with our thoughts to one degree or another. For many people it is a constant battle to keep from becoming angry, frustrated, depressed, or worried. But in the midst of this battle, God has given us His Son, His Spirit, and His Word to fight these battles and to win them. He has also given us one specific passage of Scripture that has served me so well in this battle and has had such a transforming effect on my life that I like to call it "Divine Prozac". Philippians 4:4-8 is my God-given anti-depressant! The book of Philippians is not a light and fluffy book that ignores real-world problems. It deals with pain and persecution happening in Paul's life and the lives of the Christians in Philippi. But it is not a depressing book because the main theme is the single-minded pursuit of living for Christ, which always produces peace and joy. The letter to the Philippians was written while Paul sat in a Roman prison. He wrote it to encourage the believers in Philippi. Imagine, Paul is rotting in prison and his burning desire is to make sure that the Philippians remain joyful and encouraged as they suffer persecution! If you really think about it, what Paul is doing is quite amazing. As I sit in my comfortable study typing away at my computer, I realize that I get self-centered and discouraged so easily—if I run out of iced tea I am a devastated man brooding over my unbearable circumstances. Yet Paul sits in a dirty Roman prison focused on Christ and others. Notice in the first chapter how Paul is setting up the entire letter by saying that painful circumstances—viewed from the proper perspective—are actually encouraging:

<sup>12</sup>Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup>As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup>Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly (Philippians 1:12-14).

Paul is showing the Philippians how to view a painful situation from the perspective of Matthew 6:33. Paul is in prison because God wants him in prison and so he has made the most of his opportunities inside (sharing Christ with the palace guard and I suppose other in-mates). Paul also realizes that because believers on the outside see how joyful and encouraged Paul is while he suffers in prison, the believers will not be fearful of prison. This will encourage them to continue to share Christ boldly rather than to shrink back out of fear.

<sup>15</sup>It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup>The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup>The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup>But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. <sup>19</sup>Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my

deliverance. <sup>20</sup>I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Philippians 1:15-21).

Philippians 1:21 really stands out as a thesis for the entire letter. If Christ is your purpose in life, whether you are in prison, suffering persecution at the hands of Roman authorities, or typing away at your computer with no iced tea you can have true peace and joy simply by being faithful to your Lord. The key to true peace and joy is remembering why you are here.

<sup>22</sup>If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup>I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup>but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. <sup>25</sup>Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup>so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

I think that the reasons why most of us get depressed, anxious, vengeful, lustful, is because we forget why we are here, we forget Who it is we are living for, and we forget just how wonderful our God really is. We often take our pills, turn to our tubs of ice cream (no, it is not necessarily wrong to eat ice cream), and buy our fancy new cars (no, it is not necessarily sinful to buy a new car, even a fancy one) so that we can either dull or pacify (console) our desires. In the book of Philippians, Paul is telling us that his passions don't need to be dulled nor does he need to turn to some consolation when his "needs" aren't being met. Paul's passions and needs are met in Jesus Christ. Paul is so sold out to Christ that everything he does centers on his purpose of living and dying for his Lord.

This all surpassing love for Christ influences how Paul counsels us to deal with our feelings of depression, anxiety, frustration and the like:

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Philippians 4:4-8).

There is never a time when we have an excuse not to be joyful. We are clearly commanded to be gentle, which in this case encompasses the idea of longsuffering and forbearance when others are evil to us. In addition, God, through Paul, prohibits us from being anxious.

## The Cruelty of Bare Commands

The commands to be joyful, to be gentle, and not to be anxious in Philippians 4:4-8 desperately need a theological context that Paul assumes we bring to the text. Imagine being terribly depressed and a fellow believer claps you on the shoulder and says, “Brother, God commands you to be joyful!” That admonition, rather than spurring me on to joy, would cause me to pull the bed covers over my head, never to come out again! If a fellow believer sees me in a state of high anxiety over a family matter and sits me down and tells me that anxiety is sinful behavior and that I need to stop being anxious, immediately my anxiety level will rise (and so might my anger). Have you ever been somewhere that there was no place to “use the facilities” and you really needed to use those facilities? The desire to put them to good use becomes overwhelming. No command to “relax” or to “think about something else” will stop the overwhelming desire to be relieved of your burden that consumes your every thought. Our anxiety is similar to the need to empty one’s bladder. No command to stop needing an outlet will help and it will often make things worse. We need something more than just a bare command. When Paul commands us to always be joyful he is not simply saying “don’t worry, be happy.” These commands, if we do not grasp the profound theological truths that support them, are cruel taskmasters. Paul assumes that we have a root system of theological understanding (of who God is and what He has done for sinners) that is strong and deep enough to support these commands. It is to this root system of theological understanding that we now need to turn our attention.

Paul tells us about the cruelty of bare law in the book of Romans. He tells us that law, by itself, not only is unable to make you holy, but it only irritates your sin problem and crushes you under its weighty commands:

<sup>4</sup>So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. <sup>5</sup>**For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.** <sup>6</sup>But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code (Romans 7:4-6).

We died to the law, or we were severed from our relationship to it, and joined in relationship with Christ “in order that we might bear fruit for God.” That is, when the law (God list of dos and don’ts) comes in contact with a God-hating heart it disables a person from bearing fruit or pleasing God in any way. In fact, the law “arouses” the “sinful passions.” I am no stranger to the powerful effect of an authoritative command on my somewhat tamed but still at times rebellious heart even now as a believer. There is a beautiful outdoor shopping mall about 30 minutes from my house. There is a wide courtyard in the middle of the mall area with a small well-kept lawn with a beautiful fountain in the center of it. There are some coffee shops and restaurants that surround it because the view is so pleasant. There is a small white sign with red letters that stands authoritatively in the middle of the grass. The sign reads:

## No Walking in the Grass No Wading in the Fountain

Now this is a nice part of town. Usually, when I am at this particular mall I am somewhat dressed up and the thoughts of walking on the grass and wading in the fountain don't even occur to me. That is, they don't occur to me until I read the sign. Suddenly my feet begin to sweat and I think about how nice it would be to wiggle my toes in the cool green grass. I look around to see if there are any "mall police" and I consider how my dress pants would fare if I rolled them up and dipped my feet into the fountain. The temptation has an almost narcotic effect. But rather than drink from the heady brew of spiritual rebellion, I regain my composure, remember that Jesus is my Lord and I live for him rather than myself. I breathe a heavy sigh of relief that the spiritual battle is over and I walk past the courtyard and go about my "official" mall business.

Certainly, when Paul, the inspired Apostle, wrote Philippians 4:4-8 he did not intend to cause Christians to rebel against Christ. How can we use the commands given in these verses in an encouraging and biblical manner? Well, I think the first step is to establish the context of God's commands for believers. Notice what Christ says in Matthew 11 about taking on *His* yoke as opposed to the yoke of the law:

<sup>28</sup>Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

Why is his yoke, as opposed to the yoke of the Pharisees or of the Old Covenant, easy? It is because when Jesus becomes our Lord (that is another way of saying that he puts his yoke on us), He also becomes our Savior. We do not obey Christ in order to be saved, but rather we are saved into an amazing love-filled relationship with our God who has given us mercy instead of wrath. He now loves us unconditionally because all of the conditions to be saved have been met in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Our new Lord loves us and every place he asks us to go is for our good. Because of this new relationship we have with Christ, we *want* to obey Him. He has captured our hearts and now we *desire* to serve Him rather than to serve ourselves and live in rebellion against Him. Therefore, as the Apostle John says: "This is love for God: to obey his commands. *And his commands are not burdensome*" (1 John 5:3). He showed His amazing love to us while we were still in full rebellion against Him by giving His life for us: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). In addition, He understands our temptations because He was tempted. He has compassion but he also has power to help us when we struggle because He remained faithful to God in all of His trials:

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without

sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

As Christians we are forgiven people who live before the face of a God who loves us and desires us to approach him as we do battle with our sin:

Therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:19-23).

So, in light of all that he has done for us we want to obey Him more than we want to sin. He desires us to come before Him and He has the power to help us. But there is one more crucial point in this root system. We are no longer slaves to sin. We are not in the position of desiring to obey but being utterly unable to submit to Christ. In Romans 6:14 when Paul writes: "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace," he tells us a truth that is pregnant with hope. We are no longer like the unbelieving Israelites who were given law to obey but still had rebellious hearts. If we have truly repented and believed, God has changed our hearts so that we "have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:18). Christ purchased a work of His omnipotent Spirit in the lives of all those for whom he died guaranteeing that we will not be mastered by sin. Every one of His people will persevere to the end because God is the one working in us, to make us persevere. Nothing can stop Him from completing His work in us: "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

We have one more piece of our root system to consider, which is that this God, who has been so gracious in giving us such an amazing salvation at the cost of His only Son, is absolutely in control of all things. He is in control of the details from who wins the lottery ("The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" Proverbs 16:33), to where the rain falls ("He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses" Psalm 135:7), to which nations stay in power ("Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust" Isaiah 40:15). God orchestrated the evil intentions of Joseph's brothers so that they would throw him into a pit and have him sold to slave traders and spend 17 long years in various forms of servitude. God did all of this for Joseph's good and ultimately for the good of the entire nation of Israel. Just like in Joseph's life, every terrible trial in our lives is actually a finely sculpted masterpiece of God's grace given as a gift to us for our good and the good of His Kingdom:

So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt (Genesis 45:8).

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives (Genesis 50:20).

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:29).

The most hope-giving example of this is in the crucifixion of Christ. Had you and I been among the disciples we would have undoubtedly been in despair when the evil men like Pontius Pilate and Herod, not to mention the crowds of Jews and Romans, put our Lord to public shame and painful death. But since we live this side of the cross we can look back and see that it was *God's* will and power that caused this evil to be perpetrated on the Son of God. We know that although Pilate, Herod, and the crowds of unbelievers meant it for evil, God caused it all to happen for the greatest good that can possibly be imagined.

### **Rejoice!**

Now that we have our root system firmly intact, let's turn back to the first command: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" How can I rejoice when my world is falling apart? How can I rejoice when my sweet baby girl has turned into a rebellious teen up to her ears in trouble? How can I rejoice when my spouse and I aren't getting along or my marriage is on the rocks? If you have repented and believed then you are one of God's children. This means that you can rejoice that in the midst of your pain over loss, your desperate prayers over loved ones gone astray, or the fear of your marriage going down the tubes, God is working all of these painful trials out for your good. Through these trials He is making you more like Christ, and you can and must trust that having this trial is the best thing that could ever happen to you. It may not feel that way at the moment. Although the disciples were severely shaken by the crucifixion of Christ, you and I know that our God can be trusted and He works out those circumstances that seem terrible and hopeless for the ultimate good of His children. Although we have to sweat to transform our minds, those of us who have saving faith rejoice in trials and things that the world would become anxious over, because we believe that the God who gave His one and only Son on the cross for us has promised that He will only do good to us all of the days of our lives: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). You not only have the ability to rejoice because you have been freed from slavery to sin and you love God, but you have every reason to rejoice because you believe in a God who is faithful!

### **Be Gentle and Forbearing**

When you are carted off to prison on trumped up charges; when all of your earthly possessions are taken from you because you are a Christian; or when your husband, wife, mom, or dad treats you unfairly for the thousandth time, what is it that keeps you from snapping like a disgruntled US postal worker? As we have seen, it is not the bare command to "be gentle." It is the command to "be gentle" that is given by the God who gave His only son for you. You are able to be gentle and forbearing in the most horrific circumstances because you have the unstoppable Spirit of God at work in your life

causing you to persevere in your fight against sinfully exploding. You are able to be gentle and forbearing with others who sin against you because God has been gentle and forbearing with you when you sin against Him. He will continue to be kind to you for the rest of your days in spite of your sin. Your cup overflows with God's compassion and comfort, so that it can't help spilling out onto others. The way that you obey the command to be gentle is to renew your mind with these amazing truths, approach the throne of grace boldly and ask for help, and then "just do it."

### **The Path to Peace**

Now we need to move past the commands and get to the treat that this passage holds out to us. We all want peace. We have seen how we can rejoice and we can be gentle, but how do we get this supernatural peace? Well, it starts off with prayer. I'll tell you quite honestly that at first glance this is discouraging to me. Prayer is difficult for me because I tend to make it into a ritual. I ritualize it because I know that I want to pray but I get busy and so I schedule it. That is not a bad thing, but what happens is that once I have scheduled prayer, it tends to become simply another thing to do like mowing the lawn or washing my car. I say the same things in the same ways and after 14 minutes and 35 seconds I close with Psalm 23 and I am done and I can check prayer off of my "To-Do" list. That is not right. Prayer is talking to God and although prayer is not a two-way conversation, it is the necessary fruit of a relationship with Him that cannot be ritualized. Imagine if I set aside time to talk to my wife every day and I simply said the same things to her day after day. Would we have a real relationship or would I be insulting my wife and wasting my breath? Just as I need to reveal my heart to my wife, I must be real with God.

### **Present Your Requests to Whom?**

One of the best ways to begin prayer is to remember to whom you are praying. God is not simply an abstract concept. God is an amazing person. God is all-powerful. There is nothing that our God cannot do. Proof of this is His construction of the universe as well as His sovereign control over all things:

<sup>21</sup>Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? <sup>22</sup> He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. <sup>23</sup> He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing" (Isaiah 40:21-23).

God is everywhere. There is no hole that I can dig myself into that is so deep that God is not perfectly present with me:

<sup>7</sup>Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," <sup>12</sup>

even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you (Psalm 139:7-12).

We also need to remember that God is a personal being. He is actually loving and kind. He cares about me and He is on my side. It is true that the Scriptures are clear that God is Holy and that He has wrath. But one of the most dominant themes in Scripture is that God is merciful and compassionate:

<sup>6</sup>And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation’ (Exodus 34:6, 7).

<sup>4</sup> On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." <sup>5</sup> The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth...<sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. <sup>1</sup> But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. <sup>3</sup> Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 3:4,5; 3:10-4:3).

<sup>9</sup> Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup>If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him (Matthew 7:9-11).

<sup>31</sup>What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things (Romans 8:31-32)?

As we have already seen, we don't deserve mercy but God has poured out His mercy and love onto us because of Christ. He is intimately involved in my life. He grieves over my sin (Ephesians 4:30). He rejoices when I have victory over sin and glorify His name. This is the God who wants me to present my requests—the desires of my heart—to Him.

With this in mind, consider this example: If I am struggling to make ends meet and I have a rich person who loves me and has told me that he is always more than willing to take care of me financially, would that be a comfort? Of course it would. Now, if I believe that God is the creator of heaven and earth who holds all things together by His powerful Word and nothing slips through His fingers; if I believe that this God is

compassionate and merciful; if I believe that He loves me because He gave His Son to die for me; and if I believe He is orchestrating all of my life to work out for His glory and my good, then praying to this God should give me the greatest comfort because by praying to Him I am placing my problems in His loving and all-capable hands.

### **Pray with Thankful Requests**

Paul tells us to present our requests with thanksgiving. It is one thing to pray with thanksgiving when food is abundant, everyone is healthy, and life is smooth. But it is entirely different to make thankful requests when times are difficult. What we pray for and the manner in which we pray reveals what is important to us and what we really believe:

<sup>31</sup>So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup>For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup>But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:31-33).

Consider what you pray about and whether you are able to be truly thankful for something that isn't according to your will but according to His will. Do you really desire above all things to be more like Christ? Do you really believe that your trials, no matter how painful, are from the hand of a loving God who is constantly working to make you more like Christ?

<sup>6</sup>In this (great salvation God has for you) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:6-9).

As you answer yes to these questions consistently and confidently, you will be able to pray with thanksgiving.

### **The Supernatural Peace of God**

The knowledge that God is all powerful and in control of everything, the experience that our merciful and compassionate God is on our side, and the understanding and whole-hearted trust that our trials are for the purpose of making us more like Christ—which we desire more than anything else—allows us to have peace in the midst of chaos.

### **“...These are a Few of My Favorite Things”**

This is the famous line from *The Sound of Music* when Maria (Julie Andrews) attempts to comfort the Von Trapp children during a storm. If you think about it, she really gave the children terrible advice. The truth for the Von Trapp children was that

there was a storm outside that could have killed them if they took a direct hit from some lightning or if the wind picked up a bit. So, Maria basically tells them to ignore reality and “think happy thoughts.” In psychobabble they call that “denial.” She is telling them to make believe that nothing is happening outside. She is telling them to get lost in a fantasy world rather than teaching them to deal with reality.

By way of contrast, Paul is telling struggling believers not to get lost in their creepy and dark fantasy world of worry and despair and to get a grip on reality in God’s world when he writes: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8). He is telling them to do exactly what he commanded the believers in Rome to do: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2). Paul is telling the believers in Philippi in more general terms the very same thing the author of Hebrews is telling his audience: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:2-3). Jesus and his work is what is truly noble, pure, right, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. It is by considering who God is and what He has done for sinners like you and me that we are suddenly able to interpret our difficult situations the way God intends us to.

### **God Will Move Mountains, But You Had Better Start Shoveling...**

We have been examining Philippians 4:4-8 and attempting to apply it to our lives but our passage does not end with verse 8. The thought of the passage is actually completed in verse 9: “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” If you are someone who struggles with worry and anxiety then you know how it can be a paralyzing condition. It is hard enough to do as God commands and transform our thoughts. God, through Paul, gives us a command that forces us to get out from under our bed covers, change from our pajamas to our street clothes, and actually start living for Jesus. If we want the peace of God we actually have to pray to this God, believe Him when He makes promises to us, desire what He desires, and put “into practice” all that He has taught us through the Scriptures. If I am going to embrace Paul’s motto “to live is Christ” then I need to stand up in my sometimes painful and scary situation, grab God’s promise to me (“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?... neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” Romans 8:31b-32, 39) and put into practice all that God has taught me in His Word. My God has moved and will continue to move mountains in my life. But He has made me into an incurable God-lover and I can’t help but grab my puny shovel and work at His side!