

Sermon NOTES

Anxiety, the Curse and its Cure, pt.5

We will continue in our series on Anxiety, the Curse and its Cure. (If you have your copy of God's word, turn with me to Matthew 6:24–34. Read)

What we have been doing is examining anxiety and learning what the Lord teaches on this.

The purpose of this is two fold:

1. Since we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we want the entire of our lives to conform to His standard!
2. God expects us to *know* His word and *live* in accordance with His standards!

(And by the way, God's standards *always* come in the forms of commands and not suggestions.

He never gives options when it comes to His standards.

We do not have the freedom to choose God's standards! Our responsibility is to know the standard and humbly obey to the it!)

So, as we come to His word to learn what He says about anxiety, we must be eager to learn and obey!

Now, just by way of reminder, Jesus, in what we call the "sermon on the mount" is unfolding life should be like for those who are citizens of the kingdom of God.

Jesus, in no uncertain terms, makes it clear that those who are citizens in the kingdom of God will be those who are not anxious!

Just as emphatic as the Lord is about us not committing adultery (5:25–27) and not being hypocritical (7:1–5), He is also emphatic about us not being anxious!

I would remind you at this point that anxiety is sinful just as adultery and hypocrisy is sinful! We often attempt, for whatever reason, to sanitize and categorize sin, but at the end of the day sin is sin. Wickedness is wickedness; corruption is corruption.

And anxiety is sin, wickedness and corruption!

Because of this, our Lord is plain in His teaching to us: He tells us three times “DO NOT BE ANXIOUS!”

As our Lord teaches us not to be anxious, He does so, by revealing several truths to us.

Truth #1: Do Not be Anxious...Because Life is More than Provision (v. 25)

Jesus tells us plainly in Luke 12:15, “for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

And when you are anxious, you make life only about material possessions!

Truth #2: Do not be Anxious...Because Birds and Flowers Are Not Anxious (v. 26, v. 28, read)

Jesus reminds us of the course of nature.

He tells us to observe the lifestyle of birds and marvel at the care, kindness and benevolence of God!

Jesus wants us to know that if God feeds birds and flowers, who are of lesser value to Him, HOW MUCH MORE will He provide what you need when you are of more value to Him!

And when you are anxious, it is almost as if the birds have greater confidence in God than you do!

Truth # 3: Do Not Be Anxious...Because it is A Waste of Time (v. 27)

Jesus makes sure we understand something about anxiety and that is that anxiety is completely, totally and utterly meaningless.

It is absolutely and fundamentally pointless!

Being anxious is like trying to build an igloo in the desert!

It's like trying to shield yourself from the rain with an umbrella made of paper!

It's like trying to fill a bucket with a hole at the bottom!

It is pointless and a complete waste of time!

Being anxious does not serve you in any way whatsoever.

Truth #4: “Do Not Be Anxious...Because Pagans Passionately Pursue Provision” (v. 31, read)

Here, Jesus reminds us that those who do not know God are those who fill their time with the persistent pursuit of possession.

Unbelievers pour their lives into acquiring more and more stuff!

And the reason is because when you do not have God, all that's left to have is the stuff God made!

This is why there is such an interest in people's net worth!

The reason is because there is a false narrative that is being told that the more you have the happier or satisfied you will be!

But we know this is not true.

Jesus tells us, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”

It profits nothing!! (It matters not that you have all things in the world but your soul is lost!)

And what unbelievers do, they forfeit their souls to gain the world!

And here is the truth of the matter: The world is and will always be consumed with the world, so what occupies them the most are the things of this world!

And what Jesus is telling us here is to act like those who forfeit their souls for material things!

In other word's act like people who are in a relationship with God and recognize that life is not solely about material things!

So, do not be anxious, because pagans spend their time passionately pursuing provision.

Truth #5: Do Not Be Anxious...Because Your Father Knows Yours Needs (v. 32)

What you need to be reminded of is this: Every single need you have is not only known by God, but it is also ordained by Him.

These ordained needs are designed to direct you to God!

These needs are designed in order for you to call upon Him for help, assistance, aid and support!

These needs are designed to have you set your gaze vertically!

But when you fail to recognize this, you set your eyes horizontally!
(And this is when you become anxious.)

The reason this is the case is because anxiety is a matter of perspective (what you are looking at and how you are looking at.)

And if you are looking at any need you have without reference to your heavenly Father (who knows your need) then it will be little wonder why you are anxious.

You must remember that your Father knows your needs and has ordained them and that He is the only one that can meet your needs!

Transition: Now, what we will do is consider the final truth Jesus reveals and then we consider the alternative to being anxious.

The 6th and final truth is this:

Truth #6: Do Not be Anxious...because the problems of tomorrow will be the problems of tomorrow (v. 34).

What Jesus tells us here is that the events, problems or difficulties that will exist tomorrow will be there tomorrow.

So, in other words, do not be anxious about tomorrow today!

This too is a waste of time and does not help you in any way!

When have you ever been anxious about tomorrow and tomorrow was changed because you were anxious about it? It never has.

Jesus tells us the problems we face today are sufficient for today; to not burden yourself with cares for tomorrow.

There is no need to preoccupy ourselves with tomorrow's struggles today.

In our culture there is a phrase you may hear people say that is more biblical than you may have realized.

You may ask somebody, "How are you doing?"

And they respond by saying, "Good. I am taking it one day at a time!"

What does this phrase mean?

When someone says this, they basically mean that they are living in light of today's circumstances and not yesterday's problems or tomorrow's difficulties!

They are living in the moment! And not preoccupied with tomorrow. And this is how we should live.

The life that God gives us today should be lived for today and spent focused on tomorrow's issues.

And, of course, this does not mean that we are not to plan for the future or anticipate certain things that may happen tomorrow, but this does mean that we are not so consumed about tomorrow that we are anxious about it today and that anxiety keeps us from doing what the Lord would have us to do!

Jesus is telling us, do not worry about tomorrow. Live your life one day at a time!

The struggles, the challenges, the difficulties and problems you face tomorrow will be there tomorrow, so do not spend today worrying about tomorrow!

The life God gives you today is not to be spent on worrying about tomorrow's issues!

So Jesus tells us: Do Not be Anxious...because the problems of tomorrow will be the problems of tomorrow (v. 34)

These are the truths that Jesus teaches concerning anxiety!

Truth #1: Do Not be Anxious...Because Life is More than Provision (v. 25)

Truth #2: Do not be Anxious...Because Birds and Flowers Are Not Anxious (v. 26, v. 28, read)

Truth # 3: Do Not Be Anxious...Because it is A Waste of Time (v. 27)

Truth #4: “Do Not Be Anxious...Because Pagans Passionately Pursue Provision” (v. 31, read)

Truth #5:Do Not Be Anxious...Because Your Father Knows Yours Needs (v. 32)

Truth #6: Do Not be Anxious...because the problems of tomorrow will be the problems of tomorrow (v. 34)

Now, Jesus does not end this teaching on anxiety by just saying, “stop it!”

He also tells us what we are to do instead!

Jesus gives us the alternative to worry!

He gives us the antithesis of being anxious (and He tells us in v. 33.)

Here is what we are to do. (Read v. 33)

And, what Jesus tells us is the answer to being anxious is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

“Seek first...”

The word “seek” is the same base word used in v. 32 and in this case would have a very similar meaning of to pursue a certain thing, to direct or aim at or to strive after.

Jesus says plainly, instead of preoccupying yourself with the cares of this life, preoccupy yourself by pursuing or seeking after the kingdom of God!

This is to say that the arrow of life should be directed at the target of the kingdom of God!

You must set your heart and mind upon seeking the kingdom!

Now, what place should the pursuit of the kingdom of God have in our lives?

What priority should we give to it?

Jesus tells us the answer to these questions when He says, “ Seek *first*”

First means in rank, position, priority, above all, and before anything else is done.

In the context, *first* means that seeking the kingdom of God should have *supremacy* over and above anything else in your life; that seeking the kingdom of God has *preeminence* in your life.

That there are no reveals when it comes to what you are seeking!

That to you, seeking the kingdom of God is more important than your clothing and food!

That seeking the kingdom of God is more important than rent and mortgage payments!

That being a kingdom citizen is who you are and seeking the kingdom of God is what you do!

You are to seek first the kingdom!

Now, before we move forward, it is important to make this observation:

We seek the kingdom not because we are not already part of it, but we do it because we are!

This seeking is not like the parable of the woman with the lost coin!

It is not as if we had the kingdom and lost it and now we are seeking and searching for it!

We seek the kingdom because we are already citizens of it!

Now, this is what we are supposed to do: Seek first the kingdom.

And so what Jesus tell us is this:

As a matter of first and primary importance needs to be the pursuit of the kingdom of God!

That just as unbelievers passionately pursue provision, we are to passionately pursue the kingdom!

But, a good question is, “What is the kingdom of God and His righteousness?”
Good question.

Let’s start more basic by answering this question, “What is a kingdom?”

A kingdom consists of at least four basic part:

1. A King, who rules.
2. Citizens, who are ruled
3. Laws, that rule
4. And territory, where that rule extends.

(To say it another way: There is a King, a People, Rules and a Place.)

Now, if we apply this to God and as what is the kingdom of God:

1. God (or the Lord Jesus, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords) as the King
2. The church, being the people or the citizens
3. The Scripture as the rule of law
4. Heaven and Earth, as the places where this rule extends. (Jesus says, “I have all authority in heaven and earth.”)

So, when we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness we are seeking to submit ourselves completely to the comprehensive rule and reign of the King!

We are seeking to rightly conform our lives to the transcendent and universal reality that is God!

It means that we are proactively pursuing greater alignment with the laws, standards, morals and agenda of the King!

So, when we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness we are doing three things:

1. Seeking to know the King!
2. Seeking to know what He says!
3. We are seeking to do what He says!

And if you are truly seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness when will you have time to be anxious!

So, one thing that this teaches us (just by way of application) is that at the points where you are being anxious, it is at those points where you are not seeking the kingdom!

In other words, you cannot seek the kingdom and be anxious at the same time!

There is a hymn, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” and it says this:
Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.

This line is a statement about seeking the kingdom of God!
(When you look into the king’s face you are seeking the kingdom of God!)

And according to the lyrics what happens when you do this: “the things of this world grow strangely dim in light of His glory and grace!”

But what happens when we are anxious is that we have refused to turn our eyes to Jesus and instead, we have decided to turn our eyes to the things of this world!

And we will do this, Jesus begins to grow strangely dim in light of the things we are anxious about!

So, beloved, what we must do is humble ourselves and be preoccupied with seeking to align the totality of lives to the rule and reign of the King!

And to be super practical, by seeking first the kingdom of God, Jesus means for us to be preoccupied with things that pertain to the kingdom.

- Like Husbands, loving your wives!
- Like Wives, loving your husbands!
- Like Children, loving your siblings!
- Like Christians, loving each other!
- Like Christians, living honorable and virtuous lives.
- Like Christians, working and doing good deeds for the glory of God!
- Like Christians being serious about the study and application of the word of God!

This is what it means to seek the kingdom of God (its everything Jesus says we should in the sermon on the mount!)

Far too often, we make seeking the kingdom look like missions type work...

Yes, we are to proclaim the gospel!

But we must also seek the kingdom of God in the regular, mundane, everyday things of life!

Especially because it is usually the regular, mundane, everyday things we are anxious over!

So, Jesus says seek the kingdom instead of being anxious!

And something interesting will happen if you seek the kingdom!

Jesus says that if you seek the kingdom of God, then the things that could have made you anxious, will be the very things He gives you freely! (v. 33, read)

Please notice that this is a promise: “all these things *will* be added to you!”

And this is one of those paradoxical, upside down truths of the kingdom!

There are others like it, for instance, when Jesus says, “the greatest among you will be the servant.” (Matt 23:11)

Or

“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matt 16:25)

Or

“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;
another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.” (Proverbs 11:24)

Those statements can make you scratch your head in bewilderment until you realize that you are living in God’s economy where things are not always the way *you think* things should be!

Because Jesus tells us the way to get our material needs met is to not seek or worry about our material needs!

Jesus says, seek God and He will be sure to cover your needs!

So, here is the paradigm: **Seek God, not His provision and you will have provision!**

To the natural mind this makes no sense!

But we have to remember we are citizens of the kingdom of a King whose glory should be so near and dear to us that we prioritize His rule and reign over our temporal existence!

All the while knowing and believing that if we do this, the King will be kind and gracious to provide that which we need for our temporal existence!

Our Lord says plainly, yet profoundly, “Do not be anxious about the material things of this world life, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the material things of this world will be given to you!”

Trust and believe what the Lord has spoken will come to pass!

Beloved, instead of being anxious, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all the things you are tempted to be anxious He has promised to give to you!

Let's pray!