

Sermon 50: Dealing With Anxiety Biblically: Matthew 6:25-34

Text: Matthew 6:25-34 "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof..."

Summary: A biblical worldview should support a life lived above sinful cares.

Proposition: God wants us to handle anxiety in a godly way.

Introduction:

- **God wants us to live abundant lives: "The blessed man...fulness of joy..."**
- **We need to understand the way God created us:**
 - **Body:** Physical
 - **Soul:** Mental/emotional/morally aware
 - **Spirit:** Spiritual
- **Some common terms being used today in the area of mental health:**
 - **Stress:** A temporary emotional response to a perceived threat or unfulfilled duty.
 - **Stress Management:** How we handle the unavoidable pressures we encounter.
 - **Anxiety:** A lingering condition of hopeless thinking that follows stress that has not been wisely managed.
 - **Anxiety disorder:** A persistent condition that begins to negatively affect a person's quality of life.
- **Wisdom from the life of Moses: Exodus 18:13-18** "And Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning

unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone..."

Part 1: The basis for the command: "Therefore..."

- **His teaching on anxiety is linked back to what He previously taught:**
 - **6:25** "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought..."
 - **6:30** "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you..."
 - **6:31** "Therefore take no thought..."
- **Remember what He taught:**
 - **Principle 1: Do not to be consumed with temporal investments: 6:19** "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth..."
 - **Principle 2: Temporal pursuits are empty: 6:19** "Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal..."
 - **Principle 3: Live a productive life investing in eternity: 6:20** "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..."
 - **Principle 4: Eternal pursuits have eternal value: 6:20** "Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal..."
 - **Principle 5: You invest in what you love: 6:21** "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also..."
 - **Principle 6: World view shapes everything in our perspective: 6:22-23** "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness..."
 - **Principle 7: You cannot have a healthy perspective outside of new life in Christ: 6:23** "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"
 - **Principle 8: God demands absolute, unrivaled submission: 6:24** "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the

one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon..."

Part 2: The object of the command: "Take no thought..."

• **The command is not:**

- **He is not teaching us that the physical world is irrelevant: 1 Timothy 6:17** "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy..."
- **He is not teaching us that careful consideration is always wrong: Proverbs 4:26** "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established..."
- **He is not teaching that the natural internal tensions that motivate us to fulfil our duties are sinful.**
- **He is not teaching us to live life without responsible planning.**
 - **Proverbs 14:15** "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going..."
 - **Proverbs 27:12** "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished..."
 - **James 4:15** "Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that..."
 - **Proverbs 16:9** "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps..."

• **The command is:**

- **The term μεριμνάω has the idea of "being anxious of full of care..."**
- **The command is literally:** Do not be anxious or full of cares.
- **This is not referring to an emotional response as much as an obsessive pattern of thinking.**
 - **Do not obsess over how you will handle a future challenging situation: Matthew 10:19** "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak..."
 - **Do not obsess over a secondary concern: Luke 10:41** "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things..."
 - **Do not obsess over matters that are in God's hands, not your hands: Philippians 4:6** "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God..."

Part 3: The antidote of the command: Putting it all together in a practical way.

- **How should we deal with anxiety Biblically?**
- **We need to address the issue practically and theologically.**
 - **Regularly remind yourself that God takes care of His creation: 6:26** "Behold the fowls..."
 - **Accept the fact that there are certain things that you cannot control: 6:27** "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"
 - **Regularly remind yourself that God's works are beautiful and well ordered: 6:28** "Consider the lilies of the field..."
 - **Ask yourself why you are doubting God's values: 6:30** "Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"
 - **Redirect your thoughts and energy into the right direction: 6:31-33** "Take no thought... But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..."
 - **Do not allow yourself to carry hypothetical burdens: 6:34**
Take therefore no thought for the morrow
- **We must learn to develop disciplined, Biblical thinking:**
- **This needs to become a patterned way of life:**
 - **Psalm 42:5** "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance..."
 - **Psalm 42:11** "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God..."
 - **Psalm 43:5** "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God..."
 - **Philippians 4:8** "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things..."
- **Final thought:**
 - **This passage practically addresses the theological side of anxiety.**
 - **The first passage practically addresses the physical and emotional sides that can lead to anxiety and physical and emotional burnout.**
 - **Some of us may need to reach out to someone who can help us work through these issues.**
 - **We need to take care of our bodies.**

- **We need a regular pattern of rest, refreshment, and renewal.**
- **We need to evaluate our commitments wisely.**
- **We must think Biblically about this topic.**