

## Epiphany on the Mount

Sermon Series for the Season of Epiphany



### SERMON INFO

#### TITLE

Yes, but First...

#### PREACHER

Rev. Josh Keller

#### TEXTS

Deuteronomy 30:15-18

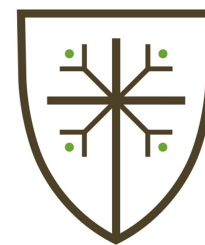
1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 6:25-7:5

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh noted in his sermon that joy is essential to God's nature. He takes joy in seeing the flowers if just for a moment. How can worry and anxiety steal this joy that is essential to us as those made in God's image?
2. What practices can help us resist the anxieties of the world taking hold of our hearts?

# SERMON NOTES



February 12, 2023

### SERMON SUMMARY

This week, Josh continued our sermon series on Jesus' sermon on the mount with the familiar passages on anxiety and on "the speck in your own eye." While familiar, these passages are unfortunately all too familiar as blanket statements against all anxiety or against all discernment of right and wrong. But that is not what Jesus says. And this is the first of Josh's three points – what Jesus doesn't say, what he does say, and finally, our call to trust.

**What Jesus doesn't say:** Jesus does not condemn generalized anxiety as sin here. For some, anxiety is a constant, inescapable state in which they cannot turn off their body's panic response. That isn't the kind of anxiety Jesus speaks of. The Greek word used is literally "a mind divided," an holding all the things in mind that we think will make us secure. Jesus also doesn't condemn planning or hard work. Jesus is not telling his followers to simply sit and wait for things to drop into your lap. And he is not saying we are not to work to improve ourselves or help others do the same. None of these are, of themselves, wrong. But first...

**What Jesus does say:** Jesus says seek FIRST, before any of these things, the things of the world that make us feel secure, seek Him and his righteousness. When we re-prioritize our seeking, it will reorient our anxieties. Jesus says look at the birds and the flowers. These created things that exist only for a short while and are gone, and yet God cares for them. How much more must he care for you? Those made in his image. You were made to rest secure in him. The heavenly Father longs for you to feel freedom to rest in him. And in Christ, you have that rest. You are His beloved.

**Trust:** We trust so much in things that perish – in having enough food, in "adding an hour to our lifespan." And yet, as Josh said, "you can't add an hour to your life, but God is the source of ETERNAL life. You cannot make bread appear, but God called the world into being." All the things we seek after to make us feel secure are already given us by the only one who can give them to us. We are entirely dependent upon Christ - not only for food and clothing, but also for judgement and our own growth for the better. As we do that - we find him gracious, kind, and merciful. And by receiving that mercy, are able to offer it to others, and then only after we have begun with ourselves first, then can we move to help others.