

Attacking Anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7

Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Just a second. I did the clicker here.

Anxiety. The Apostle Paul is talking to the church at Philippi and talking about the anxiousness that the devil in the world around us is often putting in our lives. And so, we turn to verse six, where he writes these words, “do not be anxious about anything. And then he goes on and says, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

This is the word of the Lord. Now, as you sit here today, are you anxious about anything? Is your mind just running 1000 miles an hour thinking about all the things that are going on and all the things that you think you need to do or don't do. Now, perhaps you're worried about that assignment at school. It's due tomorrow, and there is just no way you're going to get it done.

Or maybe it's that work assignment that you have to get done this coming week, and you know that you're going to be too busy and you can't get it done, and you're having all kinds of anxiety all about it. And if it's not that, perhaps maybe you're having trouble with friends, relatives, and you're anxious about the fact that we can't talk to each other. It's been so long since we've had a discussion and we're not getting along, and I just don't see any way out of it.

Maybe you've been to the doctor recently and that diagnosis doesn't sound so good. They said they were going to get back to you in a couple of days, and it's been two weeks, and I just don't know what's going on. I'm worried about what might happen. I'm anxious and I'm getting all uptight, and I don't know what to do. And, you know, you would think that with all the technology that we have in our life, that actually there would be less anxiety.

Because after all, all the things that we used to take hours and hours to do we can do in mere moments. And yet the reality is that all the technology in our lives has led to an

entire generation being referred to as the anxious generation, causing all kinds of difficulties. And instead of making life easier, it's made it harder, and we're more anxious. And think about it. Paul was writing about this some 2,000 years ago.

And we're still dealing with it, and maybe even more so. Anxiety comes in all kinds of forms and troubles and trials, and we can't seem to escape it on our own. But isn't it interesting that Jesus in his very first sermon, says, therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. You see, the devil and the world and our own sinful nature wants to cause that anxiety. And it grabs a hold of us and gets us off track, that we can't do anything.

The devil wants us to think that there's no way out and grabs us and brings anxiety. And it's overwhelming. And if we're honest with ourselves, all of us at one time or another have been impacted. Anxiety. Jesus, in preaching and teaching to his disciples, knew that they were going to be troubled with anxiety.

After all, after three years, Jesus would die on the cross and rise from dead and go into heaven, and they'd be on their own. And suddenly now they were having the responsibility and privilege of taking the gospel to the then known world. They would be beaten, arrested, ultimately most of them martyred for the faith. They talk about anxiety in jail, knowing that ultimately you were going to be martyred for the faith. And it was to that very situation the Apostle Paul is addressing in our epistle for today.

Do not be anxious about anything. Now, if that's where it ended, it'd be easy to say, okay, that's easy for you to say, but you don't know all the trouble that's going on in my life. But notice, Paul doesn't just say, do not be anxious, but he then goes on to tell us in the Philippians, but in everything, by prayer and supplication. In other words, what do we do with that anxiety? How do we deal with that anxiety as Christians, as we go out in the world around us, as we go home, as we live out our life of faith?

Because anxiety and anxiousness is a reality of life. So, my friends, even as Christians, it's not if we're going to be anxious, but when we're anxious. That's the reality. That's the challenge of knowing that, yes, even though we are Christians, even though we're a part of

the household of God, we're going to deal with anxiousness. So the challenge that's before us this morning is how do we deal with the reality of anxiousness?

How are we going to deal with anxiety? It's going to impact us at home, at school, at work, wherever we might be. And it can be overwhelming. And I'm Telling you this from my own experience, anxiety can be overwhelming. It can be such a point.

You can make yourself sick, you can make yourself tired. You're not able to get up in the morning, you're not able to do anything. And it just seems overwhelming. And it's. Why bother?

And that's exactly what Satan wants you and I to believe that whatever the trouble, whatever the trial, it's too big, it's too great. There's nothing that we can do. So, my friends, the challenges that I give you is to not look at whatever that situation is as a problem, but instead look at it as an opportunity. An opportunity for the grace of God to work in and through you and me as we deal with the trials and struggles of life. You see, Satan wants you and I to believe that.

It's so overwhelming. What is God going to do? There's nothing going to happen. But it's an opportunity to see the reality of God's undeserved love in your life and in mine. The apostle Peter, who would ultimately be martyred for the faith, you know that the guy who would speak first and think about it later, talk about anxiety sometimes, but he reminds us in the first epistle letter, cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. That's a little bit different translation than I memorized as a kid. I remember saying, cast all your cares on him because he cares for you. But how much richer it is when you look at the Word and realize, cast all your anxiety on him. Give it over to him. Give it over to God.

Let him take care of that anxiety and the struggles and trials of life instead of trying to internalize it and trying to take care of it on our own. God says, I'm with you. I'm going to be there for you.

Now it'd be easy to say, okay, Pastor, I get it. After all, we know that God created the world in six days. He made it by his word. Except for Adam and Eve, we know that. And on the seventh day, rested.

Okay, so he has the whole world in his hand. Let's face it, God's got a lot going on. And since God's got a lot going on, you mean he really is going to care about the struggle that's going on in my life at school, or he's really going to care about the struggles I have going on in my own family? The answer is yes. Do you remember from Confirmation class when we learned all the very attributes of God, who God is and how he lived, and one of them that he's omniscient.

He's all knowing. And another word right next to it is omnipotent. He's all powerful. He not only knows what's going on in our lives, but he also has the power to do something about it. Throughout life, he's been dealing with this. In the Old Testament, as we turn to Proverbs, an anxious heart weighs a man down. I think we could kind of paraphrase a little bit. Wise man weighs a man and a woman down. And yet a kind word cheers us up.

That's what Satan wants to do. He wants to weigh down our heart and life, all of us. And yet God says, I'm here to deliver you and hold you up. So, as you think about this, you know, what's the reality of anxiousness? Anxiety.

You know, what is that reality? And it's amazing what we get anxious about, because if you stop to think about it, most of what we get anxious about are things we can't even control. You know, 40% of what we get anxious about, it's never even going to happen. And then 30% of what we worry about is in the past. And trust me, there's no time machine.

You can't go back and change it.

And 12% of the things that we get anxious about are something somebody said about us isn't true anyway. You see, so much of what we're anxious about, things we can't control, things that aren't going to happen. And it's to that very situation that throughout the Scriptures and here, especially in Philippians, God has offered us His. His Word.

And to that is one of my favorite quotes in all of Scripture. Hebrews 13, I will never leave you nor forsake you. You see, as we walk down life's path, we're never alone. Part of anxiety is that we think, nobody knows, nobody cares, nothing can be done. I'm all alone. That's exactly what Satan wants you and me to believe. But the reality is Jesus is always right there with you and me. We are never, ever alone. He's walking down that path with us, lifting us up and bringing to us his abiding love and care. Now, if you were listening closely and I pointed it out as we were reading the text for today, not only does they cast all your anxieties upon him, but with prayer and supplication, we're in the midst of that anxiety.

When we're anxious about something, we're encouraged to take it to the Lord in prayer and know with all certainty that he will hear us and so it's important to realize that the peace that we receive as Christians, that surpasses all that the world has out there, as we hear in verse seven of our Epistle, lesson is what guards our hearts and minds. It's why my sermons will often end with that. Why? Because ultimately he's the one that delivers the peace and comfort amidst the anxiousness and anxiety of life around us. Not your hard work, not my hard work, not anything that the world around does us.

But it's through him that we have peace that the world just cannot, will not, does not understand.

So the reality is, anxiety is going to happen. We live in a sinful world. The devil's going to try to work hard on us to get us anxious about things we can't control, things that are done, things that are over.

But you and I as believers have something that the world doesn't have. We can take it to him in prayer and know that he will hear us and be there with us. That's where the peace comes from. That's where the understanding and dealing with anxiety really comes from.

And so now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus through all anxiety and trouble now and forever. Amen.

We continue now with our next hymn of comfort, a comfort that comes out in the anxieties of life when we hear that sweet name of Jesus. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.

