

Rev. Lex DeLong / General Adult

Borrowed Breath: Learning to Live by The Source / Matthew 6:25–34; 1 Peter 5:4–7

Anxiety is the inevitable cost of building the kingdom of self; we find rest only when we abandon our own throne to seek first the King's throne.

Notes

01/11 Matt. 6:25-34, "The Worry Glitch: Why the Self-Sufficient are Always Anxious," Scripture: 1 Pet. 5:4-7

"Last week, on January 4th, we explored God's abundant supply—His infinite provision for every need. This week, we examine what blocks that supply from flowing freely.

Why do we worry? It happens when we forget that God is the Source and mistakenly believe we are the logistics manager. We assume He should yield to our demands, as if we control the timing, the volume, and the method of His grace.

When I convince myself that I am in charge of deploying God's supply, I inevitably question my own limitations: *Am I capable enough? Wise enough? Is my timing right?*

But if God is truly the Source, I am released from fretting over the 'how' and 'when.' All power dwells in Him alone. This truth liberates me to 'seek first His kingdom' without distraction. Ultimately, worry/anxiety is simply the friction caused by trying to manage a universe-sized life with human-sized ability."

Sermon Title: The Worry Glitch: Why We Can't Quiet Our Minds

Series: Borrowed Breath (Week 2: The Blockage)

Date: January 11, 2026

Text: Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Peter 5:4-7

Main Idea: Anxiety is the inevitable cost of building the kingdom of self out of our own capability; we find rest only when we abandon our own rule and first seek the King's rule.

Introduction: The "Universe-Sized" Problem

The "Hum" of Anxiety: We all know the feeling. It's that low-level "hum" in the back

of our minds. We're driving to work, or maybe lying in bed trying to sleep, or maybe even simply just trying to read something but finding ourselves reading the same line over and over again; and our brain keeps running simulations - different scenarios.

- What if the money runs out?
- What if the diagnosis is bad?
- What about my kids' future?
- What if I cannot fix that relationship?
- What if I lose them?

C.S. Lewis captures the mechanics of anxiety perfectly in *The Screwtape Letters*. He writes that the enemy wants to fill our minds with 'contradictory pictures of the future,' keeping us in 'resignation to a dozen different and hypothetical fates.' **[1]**

[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1942), Letter 6.

It is a strategy of exhaustion. Satan wants to keep your mind spinning through so many scenarios that you cannot possibly solve any of them.

This highlights the vital difference between the human mind and the Divine. We are crushed, exhausted, and anxious by the *potential*—by what *might* happen. But God possesses true omniscience. He knows all things, both actual and potential. He knows which fears are phantoms and which future is real, relieving us of the burden of having to predict it."

Sadly, we often consider this worry, this effort as "being cautious or responsible." But Jesus calls it a worry, it's the glitch in our spiritual lives that takes our breath away instead of adding to it. Worry/Anxiety is "The Blockage" that keeps the air - the breath from flowing. We are trying to run a **Universe-sized life** on **human-sized capability**.

What happens is, ...

I. The Kingdom of Self Crushes Us With False Responsibility (Matthew 6:25-32)

This is Satan's plan since the beginning of time, to create a counterfeit of God's ways. He knows that God's ways free us, but our own ways enslave us.

When it does, ...

A. We Obsess Over the "Maintenance of Life" instead of Life Itself (v. 25)

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life..." Jesus starts with "Therefore,"

pointing back to the previous verses about money (Mammon). He immediately identifies the distraction: We confuse the **Maintenance** (food, clothing, fixes) with the **Gift** (life, breath, meaning).

The Greek word used here for "anxious" is **Merimnaō**.

- It is a compound word that literally means "Divided Mind" (merizo = divide; nous = mind).
- This is "The Glitch." Anxiety tears you apart. One part of your mind is here in the present (where your body is), but the other part is torn away into a future that hasn't happened yet, but holds you captive until it does.
- In the Kingdom of Self, we are perpetually divided. We spend all our energy anxiously guarding the "Maintenance" and we miss the "Life." We protect the container but starve the soul.

What is even worse is that...

B. We Ignore the Evidence of God's Competence (v. 26, 28-30)

Jesus calls two witnesses to the stand to prove that we are over-managing.

- The Birds (v. 26): They work (they hunt for worms), but they don't worry. They don't build barns to hoard for 10 years from now. They trust the daily supply. Jesus asks: "Are you not of more value than they?" If the King takes care of the pigeons, will He not take care of the people?
- The Lilies (v. 28-30): He compares grass to Solomon. Solomon had the greatest "Kingdom of Self" in history—unlimited wealth—yet even he could not free himself of worry. In these verses, a simple flower, clothed by God, was more beautiful than even Solomon. "O you of little faith" is the diagnosis: We are acting like the Supply is small and we have to manage it.

C. We Try to Control What We Cannot Change (v. 27)

"Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" This is the reality check. Jesus uses a specific Greek term here: **Helikia**.

- This word is ambiguous—it can refer to Time (lifespan) or Space (physical height/stature).
- Jesus is covering all the bases. You cannot control the length of your life (Time), and you cannot even control the size of your body (Space).
- We are finite creatures with zero control over the fundamental dimensions of our existence. Worry gives you the illusion of control, but Helikia reminds us we have zero control. Trying to control the uncontrollable is what burns us out.

D. Self-Reliance Forces Us to Carry the Weight Alone (v. 31-32)

"For the Gentiles seek after all these things..." Here is the spiritual reality. If you ignore the Birds, ignore the Lilies, and ignore your own limitations, you end up living like a "Gentile"—someone who does not know they have a Father who cares for all these things. They spend their lives striving instead of living.

The word Jesus uses for "seek" here is **Epizēteō**.

- Later, for disciples, He uses the normal word *zēteō* (to seek). But for the Gentiles, He adds the prefix *epi-*, which intensifies it.
- It implies a frantic hunt or a desperate scramble.
Because the functional atheist believes they are the Sole Provider, they cannot just "seek"; they must scramble.

Dr. Tim Keller summarized this perfectly, to paraphrase: **"Anxiety is the collapse of a false god."** [2] If we are falling apart, it is because the thing we were leaning on (our plan, our competence, our money) just broke. The "Gentile" scramble is the sound of a collapse.

[2] Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters* (New York: Dutton, 2009), 22–24.

So what are we to do instead of Worry?

Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you, But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"

II. True Humility is Resigning from the Job of Being God (1 Peter 5:6-7)

So how do we clear the Blockage? How do we stop living like functional atheists?

A. We Must Admit Our "Human-Sized" Limits (v. 6)

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God..." We often think humility means thinking you're terrible. **Real Humility is just thinking Reality.** It is looking at the Universe-sized problems and admitting, "I am human-sized (v. 27). I cannot carry this." It is resigning from the position of God and letting God be your God.

B. We Must Transfer the Weight to the "Mighty Hand" (v. 7)

"...casting all your anxieties on him."

The Greek word (*epiripsantes*) describes the specific action of **heaving a heavy load onto a beast of burden.**

- This same root word is used in Luke 19:35, where the disciples "cast" their garments onto the colt for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem.
- We are trying to play the role of the pack animal. We have strapped the saddlebags of the Universe onto our own backs.
- God is the Carrier. The command is to unstrap that load and heave it onto His "Mighty Hand." You cannot walk upright with God while you are still carrying the cargo of the world.

Therefore...

III. We Must Abandon Our Throne to Receive the King's Care (Matthew 6:33-34)

We return to Jesus in the Matthew 6 passage for the final solution, to answer the question, "How do we live this out?"

A. Seeking the Kingdom Means Letting the Father Lead (v. 33)

"But seek first the Kingdom of God..."

This isn't a command to "do more religious stuff." It is an invitation to switch thrones.

- When I seek the Kingdom of Self, I am the ultimate authority. I worry about the bottom line.
- When I seek the Kingdom of God, I am the Child. The Child doesn't worry about the mortgage; the Father does. The Child just holds the Father's hand and sees the life all around.

B. Trusting the King Means Living Within the Boundaries of Today (v. 34)

"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow..."

Here is the practical rhythm of the Kingdom.

- The Glitch is an issue of timing. We try to drag next week's heavy problems into today's limited strength and insight. But God has not given you the grace for next Tuesday yet; He has only given you the grace for today. Remember last week, "His mercies are new every morning. Great is [His] faithfulness."
- Corrie ten Boom, who faced the ultimate darkness of the Holocaust, used to say: "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."
- Just because the future is dark to you doesn't mean the Engineer has lost control.

The Main Idea:

Anxiety is the inevitable cost of building the kingdom of self; we find rest only when we abandon our own throne to seek first the King's throne.

Closing Illustration & Challenge

The Resignation Letter We have talked about switching thrones. We have talked about the "Great Resignation." Now, we are going to do it.

Many of us are carrying a weight because we haven't officially quit the job we were never hired to do.

I want you to picture a letter on your desk. It is addressed to the Creator of Heaven and Earth. And it reads like this:

"Dear Heavenly Father,

Please accept this letter as formal notification that I am resigning from my position as General Manager of the Universe, Effective Immediately.

I am resigning from the 'Department of Interior'—I cannot change people's hearts. I'm tired of trying. I am resigning from the 'Department of Strategic Planning'—I cannot control the future. The variables are too high. I am resigning from the 'Department of Finance'—I am not the Source of the harvest. I am resigning from the Department of war—I am not strong enough. Only You are all of these.

I am stepping down from the Throne. I am returning my badge. I am taking my proper place... as Your child.

Signed, [Your Name]."

Every person in this room and listening in online are holding onto a set of keys. They are the keys to the vehicle of the "Kingdom of Self." You've been driving the car, and you are exhausted. You're swerving. You're running out of gas. You are in traffic that you cannot control and you are running late.

The invitation of Jesus in Matthew 6 isn't just "stop worrying." It is **"Let Me Drive."** God is not just the car, full of gas and power, He is also the driver who gets you where you need to be, when you need to be there, and most importantly—in one piece.

Today, we aren't just praying for peace; we must hand over the keys. We are clearing the blockage by admitting we aren't the power or the delivery system.

Lets pray.

Note: The Doodle video explains Letter 6 of the Screwtape Letters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncte16GirMk>