

ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING - PART 2
ASK GOD FOR HELP
GENESIS 24:12-14 / PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9
2025-06-01

Last week we began a series on Anxiety. And judging by your responses, it struck a chord. None of us, it seems, is exempt from anxiety, and yet, as we began to discover and will continue to see, anxiety is not something we must wrestle with on our own. Max Lucado speaks of it as:

“a low-grade fear. An edginess, a dread...It’s not so much a storm as the certainty that one is coming. Always...coming...You can’t relax...All peace is temporary ... Anxiety is a meteor shower of what-ifs...

Anxiety doesn’t just take our breath. It also takes our sleep, our energy and our wellbeing. It can twist us into emotional pretzels. It can make our eyes twitch, blood pressure rise, heads ache and armpits sweat—maybe ½ the ailments in a medical textbook.

You might think Christians would be exempt from worry. Not so. We’re taught that we should live a life of peace, and when we don’t find it, we not only feel anxious, but we add guilt to the anxiety as well. Still, anxiety’s not a sin; it’s an emotion. It can, though, lead to sinful behaviour, for example, when we give into binges or spew anger, or see problems in every promise.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Don’t be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in/through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. What are we to do?

Celebrate God’s goodness: Rejoice in the Lord always (vs. 4) That was last week’s message.

Ask God for help: Let your requests be made known to God (vs. 6) That’s today’s message.

Leave your concerns with Him: With thanksgiving (vs. 6) That’s next week’s message.

Meditate on good things: Think about things that are excellent and praiseworthy (vs. 8) - Our wrap up

Celebrate. Ask. Leave. Meditate. C.A.L.M. God is ready to give you comfort. With God as your helper, you’ll reframe the way you face your fears, discover a life characterized by calm and develop ways of facing anxiety. It’s not God’s will that you lead a life of perpetual anxiety. Lord, You spoke to storms. Would you speak to ours? You calmed the hearts of the apostles. Would You calm the chaos within us? You told them to fear not. Say the same to us. We’re weary

from our worry, battered by life's gales. Prince of Peace, give us a spirit of calm, Will You turn a new leaf in our lives? Quench anxiety. Stir courage. Let us know less fret and more faith.

Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians. But we have "a God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." Rejoice that He is able to do what you cannot do. God exists, He's in control and He is good. Let the storms blow.

The more people try to control the world, the more they realize they can't. Instead of seeking control, relinquish it. You can't run the world but you can entrust it to God. Peace is available, not because of a lack of problems, but because of a sovereign Lord. Rather than choose the chaos of the world, rejoice in the Lord's sovereignty. Absolutely everything is under His control; we need not be anxious over what He already has figured out for our good. Others see the problems of the world and wring their hands. We see the same problems and bend our knees. You can't be full of God and full of fear at the same time. Put yourself entirely in His care. As you do, you'll find it possible to be anxious for nothing. God is personally and powerfully involved in His creation. "The Son sustain(s) all things... (Hebrew 1:3). That's to say Jesus is directing creation to-ward a desired aim. He won't be deterred. The present participle implies that Jesus is continually acting. "He is before all things and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17). If He stepped back, the creation would collapse. He isn't making up this plan as He goes along.

The ultimate proof of this providence is Christ's death on the cross. Nothing was more evil. But no result was even greater! God not only knew of the crucifixion, He ordained it. Everyone thought the life of Jesus was over...**But God**. So, can God not reverse your life pain? We have a choice—to wear our hurt or wear our hope, clothing ourselves in God's providence.

Long intro, but fundamental to move forward. Today, "Ask God for help...make your requests known to God. We're going to speak about 1) contagious calm and 2) prayer not despair. 1) Contagious calm. Anxiety is needless because God is near. Some of you may remember the Cuban missile crisis back in 1962. It was perhaps the nearest miss to a World War III. But there was an unreported incident that could have put the situation right over the top. Four Russian nuclear submarines were patrolling the Florida coast and were detected by U.S. warships, who were dropping depth charges, causing the Russians to think they were under attack. The captain lost his cool. The subs air-conditioning wasn't working for boats designed for cold water and internal temperatures reached 120 degrees F. They'd also come through hurricane winds and 50' waves on route and were ordered to stay on the surface—with lots of nausea. The captain was ready to fire the warheads. The American ships would be destroyed and the Russians would die too. But a man named Vasili Arkhipov, one on one, asked his superior to reconsider and talk to the Americans first. So the subs surfaced and were surrounded by the American fleet. It's unclear why, but they subsequently submerged a few days later, eluded the Americans and high-tailed home.

In your own world, you may be tempted to press the button, not to release warheads, but angry outbursts or rash accusations or retaliations or hurtful words. How many have been hurt by unrestricted stress? And how many disasters have been averted because one person refused to buckle under the strain? Paul says, “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything. A gentle nature is steady and alert to fairness. The opposite would be overreaction or a sense of panic.

Evident to all. Contagiously calm. The one who reminds others, even without words, that God is in control. How can we keep our heads when everyone else is losing theirs? You are not alone—the Lord is near. You never face life without help. Remember Immanuel—God with us. He is still with us in the person of His Spirit; He comforts, teaches and convicts us. The point is, don’t assume God is viewing from a distance. Clutch the presence of God with both hands. Because the Lord is near, you can be anxious for nothing.

You know the feeling: you have a limited quantity of wisdom, energy, patience or time—nowhere near what you need. That’s enough to make you anxious. But this time, instead of starting with what you have, start with Jesus. Think about five loaves and two fish, it’s more than enough. Start with His wealth, resources and strength. Count the number of times Jesus has helped you face the impossible. Before you lash out in fear, look up in faith to your Father. Contagious calm will happen to the degree that we turn to Him.

2) Prayer, not despair. Peace happens when people pray. What is the story of the persistent widow doing in the Bible? A corrupt official. A persistent gadfly. Reluctant benevolence. No compassion or concern. Is God a reluctant judge? Are we the marginalized widow? Is prayer a matter of pestering God until He breaks down and gives us what we want? No, it’s a parable of contrast. Even the judge rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to His chosen people who cry out to Him day and night?...I tell you He will grant justice to them quickly. God is not the reluctant judge and you are not the widow. The widow was at the bottom of the pecking order. She had nowhere to turn. But as a child of the King, you are at the front of the line. At any moment you can turn to God. God doesn’t place you on hold or tell you to call again later. He loves the sound of your voice. Always.

So, “be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” It’s a call to take action against anxiety. Choose prayer over despair. God calls us to pray about everything. Prayer includes worship and adoration. Supplication suggests humility. We make no demands; we simply offer humble requests. And with our requests, we tell God exactly what we want.

In Luke 18:41, Jesus says to the blind man, “What do you want Me to do for you?” Though the answer seems obvious, Jesus wanted to hear the man articulate his specific requests. When the wedding ran low on wine, Mary didn’t say, “Help us, Jesus.” She was specific: “They have no more wine.” At Gethsemane, Jesus prayed specifically, “Take this cup from Me.”

Specific prayer is serious prayer. Contrast, “Can I come over and see you sometime” with “Can I come over this Friday night. I have a problem and I really need your advice. I can be there by 7:00 and promise to leave by 8:00.” Second, specific prayer gives us an opportunity to see God at work, causing our faith to grow. I refer you, for example, to Abraham’s servant’s prayer to find a suitable wife for Abraham in Genesis 24:12-14. Third, specific prayer creates a lighter load.

Many of our anxieties are threatening because they are vague. Bring it down to size. It’s not just bless my day tomorrow, but “Lord, here’s what’s happening and here’s what I’m concerned about and need.” Reduce your problem into a prayer-sized challenge—without demanding, without conditional prayer that tells God what to do and when. Nor is prayer “a right formula”. God is not impressed or manipulated by our eloquence. He is moved by our sincere request. As His children we honour Him when we tell Him exactly what we need.

When we give our challenge to God and a sense of stress surfaces later, remind yourself you gave this challenge to God earlier. He’s already taken responsibility for the situation. So you can be grateful, not fretful. “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7)”. Cast your anxiety in the direction of Christ specifically and immediately. And it’s quite legitimate to remind God of His promises—God: “You said you would walk with me through the waters (Isaiah 43:2); You said You would lead me through the valley. (Psalm 23:4); You said You would never leave or forsake me. (Hebrews 13:5)” Find a promise that fits your problem and build your prayer around it. Your answer will come—kairos—at the right time and you will overcome. The path to peace is paved with prayer. Fewer anxious thoughts, more prayer-filled thoughts. Now that’s worth sharing with someone this week!