

Introduction:

There is a comedy skit that Bob Newhart does where he plays a therapist.

He explains to the lady who is seeking his counsel that he only charges \$5 for the first 5 minutes and that he is almost certain that their counseling session will take no longer than 5 minutes.

The lady then begins to explain to him how she is terrified of being buried in a box and that she thinks about that and it makes her suffer with anxiety.

Newhart asks, has anyone ever tried to bury you in a box, to which she responds, no.

He asks, so, you are claustrophobic? To which she responds: “yes, yes, that is it”.

He says, I am going to tell you two words and this is my whole therapy session.

Then he just screams at her: “STOP IT” He says, you don’t want to go through your whole life being afraid, so just stop it.

She responds, well, I can’t. He immediately interrupts her and says, NO, no, no, we don’t go there, you just need to stop it!

Now, if you watch the skit, it is hilarious, but this is not a very good counseling strategy.

Thankfully, Jesus is a much more compassionate counselor.

This morning, we are looking at a passage in which Jesus counsels us on the issue of anxiety.

And instead of just telling us to stop it, he is going to comfort us with good reasons as to why our anxiousness is unnecessary as God’s children.

READ Matthew 6:25-34

Big Idea: “Your life is more than physical needs, God is not unsympathetic towards those needs, but his primary care is your spiritual good.”

Outline: “Is Not Life More?”

- 1) Do not be anxious, because your Heavenly Father values you (v. 26-30).**
- 2) Do not be anxious, because your Heavenly Father understands you (v. 31-32).**
- 3) Do not be anxious, because your Heavenly Father matures you (v. 33-34).**

1) Do not be anxious, because your Heavenly Father values you (v. 26-30).

The first cure that Jesus gives for anxiety is to remind us that God values all of creation, so certainly he will value His children much more.

This is what is known as a “lesser to greater” argument.

If God does the lesser, then certainly, he will do the greater.

In v. 26 Jesus says that the birds don’t have to worry about where their next meal comes from; “YOUR FATHER feeds them.

In v. 28, he says, “the lilies of the fields do not toil or spin to provide clothes for themselves; GOD clothes them with more splendor than Solomon in all his glory.”

Jesus’ argument is simple; if God, who is your Heavenly Father, is so proficient in taking care of the lesser parts of creation, why are you worried that he will not take care of you; his child.

Do you ever doubt your value to God? Well here, Jesus says that Your Father loves the birds, squirrels, rabbits, deer, and other creatures of the forest, therefore it would be inconceivable to think that he would not love those made in his image.

But we should not stop in taking comfort in our value as God’s image bearers.

We should see our greatest value in the giving of God’s son.

Romans 8:32 says, *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”*

God has proven our value by giving his Son whom he greatly values as a sacrifice for our sins in order to adopt us as his true children.

This should be the greatest evidence to us that God values us and will graciously give us all things!

So, why should we not be So anxious? Because our Heavenly Father values us, and Jesus wants us to believe that.

You might say, well how can God truly value us? He is so far above me; he is so different from me; how can he even understand my needs in order to take care of me.

That brings us to our second point:

2) Do not be anxious, because your Heavenly Father understands you (v. 31-32).

Jesus says, *“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”*

There is a star in a far off galaxy named UY Scuti. It is the largest star known to man.

If this star were placed where our sun is, it would expand out to the orbit of Saturn.

If you flew a Boeing 777 around it at its normal speed, it would take you 1200 years to fly around the star one time.

The overwhelming vastness of some parts of creation are meant to show you the glory of God’s greatness. We serve an infinite God.

I believe sometimes we focus so much on how big God is that we become like the Psalmist in Psalm 8 who says, *“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?”*

However, as Christians, we are told in scripture that the same God whose ways are so transcendent that we couldn’t possibly understand them all, also has the hairs on our head numbered.

He is not an aloof God; He is OUR Father!

He knows you intimately and because of that, as Jesus says in v. 32, *“your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of earthly things.”*

There are two common mistakes that we can make when we slip into doubting that God knows our needs.

First, we actually doubt God’s goodness.

Jesus shows this to us in Matthew 7:7-11, where he says, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”*

This is another lesser to greater argument: here Jesus is saying, “your goodness is no match for God’s goodness; and you care for your children; how much more will God care for his children.”

Think of how humanistic we are when we think this way. We actually deceive ourselves into believing that we are more virtuous than God.

We give good things to our children, but often don’t believe that God will do the same for us and this creates worry and doubt.

When you are tempted to worry, you need to meditate on the goodness of God.

James 1:17 says, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”*

James says God is the source of all good gifts, and there is no changing in him, he never turns from giving us good gifts. And this bring us to the second mistake we can often make, which is that we can forget the unchangeable nature of God.

There is a cycle of doubting that we can go through in the Christian life.

We worry, and pray, in spite of our worry, God provides, and we rejoice.

Then another problem comes along and we worry and fret and forget that God provided for us in the past.

It is as though we are perpetually making ourselves orphans in our hearts over and over again!

In Malachi 3:6, God says, “I am the Lord, I do not change.” Guess what that means?! This means that his fatherhood doesn’t change. His PERFECT Fatherhood.

We should trust that our Good, unchanging, Heavenly Father who knows the hairs on all of our heads, understands that we have needs.

So, we should not be anxious because our Father values us and he understand us, but now let us talk about God’s primary concern, spiritual needs.

And this brings us to our 3rd point:

3) Do not be anxious, because your Heavenly Father matures you (v. 33-34).

In v. 33-34, Jesus says, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

Look at that phrase, “sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Jesus does not deny that God will allow and even ordain trouble in our daily life.

This does not contradict God’s desire to meet the physical needs of his children, but it emphasizes God’s primary concern, our righteousness.

Why do we sometimes need our needs withheld? For the sake of spiritual maturity.

How many of you when you were children, or how many of you who are children enjoy it when your parents make you work, do chores, wash dishes, mow the lawn?

Why do parents do this? Is it because they want to withhold pleasure from their children?

No, it is because they understand their child’s need to grow in maturity.

It is not as though parents despise the thought of their children enjoying life and having pleasure, but they understand that life is more than pleasure and all children need discipline in order to grow in maturity.

If we as earthly parents understand this how much more does the perfect parent understand this?

Now, we see the shift to God’s primary concern when Jesus says, “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

At this point of the passage, Jesus is showing that our worry is not just about food, clothing and shelter, it is also about submitting to God’s will rather than ours.

Just a few verses back, Jesus taught us in the Lord’s prayer that we need to pray “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

And I don’t care who you are; how spiritual you are or how immature you are in the faith; we all struggle with aligning our will to God’s will.

It seems like an easy concept; whatever the Lord ordains is right and I know I will be happiest if I submit to his ordained plan.

But we have our own plans. In essence, the true cause of our anxiousness is that we don’t trust our master’s plans and we just wish that he would sign off on OUR plan.

Sadly, a theological acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty doesn’t mean that in our hearts, we always submit to his sovereignty.

As I get older, I look back and I think, God if you had just done things my way my life would be better. And that is the height of arrogance; to think that I should counsel God; that I could have ordained a better plan than his.

And when I am afraid that he will not make things go my way; I worry.

Now, look back at verse 30. Jesus says, "...if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith."

Aren't you glad, Jesus didn't say "O you of NO faith?"

To have our lack of faith exposed the way that Jesus is doing in this passage can be a bit overwhelming.

However, I do not believe Jesus is not trying to crush us; he wants to increase our faith patiently & lovingly. Otherwise, he might just say, "STOP IT!"

But in his love and patience, he is preparing us, not for our kingdom, not the kingdom that will bring us the most earthly pleasure, but for his kingdom; the kingdom of eternal righteousness.

Think of the patriarch Joseph.

After many hardships, and many pleasures in his life, God used Joseph to meet the physical needs of the Israelites who were facing starvation.

God cared about Joseph and Israel's physical well-being.

However, when you read the account of Joseph in the book of Hebrews, he is not exalted for rescuing Israel from starvation, Not that that was a bad thing, not that his faith did not function as a means to produce that, but he was exalted for something else.

The author of Hebrews says, "*By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.*"

This seems like an odd thing to exalt Joseph for.

Why was it such an act of faith to give direction for his bones to be taken back to Israel?

Well, by faith, Joseph was expressing hope in the resurrection and wanted his bones taken to the promised land which foreshadows the future kingdom.

He was placing his faith and hope in that future kingdom, rather than placing his faith and hope in the temporary pleasures of Egypt.

Joseph suffered the loss and experienced the gain of physical needs. He was used by God to accomplish great things, but what Joseph learned in all of those things was not to live for the comforts of this life, but to make preparation for the life to come and to hold loosely to this world.

This is what Jesus is teaching when he says, “Seek first the Kingdom of God.”

All of the physical, earthly blessings are add-ons, and we shouldn't put the “add-ons” before the kingdom.

Conclusion:

I would like to begin my conclusion by reading 1 Peter 5:6-7.

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

This sums up Jesus' teaching in the sermon on the mount.

There are two ways that Jesus command to “not be anxious” should be applied to all people.

First is the 2nd use of the law. The 2nd use of the law is the gospel use.

According to this concept, the law shows us our inability to keep the it and our need to embrace Christ for salvation. Because only He can keep the law perfectly in your place.

In this case, the law actually produces a good anxiety.

It forces you look into your heart and see that you are completely unable to obey the command to turn from anxiety.

You need to Cast yourself upon Christ. Repent and embrace Him for salvation.

Second, is the 3rd use of the law. The Sanctification Use.

You have embraced Christ for salvation, but just like every other Christian, you see that you still are fighting the battle to “not be anxious”.

You too need to keep casting yourself upon Christ. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus is not teaching that you need to abolish anxiety by your own strength; the main reason that he exposes your weakness is so that you will see your need to continue depending on him.

Remember, Jesus died for all of your sins, even the sin of anxiety. This is not to say that you should brashly continue in that sin; but we must be comforted by the truth that the sin of anxiety that we are struggling with has already been paid for.

Hebrews 12:1-2 says, "...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

This passage says that we are surrounded by saints who bear witness and encourage us in our race against our sin.

As we run this race, we **MUST** look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

We also must remember that God has called us to be supporters of those who are struggling with the sin of anxiety; not Bob Newharts 😊

Now, as you fight the good fight against all of the lies that drive you to be anxious; take time to meditate upon the truth that You have a good, sovereign heavenly father who values you, who understands you and who is preparing you for the eternal kingdom; that kingdom that the author of Hebrews says can never be shaken. Your flesh may shake with fears and anxiety, but the seed of faith that God grows in a heart through union with Christ will never be shaken! Amen.