

The Anxiety of a Divided Mind

PART THREE

“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” (Matthew 6:33-34).

Intro

The root cause of anxiety is *unbelief*

The Kingdom of God...

“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world’” (John 18:36; emphasis mine).

You cannot serve two kingdoms. Jesus said:

“Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand” (Matthew 12:25).

We are citizens of another kingdom—one that never merges with any kingdom of this world, never takes up its causes, engages its culture, embraces its customs, or carries its cares.

Anxiety and the Divided Mind of a Conflicted Apostle

“He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:15-19).

All that is being done, and has been done, and will be done by God, is *for the praise of His glory*.

“From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man” (Matthew 16:21-23).

...and His Righteousness

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

He is our righteousness

“the LORD is our righteousness” (Jeremiah 33:16)

“O God of my righteousness” (Psalm 4:1).

We seek and pursue Him – *His righteousness* – in salvation and sanctification:

Romans 3:24-26

“the kingdom of God, that is, the gracious rule of God through Christ and by the Spirit in the lives of his people, bringing a free salvation and demanding a radical obedience” (Stott).

A kingdom within a kingdom.

“The kingdom of God is that realm to which believers belong. Nothing defines their identity more characteristically than that they are members of it” (Murray).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

“we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

Such lofty objectives are worthy of our focused attention, wholehearted effort, and careful allegiance.

Bottom line: there are only two courses of pursuit in life: *God’s kingdom and His righteousness; or, man’s kingdom and his desires.*

You cannot live in pursuit of both: “No one can serve two masters...” (v24).

“In the end, just as there are only two kinds of [devotion], the *self-centered* and the *God-centered*, so there are only two kinds of ambition: one can be ambitious either for oneself or for God. There is no third alternative” (Stott).

“Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (Romans 14:18-19).

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

I. An Aversion to the World

“Aversion” = ‘strong dislike, repugnance, distaste for.’

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to

this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2; NKJV).

“No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. 2 Tim 2:4; NASU).

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

This is the first key: Turn away from the cares, the customs, the culture of a world that is perishing.

II. An Allegiance to the Lord

“Allegiance” = ‘Loyalty,’ ‘commitment of a subordinate to a superior;’ ‘faithfulness’

“And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever” (1 Chronicles 28:9).

Love the Lord your God above all, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength!

This is the second key: Turn to the Lord singularly, exclusively. Seek Him only wholeheartedly.

III. An Alignment with His Word

“Alignment” = ‘arrangement in a straight line, or in correct or appropriate relative position.’

Psalm 119

This is the third key: Submit to God’s will – *both of them* – entirely, completely, consistently.

Submit Yourself to God’s Sanctifying Work – Cast All Your Cares on Him

“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” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

“anxieties” Gk *merimna* (same word); “care that brings disruption to the personality and the mind” (Zodhiates);

from root *merizo*: ‘to divide; separate into parts; to distribute; to be divided; disunited.’

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.’ Peter said to him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.’ Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.’ (Luke 22:31-34).

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).