

I. INTRO

- A. Bringing our *Let's Talk* series to a close, final message on anxiety
 - 1. Anxiety=large and growing problem now, but also takes up huge real estate in Bible
 - 2. 1st most repeated command in Scripture: "Praise the Lord." 2nd: "Do not be afraid."
 - 3. Us confronting fear is REALLY on our Father's mind, a lot. This topic is VERY worthy of our attention.
- B. Millennium Tower, San Francisco: 58 stories, 645 ft tall, 419 luxury condos, up to \$10 million
 - 1. Everyone living there: own lives, stories, victories, problems above ground
 - 2. Biggest problem: below ground
 - a. 2015, weird things: windows shatter, 12"-long crack in sidewalk, round objects always roll NW
 - b. 2016, developers admitted publicly that the skyscraper's foundation was sinking/tilting.
 - c. Overnight, \$10 million condos became almost worthless. Who's going to buy?
 - 3. No matter what problems come into and out of the lives of those people above ground, they are all made worse because of a massive problem in the foundation below ground.
- C. Anxiety is a lot like Millennium Tower
 - 1. We can't always predict and control the things that come at us "above ground." Life happens and we can't control our way out of anxious experiences and seasons.
 - 2. For some of us, anxiety is caused by situations we find ourselves in.
 - 3. For some of us, anxiety is as close as the next time our brain chemistry decides to shift.
 - 4. For some of us, it's both: situations AND chemistry.
 - 5. We don't have complete control of all of that – the part of our life that is above ground and is affected by the haphazard nature of life and physiology that can walk in and out of our "condo."
 - 6. But wouldn't you agree, that no matter what cards we're dealt above the surface, that our experience of it will be all the better if the foundation below is strong and unmoving?
- D. Two main parts of dealing with anxiety:
 - 1. Responding to anxiety when it comes is the above ground strategy.
 - a. But responding to anxiety isn't our only strategy.
 - b. Matthew 6 envisions something on the front side of anxiety.
 - 2. Proactively preparing for it and structuring your life in a way to take the fight to it before it hits you–this part is the foundation below.
 - a. I think I speak for all of us when I say: "I don't want to live my life on the defensive, just waiting for the next time anxiety might visit me. I want to suit up, arm up and take the fight to anxiety before it comes to my door."
 - b. Are you with me?
- E. Disclaimer:

1. Scripture isn't saying "Throw away your medications." We are physical beings.
 2. Scripture isn't a magic pill that wards off the possibility of anxiety.
 - a. Jesus Himself said, "In this world you will have trouble."
 - b. In a broken world like this, anxious experiences are part of the deal.
 - c. But, the same Jesus Who said that you'll have trouble is also the One Who finishes that sentence by saying, "But take heart; I have overcome the world."
 - d. Your life may be anxious—it may be EXCRUCIATINGLY anxious right now. But friend, your life is NOT HOPELESS. Today I want to give you hope by helping you anchor yourself in the bedrock truth of God's Word.
- F. Open your Bibles to Matthew 6:25
1. Matt gave a great overview of this passage two weeks ago and today I want to press in further on where he left off and make some more connections.
 2. I want to, in a sense, dissect the anatomy of fear and then sit under the instruction of Pastor Jesus and hear His unparalleled wisdom AND experience on this. Yes, Jesus too, struggled with anxiety, but He also responded to it perfectly. Let's look at the anatomy of fear.
- II. **The Anatomy of Fear:** Need to understand fear. Genius behind Jesus' words
- A. Five Basic Human Fears (Karl Albrecht, Psychology Today- 2012) boiled down all fears to five basic categories. (Amazingly King David wrote a Psalm that we have in our Bibles that describes all five of these basic fears 3,000 years before they were spelled out by clinical psychology. So when I tell you about these fears, don't hear them just as modern psychology, hear them also as an echo of ancient THEOLOGY)
 1. **Extinction** (Psalm 27:3): Loss of life/loss of existence
 2. **Mutilation** (Psalm 27:2): Loss of a body part or its function. This includes physical pain.
 3. **Loss of Autonomy** (Psalm 27:6): Loss of freedom/mobility; fearing being restricted, enveloped, hemmed in either physically or relationally
 4. **Separation** (Psalm 27:10): Loss of relationship, connectedness; loss of being wanted, respected or valued by someone else.
 5. **Ego-death** (Psalm 27:12): Loss of reputation; humiliation, shame, loss of worthiness.
 - B. What is the common thread that runs through all fear?
 1. **LOSS**
 2. But LOSS of WHAT? Keep that question right in the very front of your mind and look at Matthew 6:25.
 - C. Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life."
 1. Why did Jesus say "Therefore" as He introduces the topic of anxiety?
 2. Because He just got finished talking about something that has HUGE implications for anxiety. So let's take a look at what He's referring to—verse 19—and keep asking that question about anxiety. It comes from LOSS. LOSS of WHAT?
 - D. Matthew 6:19-21, 24 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." [skip down to verse 24]

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life ... "

1. Loss of what?
 2. Treasure, what we value most, what our heart bows to and seeks and serves above all other things. Anxiety EXISTS because TREASURE can be LOST.
- III. Everything He's going to say about fear and anxiety is rooted in **what we treasure**.
- A. If we boil anxiety down both biblically and psychologically: **Fear is the anticipation of losing something we treasure** (life, limb, comfort, finances, freedom, people, reputation). It's all about losing something we hold dear.
1. Fear has its purposes
 - a. If you're in the woods and a bear is running at you, fear is a great tool at your disposal in that moment.
 - b. If you've been slacking at work and you get an email from your boss that she wants to meet with you, anxiety, in that moment, makes sense.
 2. The problem is when fear steps out of the moment and into the permanent. When a temporary fear turns into an abiding fear.
 - a. What's happening with anxiety is that your mind and body are reacting to the perception of a threat whether or not it's really there!
 - b. Your brain is running the situation/threat over and over trying to solve the problem, while your body is preparing itself for fight or flight.
- B. And here's what I think we'll find based on Jesus' words here in Matthew 6: **Abiding fear (anxiety!) is only possible when my greatest treasure is losable**.
1. The big question is this: **What is my bare-minimum for well-being/peace/joy in life?**
 - a. The answer to this question reveals your greatest treasure.
 - b. As long as I have (fill in the blank) life is worth it.
 - c. Family, money in the bank, health, a certain reputation. Greatest treasure.

Story: Dated Charlotte in high school, broke up for two years, asked her back. NO. I had NO anxiety going into that conversation. I thought for sure she'd say yes. And when she didn't, all of a sudden, anxiety moved into my life to stay. Why? Because at that moment, all of a sudden, someone that I treasured more than anything, I realized that she could be lost to me. That maybe I wouldn't have her. That three months she kept me waiting were the longest three months of my life!

2. Here's the problem: **if anything in your "bare-minimum" for well-being is losable, abiding anxiety is not only possible but probable**.
 - a. So I just shouldn't be attached to anything or anyone?
 - b. No. Non-attachment is tenet of Buddhist philosophy. In my opinion, not possible and not biblical. So what is Jesus actually saying?

- c. In verse 26-32, Jesus gives some very real-world examples of what people worry about. I'd encourage you to read and ponder what He says in these verses as you walk through this week. But skip down to verse 33:
 - 3. "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
 - a. Seek FIRST. Not seek only, but FIRST. Fear loses much of its power when our treasures are in their proper place.
 - b. Jesus isn't teaching non-attachment, He's teaching treasure-priority.
 - c. His Kingdom, His Righteousness, HIMSELF: Jesus is our highest treasure.
 - d. When God becomes our highest treasure and our bare minimum for "being ok", anxiety's grip on you is weakened.
 - 4. **If fear's power comes from losing what we treasure most, then fear loses its power when what we treasure most cannot be lost.**
 - a. Jesus is the only treasure that cannot be lost.
 - b. Here's what I'm NOT saying: "If you have anxiety, clearly you don't love God above all things." No. People who love God dearly can struggle with anxiety deeply.
 - c. What I'm saying is that treasuring God above all things is how you bring the fight to the anxiety and day by day, month by month, year by year gain ground against this cruel enemy.
 - d. If having Jesus and becoming like Him is the greatest treasure, our bare minimum, fear will still come, and pain and disappointment and sorrow, but they begin losing control of us as Jesus becomes our definition of peace and joy. Because:
- C . **That which you treasure MOST will rule what you treasure less** (Matthew 6:21, 24)
- 1. He's telling us that there is something we must seek first, to be of infinitely greater VALUE to us, to be our "bare minimum", to be our "one thing."
 - a. What do I treasure MOST?
 - b. Anxiety and fear capture us and torture us when our ONE THING (Jesus!) shares His place or loses His place.
 - 2. As you walk through this fight with anxiety, I encourage you to do everything you can to learn how to respond to anxiety as it comes.
 - a. All of us have to make use of the resources God has put at our disposal to respond to our anxiety:
 - b. Last week, Kourtney shared with us five really important responses: Sleep enough, Good nutrition/hydration, Physical Movement, Connect with God, Connect with others
 - c. Keep these tools at the ready for when anxiety comes.
 - 3. But if your only plan is RESPONDING to anxiety, you might be missing out on some major victory against it.
 - 4. Most approaches to anxiety are about addressing the anxiety. And this is certainly an important part of the struggle.
 - 5. But I have a deep conviction AND EXPERIENCE that only addressing the anxiety is like only addressing the symptoms of a disease.
 - a. If I have cancer, do I want to address the horrible symptoms? Of course I do!

- b. But I also want to go after what is BENEATH those symptoms—the tumor itself. The tumor itself is a misaligned TREASURE PRIORITY.

Story: 2018. My year of deep anxiety?

- D. **Anxiety, at its deepest root, isn't just a response to a threat, it is a response to a treasure.**
 - 1. So bring the fight to anxiety by pulling the rug out from under its feet.
 - a. How do we do that? By pursuing Jesus above all things.
 - b. Take away the badly prioritized treasures that anxiety threatens to take away.
 - 2. We can do to anxiety the SAME THING it does to us! Anxiety's power is in threatening us with loss.
 - a. What if we threatened anxiety with the very thing it threatens US with? LOSS
 - b. "My greatest treasure was my reputation. It was above my treasuring of God. But I'm taking that OUT of that top position and placing God back there." In that moment, anxiety has lost its handle on you. Instead, you've brought loss to anxiety.
- E. Remember Millennium tTower? Interesting fact:
 - 1. Whole area prone to liquefaction. Sandy soil that can shift. Seismic activity. Moisture
 - 2. Millennium tower foundation: friction pile in the sandy layer
 - 3. Other skyscrapers were built in that same exact area
 - a. Just fine, not tilting
 - b. Difference? Dug past the sand to the bedrock. How to do that in my life?
- IV. How do I begin the process of taking the fight to anxiety by making God my greatest treasure, the treasure who rules them all?
 - A. **Honesty:** Admit to God what is true, that He may not be your greatest treasure.
 - B. **Vulnerability:** Ask God to show you the things that you treasure more than Him. (hint: it's what you have the most anxiety about!) and then share this with trusted friends.
 - C. **Action:** Take the action that God and others direct you to.
 - D. **Repeat:** This is never a once and done.
 - E. **Hope Found:** Thursdays at 6:30 in the Social Hall, right across the street
 - F. **Home Groups:** cpmodesto.org , search "Home Groups" in the top right hand corner
 - G. **Professional Counseling:** cpmodesto.org, search "Counseling" in the top right hand corner.

Prayer response: Come forward to the sides of the stage, or toward the exits of the balconies.

Prayer team members with lanyards will be there to pray with you.