

Don't be anxious be available

By Pastor John Longwell – Revive Church, Rio Rancho, NM – July 22, 2018

ALL SCRIPTURE FROM ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION BIBLE

Opening joke: God is talking to one of his angels and he says, "Hey, look at this I just created 24 hours with alternating light and darkness...The angel says...I'm sorry, I can't seem to remember.

Don't you hate it when that happens? You're on the spot and can't quite come up with the words to say.

I was in Boston last weekend and on Saturday night; I went to a comedy club. They shared that they have an open mic night, but to make sure you come with prepared material. There's nothing worse than someone winging it when you're trying to tell a joke.

Thankfully the Bible says we never need to worry about what we'll say when we are acknowledging Him before others.

Luke 12.11-12 says, "And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Is there anything more reassuring than when the Bible tells us not to be anxious?

We're going to camp out in **Matthew 6:25-34**, a familiar section of scripture.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (**Luke 12.26** adds "If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?") 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes 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? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Jesus makes a pretty good case for not being anxious, but what does it mean to be anxious?

It's simply experiencing worry, unease, or nervousness, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. So you know, life.

What happens if I become anxious? Okay, let's be honest, what happens if I am anxious. Like right now, this very second, even while I've been talking, I can't seem to think about anything else.

Well, than we need to exercise our God given authority.

2 Corinthians 10.3-6 "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete."

Instead of being anxious, we should instead:

Seek first His kingdom

Luke 12.31 “³¹ Instead, seek his[e] kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”

Matthew 6.33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

What does that mean? How do I seek God’s kingdom (and His righteousness)?

Through His Word (read it, study it, meditate upon it, memorize it, recall it, stand on it, pray it!)

Matthew 5.3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

To be poor in spirit means a constant awareness of our need for God, embracing our utter dependence upon Him. This is the place where humility toward God begins.

1 Peter 5.6-7 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

Pray about what worries us.

Philippians 4.6-7 “⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Take inventory of the treasures stored in your heart.

Matthew 6.21 ““Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust[e] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The more stuff we have, the more our stuff has us. Stuff becomes a point of concern, worry and even idolatry. Keeping God first in our hearts allows everything else to fall into perfect order.

Examine our expectations.

We can sometimes be too destination oriented (children of Israel’s 11 day journey to promise land that took 40 years.)

When the destination is God’s presence our ultimate expectations will never be disappointed & we will have no reason to be anxious.

Finally, seeking God’s kingdom first means being available for his people. On my trip to Boston I became tour guide...

Closing joke: God is talking to one of his angels and says, “Do you know what I have just done? I have just created a 24-hour period of alternating light and darkness on Earth. Isn’t that amazing?”

The angel says, “Yes, that is really cool. So what are you going to do now?”

God says, “I think I’ll call it a day.”

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