

—Phil 4.5-7—

Lesson 5 – Preventing Anxious Care

- I. Three means that, with the Lord's blessing, can prevent sinful anxiety, worry, and fear.
- A. The way to be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful about everything, v.6.
 - B. Believingly embrace God's all-sufficiency, Ex 6.7; Lev 26.1-13.
 - C. Submissively humble yourself before God's will in your life, 1Sam 3.18; 2Sam 15.24-26.
 - 1. Get your *reason* more subdued to the mind and will of God. (i.e. *What you think best for you.*)
 - a) The Lord has assured His people that it will go well with them and that He will dispose of their concerns for the best, Isa 43.1-3. If we were but acquiesced to this and fully satisfied with it, and if our will and mind rested in it, we'd be at rest from all our cares.
 - b) We believe this in theory and when it regards the affairs of others. And we even believe it when it regards our own affairs in a general sense. But when it comes to the particular circumstances of our lives and especially to weighty matters on which a large part of our comfort or estate hangs, our fearful hearts betray us and we struggle to submit and trust God.
 - (1) We say, "If I should meet with such a loss, lose such a loved one, lose such a comfort, lose such a considerable part of my livelihood... How could it possibly go well with me and be good for me if such an affliction befell me, if so grievous and painful a trial struck so deeply into my interests, my ease, my profit, my credit, or my comfort? How can that be for the best which threatens to ruin and undo me?" –Here our *reason* rises up against the mind of God so that what He thinks to be *best* for us we think to be *worst* for us.
Why? Because we can't see it as He sees it. Because His mind is not our mind.
 - c) So we're anxious about it. We're full of care about how to avoid it, change it, or remove it.
 - (1) Whereas, if our mind and heart were more subdued to the mind and will of God, we'd be able to be satisfied with that which He knows to be best for us, and our cares would subside and we'd be at rest—not in the circumstances so much as in knowing that our God is God and Governor of our circumstances, Ps 27.14; 28.6-7.
 - d) Let us labor, then, for this quiet, humble submission unto God. *Detest that horrible pride whereby we prefer our own judgments to those of infinite wisdom and advance our own will before that of infinite goodness.* If you're going to presume to make yourself wiser than God and to know better what's best for you than He does, it'll be no surprise if your heart is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, Isa 57.20; Ps 4.6.
 - 2. Get your *will* more subdued to the will of God. (i.e. *What you desire for yourself.*)
 - a) Why are we so anxious to have things a certain way and at a certain time, but because we've fixed our hearts on it?
 - (1) We've given our hearts up to a certain outcome and timing and we've rejected the possibility that it could or should turn out otherwise. And since we're sold out to our own will in the matter, we can't bear to be put off when God's providence turns out to be different than we desired. And so we murmur, complain, and fret, trying to prevent it, change it, or fix it.
 - b) Likewise, why are we so eager to avoid afflictions and so anxious to get out of them when we're in them, but because we desire an easy, comfortable, and trouble-free life?
 - (1) This is our plan and we're so dead-set on it that we can't yield to an afflicted condition when God's providence casts us down. And so we get anxious, worried about how long

the suffering will last and what it'll take away from us and if we'll ever be able to recover what we lose by it.

- c) But if we were more willing to let God have His way with us, and more resigned to His wisdom and His will for us, then all our anxiety and trouble would be subdued. What God wills for us would be welcomed by us. We wouldn't trouble ourselves by trying to prevent it before it comes or to escape it when it's come, but we'd be more trusting of God's wisdom and goodness.
 - d) The point is this: when our anxiety is honestly examined, it's nearly always a contest between our will and God's will.
 - (1) Instead of being concerned that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we're concerned to have our own will done—all our will, when we will—whatever the will of God may be.
 - (2) We want His will to yield to ours and we want that not to be His will which is His will.
 - (3) We want Him to will nothing but what we will in regard to our outward condition. And if He wills anything that we don't like, we'll try to hinder it and, if all our worry can do it, choose otherwise for ourselves.
 - e) What is this battle of the wills but proud rebellion against the sovereign will of God?
 - (1) Let us humble ourselves for this and beg God to give us a heart of flesh that'll be more subdued to His will and to take away that heart of stone that would rather break than yield, Ex 5.1-2; 10.7.
3. Live in the view of eternity, 2Cor 4.17-18.
- a) If we lived more in light of eternity we'd be far less concerned about the matters of a passing moment.
 - (1) We're strangers and pilgrims on a journey seeking a better country, Heb 11.8-16.
 - (2) Should we be so anxious about the condition of our sojourn here when it's so momentary, Ps 39.4-6; 90.12?
 - (3) When we pore anxiously over the things of this life we're stuffing our pillow with thorns and robbing ourselves of the rest we're trying so hard to secure, Mt 13.22.
 - b) When we consider that we must live after death more millions of years than there are minutes in our whole life, and even more millions of ages than there are minutes in a million years, what is this life compared to that of such an astonishing continuance and of an endless, everlasting duration?
 - (1) Can we believe this life to be anything more than a moment? If not, then why are we so anxious, why are we so concerned about the accommodations of a moment?
 - (2) What does it matter if they're not pleasant, comfortable, or abundant when they're so brief?
 - c) But the concerns of eternity are the concerns of a condition that'll never, ever have an end, that'll be never nearer to an end after it's lasted millions and millions of ages.
 - (1) This, then, should be our concern. And it should be so much our concern, that the things of this life should have little or nothing of our worry in comparison, because they're little or nothing compared with the things of eternity. They're of little to no continuance and of little or no consequence.
 - (2) Therefore, don't be anxious for anything, but *seek first the Kingdom of God*, knowing that your heavenly Father *knows what else you need* and will *surely give it*, Mt 6.33.

Finis.