

We all get worried from time to time, don't we? Some of us are worrywarts, always worried about every little thing. And some of us probably could get by pretty easily. It seems like we don't have a care in the world. But whether we are worrywarts or whether we are carefree, we all know what it means to worry from time to time. It's part of what it means to be human, after all. But Christians, as Christians it's not a good thing to worry. It's not good, because anxiety keeps us away from God, so that we very often believe in God, but we don't always believe God. Let me repeat that, just so that I'm clear here. Anxiety is something that causes us very often to believe in God, but not to believe God. By which I mean that we very often know what he is capable of. We very often know what he can do. But then when it comes to our specific situations, we forget what it is that he has promised. We stop listening to God. And that's a real problem, because we should trust in him above all things.

Let's unpack that a little bit, so you understand what I'm getting at here. When we say that a Christian should not have anxiety, what I mean first of all is that being an unbeliever, being someone who doesn't trust in God, is someone who doesn't have anything to turn to in the midst of their anxiety. When an unbeliever is anxious, when an unbeliever is worried, they don't have anywhere to go in order to take care of that worry. So whether they are dealing with, for example, trying to deal with home problems or deal with work problems or deal with getting things of this life, all they can really do is turn inward, look inside themselves as a way of giving themselves comfort in the midst of their anxiety. But that doesn't really work, does it? Sure, they'll tell themselves things like, "Don't worry. Be happy." But you can't always be happy. And they'll say, "Don't sweat the small stuff," but sometimes the small stuff isn't all that small. And so in all of these things, the unbeliever has nowhere to turn in order to find comfort in the midst of their anxiety.

But we as Christians, we do have somewhere to go. We can go to the Lord our God, to bring all of our petitions to him in prayer and to come to him whenever we need something, so that we have comfort even in the midst of anxiety. So when we are anxious as Christians, when we're uncertain of what the future might hold, we're acting like unbelievers. And that's why it's such a dangerous thing for a Christian to give into this kind of anxiety, because in so doing, they forget all the things that God has said and all of the things that he has promised. And when we forget, we get caught up in the things of this world and forget the things of God.

Now, why do we get anxious as Christians? I said, because, after all, we believe in God, but we don't always believe God. So that we know what he's capable of. We know that he can move mountains, so to speak. We know what he can do. But then when it comes to this particular mountain that's right in front of me, I forget what God has said. I forget that God has the power to take this away. I forget all of the things that he has promised. And so this mountain in front of me seems so big that I don't know how I'm going to get around it. I don't know how I'm going to get through it. And I wonder, "God, why have you put me here?"

But why do we get into that situation at all? Christians, we get anxious because, as I would argue, we stop thinking. And that might sound kind of strange, because we usually think of anxiety as thinking too much. I'm caught up in my own thoughts. I'm caught up in my own little patterns of thinking, and I can't stop thinking about it. It won't get out of my head, and that's the reason why I'm anxious! But Christians, I would argue that we're not thinking at all. Because

when we become anxious, we get caught in this kind of circle where the question doesn't really seem to have an answer. And so because we're running around in this circle, like a dog chasing its own tail, we stop thinking the way we should be thinking. Because if we were thinking the way we should be thinking, Jesus tells us, we would remember what God has done, and we would remember what he has promised to do. So the answer, Jesus says, is to stop. Stop your fretting, and think. Think what God has done. Think what God is doing, and listen to the promises that he has made you. That is our way out of anxiety.

Because listen to what Jesus says here in the Sermon on the Mount. He says in verse 26, "Look at the birds of the air." Okay? Stop thinking about worrying about food. Think and look at what the birds are out in creation. So stop, think, and listen to what God is doing. Because you're so worried about food, wondering where it's going to come from, where you're going to get your next meal. Jesus says, "The birds neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns." They don't have tractors. They don't have combines. They're not out harvesting the beans as most of us are right now. The birds are provided for. Yes, they go and they look for their food. They still search for it, because God has not called us to be idle. But God gives them all the food that they need, so that in every season, spring through winter, the birds have more than enough to eat and to survive, even though they don't plant and harvest the way that God calls us to do. And God cares about the birds. He wants them to have food. But he only cares about them so much, because after all, you are worth more than all the birds. One person in his sight is worth more than many birds. And if God so takes care of these birds, Christians, if he so takes care of the birds in the field so that they always have enough to eat regardless of what season it is, do you think he's going to forget you? Think about it. That's what Jesus is saying. Think about it. He cares so much for them, and you mean more to him than they do. He will not fail to take care of you and give you the food that you need.

Are you worried about clothing? Jesus says stop, think, and listen. "Consider the lilies of the field," he says. Think about them. Look at them. They neither toil nor spin nor weave nor make clothing, and yet God clothes them with a beauty far greater than anything we can produce. After all, a lot of you have apple trees. I'm sure you can remember in the spring how beautiful an apple tree really is, with its beautiful blossoms and that beautiful pink color which it has. But God tells us, Christians, that the flowers quickly run away. They are here today and gone tomorrow, just like the blossoms on the apple tree barely last a week before they are gone for the entire year. God gives them such beauty and clothes them with such beauty, even though they will disappear so quickly. And if he clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and gone tomorrow, do you think he's going to forget you who will be with him forever? God cares so much about the grass that he takes care of it and gives it those beautiful flowers. But he cares more about you, Christians, and he will take care of you no matter what and clothe you with the clothes that you need.

And we can apply that in any way, just as Jesus continues on here. We could ask: are you worried about your health? Are you worried about getting sick? Jesus says, stop, think about what God has said, and listen. God has taken care of you so many times in the past, Christians. He has given you health after you have been sick time and time again. He's even healed so many in the past, brought them back with miraculous cures. Do you think that this thing in front of you, whatever it might be, is so big that God is somehow going to forget? Do you think that God

will not take care of you even in the midst of disease? Christians, you mean so much to him. He loves you. He will take care of you.

Are you worried about the election, about the things that might happen to this country, the things which seem to be going on all across the nation? Jesus says, stop, think, and listen. Consider the sun and the moon and the wind and the waves. God commands all of them to know their place. God commands the sun to go in its path, the moon to follow its course. He commands the winds to stop, and he commands the waves to stay where they belong. And if God so commands the world to follow an order so precise and predictable that you can tell when the sun is going to rise tomorrow morning, do you think God is going to somehow be taken by surprise with the results of this coming election? The world is his, Christians. It belongs to him. He has it in his hands. And he will keep good order, according to his good pleasure. So don't be afraid. Don't be anxious. God will take care of you, no matter what.

Jesus even jokes a little bit. He says, do you want something to worry about? You want something to fret about? Worry about the kingdom. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Worry about God, Christians, and when you do that, all of the cares and the concerns of this world will seem as nothing in comparison. Because when we seek God and his righteousness, we will remember in every circumstance the things that he gives to us every single day. God the Father has given you every good thing that you have. God the Son has given himself as the sacrifice for your sins so that you might live. God the Holy Spirit gives you faith and life, so that now you can trust in him. God will take care of you always, no matter what, through all of the things that he does.

So don't be anxious about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Tomorrow belongs to God. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all of these things will be added to you.

To God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gives us all good things, be all glory, honor, and worship, now and forever. Amen.