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Is Himself*

## *God's proven cure for anxiety is Himself*

The Lord tells us to be anxious for nothing because we can trust in God's protective care for each of us as His beloved children. This means that when we believe in God, we must trust our life into His powerful hands.

The cure for anxiety that can overwhelm everyone of us begins with trusting in God even while we are dealing with the curse caused by the sinfulness of man. And in the same way as our salvation can't be addressed until we acknowledge our sinfulness; our anxiety can't be adequately resolved until we accept that its cause is with ourselves and where we have invested our hope away from God.

To begin with, it is often the case that we are not mindful enough that we live in a world that remains under the curse of God's judgment against sin until Jesus returns. Mankind rebels against the sovereignty of God so that the full blessings of God are forfeited. Some of that independent spirit that bought Adam down still lingers in us, so instead of trusting God we want to insist on looking to the world for what we want. Even when we say we are Christians who are supposed to trust in God for what we need, we fail to rely on Him. We seem to be blind to the fact that nothing in the world is going to be ideal all the time, and even if our heart is towards God, we are told that suffering will increase because sin increases.

So the Lord Himself has told us to consider our ways:

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor*

*gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Matt 6:19-34

Here we see two realms of desire that can claim our hearts. Our desires can either be for the physical world which is in decay, or the kingdom of God that is eternal. There are two masters that we can be slaves to, one ruling over earthly desires that can dominate our life, making us slaves to coveting which isn't going to give peace but make us even more anxious. The other master is when heavenly desires enslave us to God so we can give up being anxious because God is the Master of our lives. We are either mastered by the creation or the Creator. And behind the creaturely world lies the deceiver of the world, the lord of the flies. Baal Zebub, "Baal of flies,"

2 Kings 1:2 Matt 12:24

We can also see two treasure locations, heaven or earth. The issue for us is where we have placed the treasure of our hearts. What is of most importance that we devote most of our time and consideration to achieve? What occupies our minds most of the time, and what are our priorities? Are our aspirations Heavenward or earthly?

We also see that there is a condition of spiritual sight, if our eyes are on the world which is no substitute for God, we may think we see, but the light we think we have is darkness, and how dark is the darkness that doesn't know it's blind. This poor spiritual vision will ruin the whole direction of our lives. *"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"*

Matt 6:22-23

And if there is darkness there is also the light that God gives to those who place their trust in Him. The followers of Christ have received His light so they don't walk in the darkness. *'Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'*"

John 8:12

If we walk in the light we will know our treasurer is Christ, and our hope is in heaven waiting for us in Christ Jesus. If we think we walk in the light, but our hope is still in the world, we can't see because we have a rubbish bin over our heads.

The only way the kingdom of God is going to be seen in this world before Christ comes again, is if we show it by the way we live as citizens of heaven as obedient subjects of the King by depending on Him for life and godliness. The world needs to see the humble obedient way of Christ in His followers, but if we are looking for what we want in the world, they will not see light because we are in the darkness of the world and we aren't any different to them.

Jesus asked the Father: *"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."* When we get personally upset about the plots and schemes of fleshly people which are orchestrated by the evil one, we have begun to think the world owes us something, and we have been deceived and become blind again. We are not to identify with the world, but the evil one will try to get us to believe our hope is in the world.

### **God gives security against anxiety**

Therefore we need to take stock of our priorities. We need to see where real life actually comes from. *'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'*" John 14:6

We need to know the basic meaning of the kingdom of God, so we need to acknowledge God's kingly rule, His reign, His action, His lordship, His power; His sovereign governance over all things in heaven and earth is without contradiction. Seeking the kingdom that Jesus commands means surrendering to the Majestic Authority of God in Christ in all things. It means we don't live as if we need to be in control, for that is impossible and leading to treason, but we do need to surrender in trust to God who created the world so we live in the knowledge He is in control.

If we are submissive to His power to manage our life we will know His love will keep us safe from worry as we live for Him.

*'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.'*  
2 Cor 5:14-15

The reality of this world that is under the curse of sin is that Christians will suffer just as the unbelievers. But there will be a vast difference in the way the believer and the unbeliever goes about submitting to the rule of God. The believers will obediently live by faith in the midst of darkness, simply because they have the Lord God who is the light of the world abiding in them, so they will not be moved. The unbelievers will be anxious because they ignore God's rule and have no power to enlarge their lives by one minute beyond the decay of the fallen world. Believers are safe with God: *"So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."*  
Matt 10:31

*'For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"'*  
Rom 8:15

God in Christ is King over every area of our life. Jesus is the King of Kings. Jesus' Kingship is not something that remains in the future. Christ is King right now. He is seated at the throne of the highest heavenly authority. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to God's anointed Son.  
Matt 28:18

### **You of little faith**

So: *You of little faith! Do not worry.* Little faith means we lack confidence in God. We are allowing ourselves to be distracted by the darkness. We need to take more care about our thoughts. Our worry is the result of unbelief and a failure to rely on Him. Why are we concerned when we claim to believe in God, what's going on? Belief determines behaviour, so if we are worried, our belief is lacking. It's a bit like the Israelites in the wilderness when God put them to the test of faith, and they preferred to go back to Egypt to eat onions in horrible conditions of slave labour.

To those of little faith “do not worried” is repeated five times. Five repetitions are telling us of a serious issue we must pay careful attention to.

For this reason do not worry, (v25) you can't serve God and wealth, (v24) you can't be healthy and have an attachment to wealth and God at the same time. That will only increase your worry and worry will not be productive. (v27-28) Do not worry then, (v31) because unbelievers are worriers like that. But you must know that God knows what you need, (v32) so seek first the kingdom of God. (v33) Do not worry, you can't change tomorrow, tomorrow will look after itself, regardless of how much you become anxious for the things of the world. Matt 6:34

Don't be anxious for this reason: *“Your heavenly Father feeds you, God so clothes you; your heavenly Father knows what you need.” “Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things”* God has it in hand.

While the world falls apart and corruption destroys what blessing are left, we can be secure in the knowledge that God has our lives secured in His hands so we can take our place with Him in Glory. Rom 8:17

The answer to worry and anxiety is God who manages on our behalf.

*‘And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’*  
Rom 8:28-31, 38-39

Trusting in God for our life is the essence of the faith. His gift of faith is what we need as we are prepared by our Father for heaven through godly training in the midst of this sinful world. His faith is not anxious because we belong to God who has undertaken to complete what He has begun on our behalf.

*'For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.'*

Phil 1:6

## **We are not to be blinded by being attracted to the world**

*'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.'* Heb 11:1, 16, 36-40

To this spiritual training in suffering by faith we can add from more recent history, some were fed to lions, some burnt at the stake, some beheaded, some hung from gallows, some burnt in their houses, some blown up with bombs, some drowned in rivers, some starved to death, some enslaved and tortured in prison.

And all these champions of faith didn't turn back when they were denied the good things of life. They suffered patiently. *'For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favour with God.'*

1 Pet 2:20

Like those who went before them: *'All these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.'*

As we are transformed by suffering Paul tells us to follow his example and to watch out for imposters: *'Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.'*

*But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

2 Tim 3:10-13

We are told to ask God for what we need, but we are confused as to what that is because we look too fondly at the world and forget we are a holy people belonging to God.

1 Pet 2:9

Jesus says: *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”*

Matt 7:7-11

The context of asking, seeking, knocking Jesus talks about is the exclusive kingdom of God. *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

Matt 7:13-14

However earthly minded empty clouds will try to interpret this passage as making the things of the world available to the children of God, but they can only do that by taking God's word out of context. The false prophets will always tell the people what they wanted to hear, and the earthly minded only want to hear about the stuff of the world.

When we keep looking to the world as the unbelievers do, haven't we forgotten who we are? *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?*

1 Cor 3:1-3

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Luke 12: 34

The asking and seeking Jesus is talking about is not after the world of flesh, His concern for us is our heavenly home. When we seek the King and His rule to reign over us, our Father in heaven will give us what is good for us according to the heavenly realm. *“Pray, then, in this way:*



*'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.'* Matt 6:9-10

This is the abundant life Jesus offers; it is fellowship with the Father and the Son. (John 17:3) Fellowship with God is the answer to all anxious thinking. Without fellowship with God the thorns of worry will strangle any potential for life. *'And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.'* Matt 13:22

But the good soil produces good fruit, *"the man who hears the word and understands it."* (Matt 13:23) He does this by *'casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.'* 1 Peter 5:7

### **God has provided the means for us to understand**

God has provided His trustworthy owner's manual we know as the Bible for those who are possessed by God, but the warrantee is only valid when the manual is followed correctly.

*'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.'* 2 Tim 3:16

*'Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'* Col 3:1-3

We need to look up to where Christ is because there is a tendency to look down; we need a heavenly perspective because we live with the earthly remnants of our mind that must be dealt with as we grow in Christ.

When we are joined to Christ Jesus we begin the task of putting to death the fleshly thinking and desires that resist faithful obedience to God's manual so that we can successfully put on Christ who is now our life. *When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.* Col 3:4

We need to develop a new way of thinking. *'And do not be conformed to world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you*

*may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'*

Rom 12:2

According to the biblical training manual, this new way of thinking means trusting in God who gives us peace in the chaos of this world, because we are in Christ and Christ is in us.

Gal 2:20

Paul said we can know peace in hunger and suffering: *'I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.'*

Phil 4:12

*'in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'*

1 Thess 5:18

### **Therefore is God's provision a general idea or an absolute reality?**

*"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

Matt 6:33

Is this teaching to be understood as uncontradictable? Does it mean God will give you what you want all the time?

What does the rest of the Bible say, and what does Jesus say elsewhere? The answer is it is both general and absolute. In a way the general deals with everyday concerns, and the absolute the ultimate goal of eternal life in the image of Christ for those whom He died and rose again. It is not too hard to know from experience that generally God provides for the majority of His people the majority of the time, but we also know sometimes the reality of a shortcoming where greater trust is needed. So we shouldn't conclude that this verse tells us all there is to understand about what the Father is doing on our behalf?

There is a bigger picture that we must never forget in fear of taking the daily struggle for our needs to be the greatest reality and forget we have eternal life in Christ.

In the beginning God's provision was absolute. But from the fall and the curse of sin this provision is more general and sometimes uncertain. This is obvious because the early churches suffered persecution, and Christians often suffer a lack of provisions.

Jesus said we would suffer tribulations. (John 16:33) Jesus also said *"For you always have the poor with you."*

John 12:8

## **Poverty was the normal situation for many churches**

*'They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.'*

Gal 2:10

*'In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

Acts 20:35

*'Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.'*

James 1:27

*'For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.'*

Rom 15:26

*'Even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.'*

Phil 4:16-19

As the family of God we care for each other, we are commanded to help the poor. The early churches were often poor. The health and wealth teaching wasn't known in the first century. Those who were well provided with were often the means of God's provision for those who had little.

*'But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?'*

1 John 3:17

*'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.'*

Phil 2:3-4

In the early church, the majority of the members were poor, there was no concept of the elements of modern 'prosperity preaching.' In fact, the early church had a view of poverty and a disposition towards the poor that is far different from that of the prosperity preachers today. The early

Church saw suffering as the only way to follow Jesus. The early Christians saw struggle as muscle development in the things of God. The early church was wedded to poverty, prisons and persecutions as they suffered with Christ.

Suffering persecution for His sake is one means God uses to bless those who represent Christ. *“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”*  
Matt 5:11

But today there is a push by some towards being married to gaining more prosperity, glorifying and promoting personalities, and being popular and successful in the secular world while denying the need to suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with Him.

### **Sickness was not unknown in the early Church**

Although Paul was able to do some miracles of healing, all who he knew were not healed miraculously.

*‘Epaphroditus was sick to the point of death?’* Phil 2:27

*‘use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.’*  
1 Tim 5:23

*‘Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.’*  
2 Tim 4:20

*‘For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.’*  
1 Cor 11:30

If Christians were to always have what they need of health and goods as supplied abundantly by God, as many would insist, then God's word got it wrong in all the above verses. And there would be little need to live by faith as we are put under the test in a fallen world.

### **The gospel is the same yesterday and today**

Today the gospel of God is the same as it was when He called His disciples. *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains*

*the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

Matt 16:24-26

This is the way of Christ and self denial, sincere humility, daily cross bearing, constant suffering in the world, increasing alienation from the world, patient contentment in little and grace in much hostility.

But this true Gospel has been replaced with another easier gospel finding comfort and enjoyment in the world that is alienated from God.

If we don't walk as Jesus walked we haven't taken up our cross so we have every reason to be anxious. Our cross is our key to heaven, not our pillow. An abundant life of health and happiness now is not what Jesus had in mind. *'Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

Matt 19:28

Instead of looking to the world Jesus would have us trust the Father in time of plenty and in times of little, because it is the Father's privilege as to how He works out the details in our lives according to His will. Therefore the Father is not subject to our demands as if He can lose His ability to direct our lives the way He has planned from the beginning. *'We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.'*

Eph 1:11

*"The LORD Almighty has sworn, 'Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.'"*

Isa 14:24

When there are shortcomings in our physical supply of *"these things,"* our God often wants to make up for what we lack with supply from His other children, and most importantly with Himself as He abides in us so that we are filled up with the fullness of God.

Eph 3:19

Those who have gone before us and suffered severely at the hands of men still had inner peace because God abides in them. But we have a tendency to forget that above and beyond our physical life we are the spiritual children of God. We are the dwelling place of God. We are the temple of God. We are new creations of God. We have a heavenly home that is not of this world. What is of most importance is that we have been made to be one life with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. We have no need to be fearful or anxious, because we are more than conquerors in

Christ Jesus our Lord. *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”*

Matt 5:6

The health and wellness merchants are most interested in gratification of the physical world. Our Father in heaven is most interested in our spiritual inheritance in Christ; therefore we are here for training by the Spirit in righteousness so that we overcome by faith as we grow in Christ. We may not want to give thanks for all things but we can give thanks in all things because we know our Father is using that disagreeable person or that uncomfortable event to assist our transformation into the image of Christ. In this way He *‘causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son’*

Rom 8:28-29

If all was health and wellness there wouldn't be any need for faith in undertaking the trials of deprivation that are designed to produce mature children of God. Health and wellness merchants would have us believe that somehow disciplined and diligent training under sufferings transforming power isn't necessary, for as they promise all things here below, they make the incorrect assumption that we have somehow already arrived at the fullness of the maturity of Christ.

### **God our Father has prepared us for training now and heaven later**

If our attachment to this world is where our idols come from, then it is for our benefit that our heavenly training takes place by the removal of that which takes God's place so we can focus better on Him. We enjoy that as much as children when the candy is placed out of reach.

"Your will be done" means whatever God wants to happen will happen. When we surrender to His sovereign will His law can be fulfilled in us who do not walk by the flesh but by the Spirit of God given to us (Rom 8:3-4) to compel us to keep His statutes and commandments.

Ezek 36:27

Therefore we are to trust in God, whether we are full or hungry, well supplied or lacking. We can give thanks in all things because our Father has us and we have Him. When we trust in God as we suffer with the rest who don't know Him, we will be as lights in the darkness of the world. We will be witnesses to the divine redemption made available in

Christ, and our testimony of His kingdom reign will be the power of God for the salvation of all those who the Father has chosen to be born again in the image of Christ.

But from the coming of Christ the redeemer, the corruption of creation continues with poverty, sickness and suffering, even for those who believed in Him. Although He had purchased us with the shedding of His blood from the power of sin and death, the creation is still waiting for its redemption. Sin and corruption remain until Christ returns and the whole creation waits with great expectation for the glory to come.

*'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.'*

Rom 8:18-23

This is a wonderful truth about life in our present experience in pain and suffering, and the fullness of blessings and glory that awaits us in Christ. And while we suffer, it is not in any way to be compared to what awaits us in the future. The creation's expectation of wholeness is not possible until we are changed in the coming of the Lord. Therefore we have a living hope that our suffering is not meaningless. The futility of the world now is part of God's judgement against the sin that must face its final eradication in the Day of the Lord. And when He comes for us the creation will rejoice with us. So even while we have been given the Spirit to dwell in us, we still groan in our suffering with creation while we await our final and full adoption to come with the redemption of our bodies. We have suffering now and heaven later.

### **This is the now and the not yet of the Kingdom of God**

When God called out His chosen people who would live under His rule in the kingdom of Israel, He would be their King and rule over them, He

would give them the laws to live by, He would be their God and they would be His people. But the people wanted a king like the nations.

*“The LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.”* 1 Sam 8:7

The same situation exists today. Jesus told a story about the attitude of pride amongst the people He came to rule over.

*“While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. So He said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, ‘Do business with this until I come back.’ But His citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’”* Luke 19:11-14

But still Jesus shows us God is ruling over the world.

*“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”* Matt 6:9-10

The kingdom is now and not yet. It has already come because the King has come. (Matt 4:17, 23) It is also now for those who are poor in spirit and those who are persecuted because of righteousness. (Matt 5:3, 10) And it is still to come. *“Your kingdom come.”* (Matt 6:10) *‘So that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’* Phil 2:10-11

The Kingdom is moving towards a comprehensive conversion of the entire universe: with a new heaven and a new earth. *“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.’”* Rev 11:15

Because of the kingdom we must exalt God who is *“Hallowed.”* He is to be worshiped. His is most worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness. *“Your will be done,”* means whatever happens on earth, only happens because it is within His purposed will



and ultimately plan in heaven and on earth. His will, will be, what He allows, He allows, for nothing can take place other than what He determines will occur. No one argues with God and wins.

When God handed man over to reap the consequences of his sin, it was obviously not His will for man to sin, but it was part of His divine judgement to hand him over, (Rom 1:24, 26, 28) it is part of His plan for the final consumption of all things under the rule of His Son.

*"He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth."* Eph 1:9-10

### **God's will is for our training now and exaltation later**

Any apparent lack in the world now is for our benefit later as we rise above the darkness through faith and point the way to God in Christ by our personal witness to Him who died and rose again on our behalf. In this faithful reliance on God regardless of our circumstances, the world will see we have a living faith, because we have a living God who supplies all our needs according to His sovereign will that we should walk as Jesus Christ walked in the darkness of the world.

*'For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.'* Heb 12:3-8

Our salvation comes to us in Christ while we live in the midst of the curse of sinfulness. Therefore our training in righteousness is like a refining fire in the sinful world, so that we would appear as lights in the darkness that show the way to God in Christ.

If our prayer hasn't changed our circumstances, God is using our circumstances to change us. We have to change; we have to put off the old life of the flesh and put on the new life of holiness in the image of Christ. We should be quick to give thanks to God that we even have the privilege of a cross that we can take up to follow Christ, for it is God who is working in us, (Phil 2:13) so that we can be transformed into the image of God in Christ.

Rom 8:29

### **Be careful about false lights**

But there will always be those religious people who look for what they want in the world. Some have been teaching that we can expect to see the benefits of the blessings of kingdom of God right here where we live on earth. But Jesus has declared that His kingdom is not in this world. Those who offer the blessings of heaven now are clouds without water, according to the word of God they can't deliver.

The promise of God is in Christ who we have now, and heavenly blessings will be ours when He returns to take us home. Right now we have received every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Eph 1:3

Seeking the kingdom of God is trusting in God to take care of our needs according to His will. However we must not assume we can have it all now because the flesh that remains in our thinking still wants to be satisfied, suggesting that we can go through life without struggle because Jesus has paid the price of our salvation. Our needs in Christ are more than earthly things. We cannot be slaves to two masters, at the same time a slave to the world and also a slave to Christ.

Jesus said we will have tribulations now. (John 16:33) There is a war raging between the earthly and the heavenly. *'Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.'*

Eph 5:11-12

We will have difficulties because the flesh wars against the spirit. *'For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.'*

Gal 5:17

If our minds are preoccupied with earthly things we will be anxious, because we know deep down that the earthly cannot be counted on. When our minds are preoccupied with the world we will not see God's provision in Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit. *'The mind set on the flesh us death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.'* Rom 8:6

### **We need to consider the whole council of God's word**

*'Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.'*  
Phil 3:2-3

*'For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.'*  
Phil 3:18-19

Is there a danger that in playing the Prophet and teaching earthly prosperity that the little ones may be caused to stumble? I believe there is, woe be to the ones who promote this way. In the Day of the Lord, great sorrow and distress be upon the false teachers. Isn't it obvious that when people are already anxious about worldly desires, that encouraging them to desire more from the world will ultimately lead to more anxiety? The Lord Jesus Christ has called His disciples out of the world, though they remain in the world, they are not of the world. *"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."*  
John 17:15-16

Why in the world would Jesus agree that we should seek what we need in the world again, isn't that like a dog returning to its vomit for a second course of vile bile? *'Do not love the world nor 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 lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.'*  
1 John 2:15-17

Listen to the judgement of God: *"but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. "Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is*

*inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!"*

Matt 18:6-7

The church is built on the foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles. We don't need new prophets and apostles to lead us astray by encouraging worldly aspirations. The roles of prophet and apostles as reserved for our foundational education in Christ have finished, the foundation is sound, and it is built on solid Rock. God has already provided what we need to know, we just have to obey the word of God and abide in Christ. If we are in Christ we cannot be divided from Him or His will for our transformation into His image.

### **In Christ we are not afraid to surrender all we have**

*'But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.'*

Phil 3:7-11

### **Worldly loss will not separate us from God**

*'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Rom 8:35-39

Because we have God we can never be separated from His love regardless of the chaos in the world.

## God is with us

Satan rages and the world is terrified as the curse of sin wreaks havoc under the judgement of God. But because God's word tells us Christ is in us and we are in Christ, we shall not be moved regardless of what is happening in the sinful world. The Lord our God is not under the curse of sin so that He is unstable and unreliable. He is not limited or frustrated by the blindness of men. The Lord Almighty has victory over all things and rules all things forevermore.

For the Lord is our shepherd, He keeps us safe from the curse of sin and death. The Lord makes up for everything that is lacking in our life by faith as we wait for His return to take us home. We can rejoice even if there is physical illness, or a lack of personal intimacy and love, or difficult poverty or even persecution. He is our life and secures us like a mother hen protects her chicks under her wings to shield us from terror. He is our high tower so that we can rise above the turmoil below which is revealed in a state of great disturbance, confusion, and uncertainty. Christ is real bread and drink to keep our heart fully satisfied because we can feed on the immortal life of God so we can be content in every situation. He constantly whispers to us that we should not be afraid because He is with us, and He isn't going anywhere. He assures us that He is always faithful and will never abandon us. He promises us whatever happens He will take us to be where He sits on His throne. The Lord Himself is our peace; because of His love we are comforted all the days of our life. He is our life. The Lord Himself gives us His word to keep in our heart so that we always have His testimony of His loving assurance, knowing that He abides in us by His powerful Spirit so that we can understand all that the Father has prepared for us from before the foundation of the world was laid. Blessed be the Lord God almighty; Who was, and still is, and will come for us, so we will not be moved because we trust in Him.

*'For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which*

*surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.'*

Eph 3:14-19

It doesn't matter how badly the world attacks us or denies us, the world cannot take away our eternal value to God and the comfort He brings as He lives in us by His Spirit. *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.'* 2 Cor 1:3-5

However, while the Lord says we can't have two masters, I don't think He means it is impossible, we do our best to make it so, but to be truly free of anxiety it is impossible. But if we insist on having one foot in heaven and one in the world it is easily possible and disastrous. Unfortunately this is how many attempt to live the Christian life, thinking they can manage with one foot in the world while hoping for heaven. All this worry means is that we are not securely attached to Christ, we are not abiding in the true Vine, so we won't produce the fruit of the kingdom, and instead be gathered and burnt in the fire. Having a foot in both the world and heaven is at best like straddling a strong barbed wire fence while standing on wet slippery grass.

Therefore: *'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'*

Phil 4:6-7

We need the uncanny single minded ability of homing pigeons to always return to their home base to be fed by their master instead of being distracted by seagulls scrounging for scraps of rubbish in the sand. If you haven't surrendered your life to the King of Glory you will be as anxious as scrapping seagulls fighting over rubbish in the sand. Jesus calls all to Repent and believe in the only Son of God who has the gift of life and peace.

Jesus is God's proven cure for anxiety Christ our Lord and King. If we aren't living under the sovereign rule of God and denying ourselves and taking up our cross, then we have every reason to be worried and anxious. Even as sin continues, God is always in control. How big is

your God? Is He the one who gives His life to those whom He has chosen so that they will never be alone or lack the power of His presence? Or do you have a god who is unable to uphold you with His feeble hand. We need the only God who is able, so that we are anxious for nothing, and give up worrying because He cares for us. Jesus said to His disciples: *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."*

John 14:27

If Jesus is King we need to submit to His rule in order to know His provision and His peace, for He alone determines our spiritual needs as His chosen people. *"Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD."*

Psalms 32:10

*'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'*

Phil 4:6-7

This prayer isn't designed to change God's mind, prayer is meant to change us so that we have the mind of Christ. *'O LORD, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.'*

Isa 25:1

It is worth saying again. If our prayer hasn't changed our circumstances, God is using our circumstances to change us. When our prayers see no change it means we have to change; we have to put off the old life of the flesh and put on the new life of holiness in the image of Christ. We should be quick to give thanks to God that we even have the privilege of a cross that we can take up to follow Christ, for it is God who is working in us, (Phil 2:13) so that we can be transformed into the image of God in Christ.

Rom 8:29

*'The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand."*

Isa 14:24

*'Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.'* (Prov 3:5-6) God Himself is the only answer to worry and anxiety, trust Him. *"Do all things without grumbling or disputing."*

Phil 2:14

# Living Water Resources

## Come to the River

Fear, worry and anxiety are the fruit of the corrupted self. We Christians are to understand that self is dead, even as we are just getting used to the idea.

The cure to Fear, worry and anxiety is God. He is the answer to all that robs the heart of the peace that goes beyond understand, if we would just trust in Him.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones." Proverbs 3:5-8*

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