

Dear Friends in Christ, Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen!

This morning we continue our series of messages based on Scripture and Max Lucado's book "Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World". As I was looking at the Scripture I'll be referring to in this message I was reminded that Anxiousness, Worry and Chaos are nothing new. Many times in Scripture the people are told not to worry, to not be anxious, to place their lives in the hands of God, to remember that God was with them.

Many of the things that concern us of course weren't even around in ancient times so they didn't worry about them. However, some of the basic human worries are the same. Some of the things that can produce anxiousness and chaos in our minds are the same because they are part of the basic human condition right? Things like does anybody really care? What happens after death? Where is my life headed? If there is a God does he really listen to my prayers? Why do bad things happen to good people? A lot of questions like those that you ask when you're a human being.

But remember not all anxiousness and worry is a bad thing. A little anxiousness and worry in life can be a good thing. It can be a signal that we need to take some kind of action. It's like the old joke about the two guys out camping and one says to the other, what would you do if we came across a big bear? The one says after screaming I'd turn around and run from the bear, why, what would you do? The other guy says I wouldn't worry about outrunning the bear all I have to do is outrun you outrun you?"

Anxiousness and worry aren't always terrible things when they push us forward to do something. They do become a problem in all kinds of ways when we get stuck in them, when anxiety, worry and fear are the primary ways we experience life.

So our key verse, our anchor verse if you will for our series is Philippians 4: 6-7 **"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 understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."** Wouldn't it be awesome to have your mind guarded by the peace of God? Well we're invited to have that be the case.

If you were to put that verse into an acronym it would be C.A.L.M. We looked at C last week which was for celebrate. In other words it's important to celebrate that God is sovereign. That even though we don't know all of the answers to all of the questions in life that some how, someway God is in control. The A. is for ask, L for leave and M for meditate. Today we'll look at the A in CALM for ask.

Over the years whether visiting people from Church or for my own reasons I've found myself in different emergency rooms and urgent care facilities. In addition to their ability to treat whatever happening one of the things I've really grown to appreciate about the doctors and nurses is their ability to be calm in a chaotic environment. Even though it might be a very critical health situation their sense of calm can be contagious. And I think to myself when we are feeling anxious and filled with worry and stress what can we do to capture some of that calmness. How can we be as the passage says "Be Anxious for Nothing".

Sometimes what we need to do is remind ourselves that God is with us in the anxiousness. Multiple times in Scripture God, through a prophet or someone else just had to

remind his people that he was there. Like a frightened children who is comforted by the presence of a loving parent. It can be comforting to know God is with us even if the situation isn't immediately changing. Genesis 15:1 "Do not be afraid...I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward". Genesis 21:7 Do not be afraid; god has heard and our verse for today from Joshua 1:9 **"I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."**

Notice how being strong and courageous is a part of not being frightened or dismayed and being strong and courageous and not frightened or dismayed can come from being reminded that the Lord is with you wherever you go. It's that contagious calm. So we need to remind ourselves on a regular basis that God is with us even when we don't feel like it.

I don't know what you're facing this morning that might be causing you some sense of dis-ease, discomfort and possibly even anxiousness or worry, it could be financial, relational, it could have to do with health or just a general sense of uneasiness in life and your life feels like a bucket with a slow leak in it that you just can't replenish, or it could be something that's really pushing you to the edge of your limits. A place to begin is to remember that God is with you and as our second verse said in 1 Peter 5:7 **"Cast your anxiety on him because he cares for you."** I really like Lucado's one liner when he says "Before you lash out in fear, look up in faith. Take a moment. Turn to God for help"

That's the A in CALM the asking part. That's the part of our anchor verse **"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;"**

Here's what's interesting about this verse, we've been talking about the sovereignty of God right that's the C-Celebrate. We've talked about the importance of reminding ourselves of God's presence, now with this part of our anchor verses we are invited to act on our belief. As Lucado says and he's got a gift for turning a phrase "We choose prayer over despair—peace happens when people pray" That's one of the reasons why, Prayer is one of our 6 core values as a congregation.

As I mentioned last week, core values are alike the poles that hold up a tent. Only in this case the tent is our life and it's really important to know and build biblical core values—prayer is so important for many reasons but one of them certainly is we are invited to give all of the stuff that we are anxious about over to God. And to do it on a regular basis.

We're not talking about arrogant prayer that presumes to tell God what to do. Or prayer that we think has to be done in exactly the "right way". God isn't manipulated or impressed by our formulas or eloquence but God can be moved by our sincere requests.

In that 1 Peter 5:7 verse "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." The word CAST is an active word. The fisherman in Jesus day knew what casting was and we too know what it is. It's an intentional act to relocate something, when it comes to fishing right you are relocating that hook and that bait. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday the people CAST their garments in front of him.

In other words we are being invited to be very intentional about our prayers. To cast our anxieties on him and as the passage says and to do so with thanksgiving. With the thanks that The Lord is with us, that he hears us, that he goes before us in life and with thanks that he will take on himself our anxieties and fears.

Just so you don't think this all sounds so simple, I think the process is pretty simple. I mean we are simply invited to pray about stuff. But some will say things like "I could never do that, my family is so messed up there's so much to worry about". "I could never do that there's always too much month left at the end of every paycheck." or "I could never do that with the medication I'm on" or "I could never do that with the stuff that's happened to me in life". Some of that may be true.

But I do wonder about some of the things (not all of them) but some of the things that cause of us to be fearful, to be anxious and to worry, if we just haven't become so used to them that we don't really know what we'd do with our time and energy if we weren't worrying about them. It's like the old line "If I don't worry about this stuff who will?"

I wonder what would happened if we really did cast our anxieties on God because he cares for us and we left them there maybe just for one night or one day. Or if we weren't dismayed or frightened because we trusted that God was with us wherever we went that day. Or if whatever was causes us to be anxious in this chaotic world we took to God in prayer and refused to take it back and just left it with God."

Not gonna make all of our problems go away, but perhaps we might experience just a little bit of that peace of God which passes all human understanding that Scripture talks about. Maybe today is the day, maybe this is the week you experience that peace when you celebrate that God is in control-that God is sovereign and that in prayer you cast all of that stuff that's causing you to be anxious onto The Lord.