

Introduction: there are many images and analogies for the Christian church (family, army, building)

- One of the most frequent is that of **liberated slaves** now in a **wilderness** headed toward a **promised land**
- Our weekly meetings include our gathering for **praise** and also as **instruction** in how to live in this world
- Our fight against sin is a warring against all that is contrary to what we will become - it is **preparatory**
- This fight is also a present warring against things which **dishonor our King** who has liberated us by His crucifixion
- We are gathered **to hear the Word of our King** – to receive further instruction in how to honor Him who died for us
- This is sin, a falling short of God's standard of living for His people
- Sin includes things in our hearts and actions that are contrary to the life of rest to come, and contrary to a life of faith
- When we hear **preaching** against particular sins, and those sins which we realize are in US, we should respond with thankfulness that God reveals it to us and provides a way to turn from them to what is right
- There are some sins that **we find abhorrent**, and see clearly that they are vile – we respond with an earnestness
- There are other sins that are **more "acceptable"** than others, and which we can respond to with a certain defensiveness
- I will be addressing one of those today, and God's direction of how to overcome it – **anxiety**
- **The reason** for my addressing this sin in particular is in part due to the **unsettled situation** in which we find ourselves (political, national, economic) - How should Christians respond? What should mark us out as different from the world?
- Not only these unusual circumstances, but the **normal things** that come on us as we live in this "wilderness" waiting for the re-creation

God's Straightforward Prohibition against Anxiety

- The command is **simple and straightforward** – "Do not be anxious"...no qualifiers, exemptions, or exceptions
- We must face it for what it is...**a sin** against the Lord and contrary to His Word
- What is anxiety? (Gk. verb merimnao 27x //noun merimna 6x)
- **Negatively** – a God-dishonoring worry that is destructive Mt6:25-34 Mk4:19 chokes out the Word (faith, hope, trust)
- **Positively** – a God-honoring concern that motivates to loving diligence to responsibility 1Cor12:25 Phil2:20
- One of the clearest identifiers of such concern is that when duty has been done, there is a trust in the Lord for outcome
- So God's command (through Paul) is against this negative form
- The command is universal – about **any-thing** - there is no wiggle room for temperament, upbringing, or circumstances
- It may seem at first **unloving and insensitive** to say such a thing to one who suffers from anxieties
- It is no more unloving than telling someone of an **illness** that they have that is destroying their body
- The reason to face this sin is not to bury under guilt, but to see it for what it is (an enemy) so that help can be sought

God's Commanded Substitute for Anxiety

- But **in every-thing**... again we see the universal scope – no matter how large or small, everything that tends toward anx.
- Let your **requests** be made known – while most of the concerns are temporal, they are to be made known to God
- By **prayer** and **supplication** – this is how we are to make it known to God; **prayer** is the general term for speaking to God about it; **supplication** refers to an intensified level of a sense of need
- Not by **merely thinking** about them - not first and foremost in making them **known to others**
- With **thanksgiving** – not just a bare making known of our needs, but mixed with thanksgiving to God

God's Promise....

- And the **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will **guard** your hearts and your minds
- The peace of God, as described here, is something **supernatural** and in one sense supra-rational (not irrational)
- This peace comes **by faith**, not by sight; the promise is **not a universal granting** of your request
- It is something promised even if the **situation or circumstances** don't change...or even **get worse**
- This is **God's remedy**; there are many who seek other remedies, but for the Christian this is absolutely essential
- The **first thing** we should ask ourselves when feeling this anxiety is whether we have done this
- Attempts to use **other things** such as **medication** (drugs or alcohol), **distraction** (entertainment), **therapy** (unbiblical counseling), or other remedies as the first thing cannot give us the peace of God promised here
- There is an essential part which I have not yet mentioned - **in Christ Jesus**
- True help and true peace CANNOT be found apart from this important phrase and what is packed into it
- It is only in **union with Christ**, the **promises of the Gospel**, knowing **God as our Father**, His working all things for our being made into the **likeness of Christ**, the hope of **life to come**
- It is for us to embrace the reality that we are a part of something much bigger than ourselves – **God's story**
- These are the things that are to be woven into our prayers and especially our thanksgiving that the Holy Spirit will use to grant us this true peace in opposition to anxiety

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- If you are a **Christian**, I urge you to be dealing with anxiety in this God-magnifying way – **anxiety is your enemy**
 - For **unbelievers**, I invite you to enter into this reality through **the Gospel of Christ**