

—Phil 4.5-7—  
*Lesson 3 – Understanding Anxious Care*

- I. Reasons why God's people should not be taken up with such an anxious carefulness about the things of this life, Mt 6.25-34.
- A. It's foolish.
1. Tomorrow has burdens, troubles, and turmoils which you'll find when it comes, Mt 6.34. It's foolish to bring the burden of tomorrow's troubles into today by worrying about them.
  2. Tomorrow already has as much trouble as you can bear. By being anxious about tomorrow, you bring the evil, the trouble of many days into one, when the burden of this day is heavy enough, and all you can bear.
  3. There's a far better way to dispose of your temporal concerns than by being anxious about them, a way that's easier and shorter, and more pleasant and sure than any anxiety could be. And that way is opened in the text itself, Phil 4.6.
    - a) This is an easier way. This is God's way. How easy is it to ask God to care for you? The way of anxiety is like thorns and briers to the mind, it's entangled and full of troubles and vexation. But God's way is so much easier and gives you no trouble. It's open to you and the Lord invites you into it to relieve you of all your trouble. Moderately use the means God allows and seek His blessing in them, and that's all the care you need to give to things. Because He will take care of you, Is 26.3; 1Pet 5.7.
    - b) This is a shorter way. The way of anxiety is tedious. There's no end to it. Care of getting turns into care of keeping, turns into care of disposing. Why choose such a way when the way of God is so much shorter?
    - c) This is a sure way. If you walk in God's way you can be sure either to arrive at what you desire or at that which is better because you have the promise of God on it, Ps 37.5. And whatever God undertakes can't fail. On the contrary, by being anxious about our own things, we have the best chance of losing them altogether, Mt 16.25.
      - (1) He that gets anything by this carefulness gets problems along with it, Jer 17.5-6. The seeming success is worse than a disappointment, because he who doesn't get it God's way, can't look for His blessing on it.
    - d) This is a safer, more pleasant, and happier way. And the reason is, because the Lord is with you in His way, while if you go your own way, you'll be left to shift for yourself. In God's way, you go leaning upon God, in your own, you lean upon your own understanding and strength, Pr 3.5-6. To be with God is to be blessed, comfortable, and happy; but to be left to yourself is nothing but danger, disaster, and misery. It's incongruous to be so anxious about outward things because they don't deserve so much of your care. Particularly:
  4. They're of little moment and won't recompense all the anxiety they cause you.
    - a) You're very little concerned in them.
      - (1) Your souls and your eternal estate are very little concerned in these outward things. In fact, much of these outward things endanger your eternal life, Mt 19.23-24; Lk 16.22; 12.15.
    - b) There's little reality in the things we're so anxious about.
      - (1) The good you're so anxious to find in outward things and the evil you're so anxious to avoid in outward troubles, are not so good or so evil as you imagine. How much better is

a man's soul for all his riches and how much worse is a man's soul for all his poverty? Nice things in life are really no better than plain things in life, except that the one pleases us more. But if we bring our heart to our condition we can be happy and pleased *anywhere*.

- c) They won't answer the ends for which anything is worthy of your care.
  - (1) Will they help you to contentment? Isa 55.2; Ecc 4.8, 10. The soul will still cry out for God in the face of all outward pleasures, Ps 4.6-8.
  - (2) Will they make you better? Riches are prone to hinder the best so that they move slowly in their spiritual course while afflictions are profitable to those who know how to profit from them. The soul will never be better until it finds its rest and peace in God, Ps 4.8.
  - (3) Will they make you happier? How can that be when those who have most of them are most miserable, and those who have least of them have been most happy? Ps 94.12; Js 1.1-3.
- d) If the ends of your anxiety were gained, it'd be worse for you than if you missed them. Success here would be worse than disappointment. And is that worthy of your care wherein a failure is better than success?
  - (1) Why do men take so much care to escape afflictions and to get so large a share of riches? If it's so that they can live at ease, eat well, gratify their heart's desires, and stand above others, what is this but pride, slothfulness, sensuality, and selfishness?
- 5. They're of little consequence.
  - a) The things of this life are of no more continuance to us than our life is, and most of them don't even stay that long. They vanish before our eyes.
  - b) But even if we had them all our life long, what is that but a morning mist compared to the eternal place to which our souls hasten after we die? Who but a child would pour so much care on things that pass away with the using, Js 4.14? All the enjoyments of life are vanishing away. If we have them, we're soon to lose them. If they please us now, they won't please us long. If they're not taken from us, we're sure to very soon be taken from them.
- 6. They're of uncertain continuance.
  - a) We have no lease on any of the things of life, no guarantee in them at all. In the next hour, the Lord may take them all away, Job 1. And the Lord's surrounded them all with such uncertainties to teach us not to be anxious about them, Pr 23.5. There's nothing so certain as our utter uncertainty of having them or keeping them. So that whatever care we put upon them is lost and ill-placed.