

CAST ALL YOUR ANXIETY ON HIM

I Peter 5: 7 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

For most of us, anxieties are paralyzing for us, more often than we would like to admit. George Muller, that great man of prayer and faith once said, “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.” Thomas Jefferson said, “How much has it cost us-- the evils that never happened?” That’s a telling question. Another man, Arthur Somers Roche said, “Anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.” Have we made it through these first five months of 2022 without deep anxieties? How do we know if we have deep anxieties, cares, and worries? When that concern is our first thought in the morning, our last thought at night when we go to bed, and the one thing that wakes us up in the night, anxiety is strangling us. When we think about that same concern in every spare moment, anxiety is strangling us. When we find we bring up that concern, in almost every conversation, we are being strangled by anxiety.

Anxiety displaces God, as we live as though God did not exist. Anxieties and worry distract us all from the things that really matter in life. Anxiety is like a rocking chair. It gives us something to do, but it doesn’t get us anywhere. Research on anxiety shows, “An average person's anxiety is focused 40% on things that will never happen, 30% on things about the past, that can't be changed, 12% on criticism we have received from others, most of it, untrue, 10% about our health, which gets worse because of our stress and worry, and 8% about real problems that we are facing.” That means roughly, that 92% of all our cares and anxieties are about issues that we cannot do anything about. What does our anxiety do for us? It never empties tomorrow of its sorrow, but it does empty today of its strength. Anxiety never makes us escape the feared evil up ahead, but it does make us unfit to cope with it, if it comes. The heaviest thing in the world is our heavy heart.”

Perry Tanksley said, “You can’t change the past, but you can ruin a perfectly good present by worrying over the future.” Anxiety is the interest paid by us before it is due, when we borrow trouble. Soaring eagles don’t worry about crossing rivers. As long as we are worrying, we can’t do anything else. I know most of us know these things, but today Peter comes to us with this instruction and reminder as a divine command that is to be for us, a continuous obedience daily, “Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.” Dr. E. Stanley Jones said it well. “I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt, and anxiety. In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath. These are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely—these are my native air.” Today, I am preaching to many of us who are good and godly disciples. Yet we struggle with troubled, anxious hearts. Let’s open the Word of God to learn about this neglected, forgotten text. Let’s examine this one verse to learn what it teaches us about all our anxieties.

THIS DEFINITE CALLING TO CAST OUR ANXIETIES IS TO YOU! (I.)

Notice the specific words in I Peter 5: 7 to you. “Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.” We live in a world that is often impersonal. Many of us may not know our neighbor’s names. We can purchase almost anything on the internet and never make contact with a real person. Yet we aren’t just a number on God’s cosmic computer. In John 10:3, Jesus says He calls His own sheep by name. He knows your name. Today Jesus is talking to you. In Matthew 10: 30, Jesus testified that every hair of your head is numbered. He knows every morning when you comb or brush your hair how many hairs of your head fall out. Jesus knows specifically about you and your very own temptations. In I Corinthians 10: 13, we read, “No temptation has overtaken you, that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” God created you, and is it remarkable that God knows about you? This definite call to cast anxieties is to you. God knows your worries, what you are anxious about right now. He knows what you are anxious about right now. Is it a medical matter, test results you are waiting to get back, concerns about the loss of a loved one, concerns relating to your marriage, or is it concerns about having adequate food in the house or money to buy food after paying for your prescriptions or doctor bills? God knows about each of your anxieties; they are no secret to Him. Just as I was preparing this message, I got a call about something I have been praying about, and God proved to me He has been thinking about me.

Claim Psalm 139: 16-17 now! “How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I could count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.” When Jesus came near to Jericho, on His way to Jerusalem to die to us, He disregarded His disciples telling a blind beggar, Bartimaeus to quit begging for Jesus to heal him. Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, kept crying out, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; He is calling you.” Then Jesus asked him what he wanted. Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 51-52) replied, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight!” Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he recovered his sight. Beloved, take heart. God is calling you today—“You, you, you, hear His definite call is for you.” Jesus has seen the blindness your anxieties have caused. He sees the toll your anxieties have taken on your life. Take heart; He is calling for you. Secondly,

THIS DELIBERATE CASTING IS ALL ABOUT YOUR ANXIETIES! (II.)

Notice again I Peter 5: 7. “Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.” Your anxieties are in these words. What is Peter talking about? Peter’s word was **merimna**. It means a distraction, a thought that divides our interest from what is at hand to deal with. It means we don’t know whether to do this or that. It is a state of being in a quandary. It is an uneasy feeling, allowing our mind to dwell on difficulty and troubles. It can mean to strangle or to seize by the throat. Anxieties are just that, pressures squeezing us. Anxieties send us on a roller coaster

of emotions, and we can be confused. Last Thursday, I received a call for counsel from a man of God many states away from here. His exact words were, “Do you have time to talk a little. I am facing some hard decisions and I am confused.” Has one or more of your anxieties caused confusion for you this week. I Corinthians 14: 33 is a verse we all need. We read, “For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.” Just because we are confused doesn’t mean God isn’t speaking to us. What it often means is that our minds are made up, and our will is colliding with God’s will. That’s what happened to Martha as she spoke to Jesus in Luke 10:41. “And Martha was distracted—**merimna**, with much serving; and she went up to Jesus, and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister Mary has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious—**merimna** and troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” Martha was almost ready to pull out Mary’s hair, or her own hair. She was even getting upset with Jesus for letting Mary listen to Him while she, Martha, did all her work on the meal by herself. Anxieties draw our mind in different directions. Anxieties divide and distribute our attention, disuniting the part we are worried about from the whole, causing undue concern. So, what are we to do with our anxieties?

Peter is telling us to cast our anxieties. His word is **epirrhipto**, a compound word. The word **rhipto** means a sudden motion, to fling with a quick toss, to throw out an anchor or to throw ourselves upon. The Greek word **epi** means toward. We are to cast or fling our anxieties toward and on Him. Another word picture of **epirrhipto** is used for saddling a horse. It is the throwing of the saddle upon the back of the horse who will be carrying the load or the person. Luke 19:35 uses this word about Jesus’ Triumphal entry saying, “And they brought the colt to Jesus, and they threw—**epirrhipto**—threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus on it. This image of casting all our cares upon God is an Old Testament image. It goes back to Psalm 55: 22 where David’s maskil that Pastor Larry read, says “Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved/shaken.” David’s word for moved in the Hebrew is **mowt**. It means to waver, slip, shake, fall, or be removed. God doesn’t want us to be shaking in our boots, slipping, falling, wavering, and so anxious we are distracted from looking to Jesus. David says in Psalm 37: 5, “Commit your way to the Lord, literally, roll your burden on the Lord, trust in Him and He will act/He will bring it to pass.”

Jesus spoke of this casting of anxiety upon Him as He prophesied about the future in Luke 12: 11,12, saying, “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious/**epirrhipto**, about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” Anxiety implies not only some distrust of God’s sovereignty, but also some kind of thinking that we may be able to manage better for ourselves. Each of us daily find ourselves with the football in our hands and the defense is doing a blitz against us. We only have a few split seconds to hand off the ball or to cast it to a receiver or we will be sacked. How many of us find ourselves often losing ground, many yards because we won’t let go of the ball?

The success of a quarterback is how fast and how wise he is in getting rid of the football. Our daily success is found in how fast, and how often we hand over the ball of our anxieties to the Lord. We wake up and remember today is the day to pay our bills. Today, we face a test at school or a test at work or a test at the hospital. A voice in our ear whispers, "This is going to be a bad day, miserable in fact." Peter is calling us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to cast our burden/our anxieties upon the Lord. Commit them to Him. Roll them over onto Him. Make them His concern, not yours. Do it as an act of faith! But remember, before we can cast our cares upon Jesus, we must cast our sins before Him in humble repentance. Then we must be living our lives for Jesus, yielding our lives to Him and to His way and will. We must be living in His Word, feeding our faith with His precious promises. When those conditions are met, casting our anxieties on Jesus is far more easily a way of life. Oh, we may well have to drink the cup before us, or bear the discipline we need, or do the work that God calls us to. Our casting all our anxieties upon Jesus is what we must always do, without exception. Thirdly,

THIS DIVINE CARRIER OF YOUR ANXIETIES IS JESUS! (III.) Notice I Peter 5: 7, which says, "Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you." Either Jesus will carry the anxiety, or you will. If you or I do, we'll be divided, distracted, disturbed, frustrated, confused, overwhelmed and overburdened. If He carries our anxieties, we will still have troubles and difficulties but those troubles will not be consuming, dominating, with undue concern, or with hopeless despair. Going back to the Greek word for casting, **epirrhipto**, one of the meanings is to throw off with vigor. It's the picture of a hiker at the end of a long, long walk, nine miles out from the Cirque to Big Sandy Openings. What's the first thing we as hikers would do when we got back down to our pickup? You got it—we would unhook our backpack and drop in on the ground or into the back of our pickup. Our divine Burden-Bearer, our Divine Anxiety Carrier calls for an act of our will to unload all our anxieties on Him. If you are into control, as many of us are, we like to be in control, and we fancy it's valuable to worry, and we have the illusion of control when we keep carrying the backpack of all our anxieties.

So, think about it with me. Jesus is calling, commanding, and appealing to us to let Him carry our anxiety backpack as we journey on toward heaven. Imagine it, that Jesus, the Servant of all, who washes our feet, also insists on carrying our anxieties. Either He carries our anxieties, or we do. How can we say no to Jesus' intimate, personal invitation for Him to carry our burdens? Can Jesus be trusted? Believers sometimes foolishly believe, if we cast our anxieties on Jesus, He will mess things up. Listen to believers who contend, "Give it all to Jesus and He'll ask you to do things you don't want to do, He'll ask you to be someone you don't want to be, He'll bring unpleasant people into your life, and He'll send you places you don't want to go." When we secretly fear Jesus can't be trusted, we decide to handle our own anxieties, and we wonder why we are so confused, frustrated, and unfulfilled. The biggest problem we all have with casting our anxieties on Jesus, is that, like fishermen, we get out our own casting rod and snare the anxiety from

Jesus and reel it back in. The Gospel chorus is what we need to do--“Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.” I know this casting our cares and anxieties on Jesus seems too simple, but refuse to do it, and tomorrow morning will be like a hangover. The Gospel chorus is true, “Cheer up, ye saints of God, there’s nothing to worry about, nothing to make you feel afraid, nothing to make you doubt. Remember Jesus never fails, so why not trust Him and shout, you’ll be sorry you worried at all tomorrow morning.” Fourthly, and lastly,

THIS DELIGHTFUL CHARM IN CASTING IS HE CARES FOR YOU.

(IV.) Notice for this fourth time to I Peter 5: 7, “Casting all your anxieties on Him, for He cares for you.” The Greek word for cares is **melo**. This simple little word means He is concerned. It matters to Him about you. We are the object of His care. Go back to sleep, beloved, when you wake up in a panic. God is doing the job of making your concerns matter to Him. If our Pilot is seated in the cockpit, why are we worrying in seat 23A? If our Captain is at the helm, why are we worrying in our cabin? When we place our anxieties in the hands of God, be certain. It is as good as done. Divine care is so deep, Jesus came to earth to rescue and redeem you. There has never been a time He did not love you, brood over you, and care for you. He knows each fallen tear, and He cares about each anxious thought you have. He is full of fathomless carefulness for all that concerns you and me. No mother ever cared for a sick child like God cares for you and me. Each moment He knows each twitch of our eyelids, each wrinkle of our brow, each need, each desire, and He knows it all before we ever express it to Him, or even before we feel the pain, He knows what is coming and He anticipates it for us. Let us trust Him. Paul said it well, in I Corinthians 7: 32, as God would say to us today, “I want you to be free from anxieties.”

At the heart of biblical Christianity is I Peter 5: 7. God cares for us. God cares for you. God cares for me. He proved it by sending His own Son to die for us. The issue was settled for all time at the cross. Any God who would sacrifice His own Son for a person like you or me must care for you and me. There’s no other reason He would do such a thing. When we come to God, we don’t have to convince him to hear us. We don’t have to chant, shout, burn incense, ring bells, use a priest, or offer a sacrifice. We come as His children and gladly He hears us. We don’t do anything to make God care for us more or less. We start from the assurance, rooted in history; God cares for us. And on that basis, we unload all our anxieties on Him.

Some people say, “The only way not to be anxious is to die.” Research tells us, “Each week, we spend 14.31 hours being anxious, that equals 744 hours of anxiety each year, 45,243 hours of anxiety over an average lifetime, that equals 1,885 days in a lifetime, doing nothing but being anxious, 5.2 years of our lives, captured by anxieties. No wonder we have trouble sleeping, feel under so much pressure, and we find it hard to concentrate. It’s not just one thing, but many things wrapped together--our job, school, church, money, work, health, bills to pay, husband, wife, and children, and our knees start to buckle. I call us back today to the delightful charm of casting all our anxieties on Jesus, for He cares for you and me, Amen.