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MATTHEW

The Cure for Anxiety

Matthew 06:19-34

- I. The Cure for Anxiety
 - a. Title of this section of scripture in the CSB
 - i. Quite the claim – ***Mat 6:25 Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life...***
 - ii. Seems impossible – considering we all walked in here this morning riddled with it
 1. Worry and anxiety seems par for the course in this life – common to fallen humanity
 - a. Paying my bills or expenses: 61% “very or somewhat anxious”
 - b. Keeping myself or my family safe: 62%
 - c. My health: 59%
 - d. Job security (employed adults): 40%
 2. That is exactly what Jesus desires to pull us away from the common and the natural and into the supernatural – that is the heart of the Sermon on the Mount
 - a. There is another way, another life, another Kingdom – marked by uncommon love, uncommon forgiveness, uncommon generosity, and uncommon connection with our Creator
 - b. All motivated by an uncommon desire to know God
 - i. To please God, to seek His favor and not the praise of man
 - b. That is the challenge – we live in a place between two worlds
 - i. The already, not yet
 - ii. ***John 17:15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.***
 - iii. How do we live through the already, not yet? – how do we experience His Kingdom come, His will be down – on earth as it is in Heaven?
 1. Worry is a symptom – to treat the symptom we must get to the root cause

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- I. Where Do We Find Life?
 - a. ***Luke 12: 15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”***
 - i. When Jesus tells us what “Life” is, we should listen. The life He has planned for us is an abundant one
 1. I love that the teachings of Jesus cut through 2,000 years of history and strike right at the heart of culture – there’s nothing new under the sun

2. The cultural climate we must be aware of (prone to conform) - Our nation has been living in excess for so long
 - a. Chipotle burritos as big as your head, to lifted trucks that have never gone off road, to 31 flavors of frozen yogurt, to 300 TV channels, shelves and shelves full of shoes, 18-layer chocolate cakes
 - b. It is never enough because none of it satisfies – so we think we just need to add more
 - c. But we are beginning to reap what we have sown – this excess has only brought with it emptiness, loneliness, a loss of purpose, confusion, and fear
 - d. People are realizing the promises made by our culture are not being kept – there is great opportunity when the lies are exposed
 - e. Already seeing an attraction to minimalistic lives – but removing excess is not enough – what is removed must be replaced by something of far greater value
 - f. You see this in addiction – alcohol or narcotics – an individual can get sober but unless you then find a purpose for living beyond just being sober you will fall right back into that lifestyle
- ii. The answer isn't simply less things – it is more of Him
- b. Treasures: earth vs heaven
 - i. Earthly treasure is fragile - (moth/rust/theft)
 1. Worry - fundamentally rooted in the fear of loss
 - a. Loss of Security and Stability
 - b. Loss of Control and Certainty
 - c. Loss of Connection and Approval
 - d. Loss of Reputation (Fear of public speaking)
 - ii. When our hope is placed in earthly things, they by their very nature, have an expiration date
 1. Moth – fine clothing (especially wool, silk, and linen) was a primary form of currency and status.
 - a. Wealthy enough to own extra robes, you stored them in chests
 - b. Slow, unseen destruction – we thought our things were protected but moths were destroying them
 2. Rust – brōsis – an eating, consumption - "rust" was the biological decay of your food supply.
 - a. Iron was expensive and vital for survival (plowshares, tools, weapons)
 - b. happens through ordinary exposure, rust comes from normal contact with the world. You don't need an enemy; you just need time and exposure.
 3. Thief – no banks for the common person. If you had gold or silver coins, you had two choices: carry them on your person (risking robbery) or bury them in the dirt floor or walls of your house.
 - a. Sudden, unexpected loss - Betrayal, disaster, illness
 - b. The unpredictability of life and other people
 - c. We worry because something could be taken at any moment
- c. *"Everything you are trying to hold onto is currently being eaten, rotting, and watched by a thief."*

- i. If your treasure is something that can be lost, your heart will live in fear.
- ii. So what is the alternative??

22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

II. Choose Your Master

- a. What you focus on determines what you see and how you live.
 - i. Which way are we pointing our lamps? What are we thinking about? What has captivated us?
 - 1. Your "lamp" is pointed at something that is being eaten by moths, corroded by rust, and watched by thieves.
 - 2. Your whole body (your entire being, your actions, your emotional state) will be "full of darkness"—anxiety, fear, and desperation.
 - ii. But if your eye is healthy (focused on what is imperishable), then:
 - 1. Your whole body will be "full of light"
 - 2. It is all about aim and focus and desire
- b. Whatever captivates your attention is what you will worship – it will be your master – it will guide and direct your decision making – it will lead you
 - i. Choose your master carefully
 - ii. Choose the one that will give you the best gifts (that sounds like the prosperity gospel!)
 - 1. Mat 7:11 “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 good things to those who ask Him!”
 - 2. Rom 8:32 “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”
 - 3. Jam 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”
 - 4. God so loved the world that He gave
- c. Rewards
 - i. Did Jesus teach us in His Sermon on the Mount not to seek rewards?
 - 1. ***Mat 6:4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.***
 - 2. ***Mat 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.***
 - 3. ***Mat 6:18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.***
 - ii. Whose hands do you want the rewards coming from? Who do you trust?
 - 1. Do we think joy and contentment will come from earthly things? Or do we believe God has something far greater in mind?

2. The issue isn't wanting purpose, wanting fulfillment, wanting satisfaction – those are good desires – we just settle, we set the bar tragically low – we look to the world to provide those things
 - a. And what the world provides never truly satisfies
3. The Beatitudes gave us a list of what God provides - the kingdom of heaven and the promise of divine comfort. The earth as an inheritance, total satisfaction in a life filled with righteousness, and mercy. We see God, the honor of being recognized as His own children, belong to the unshakable kingdom of God.
 - iii. Here is the path forward

25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

III. Closing

- a. The Cure for Worry - Reorder our lives around the Kingdom of Heaven
 - i. This is the practical application of everything we have discussed: it is the act of intentionally moving your "treasure" and your "eye" away from the perishable and toward the eternal.
 - ii. This isn't advice, it is a command
 1. Eye – what are we looking for? What are we watching? What is our primary concern?
 - a. How do I protect what I have? Clutching our pearls
 - b. What is God doing in this world and what part does He want me to play?
 2. Treasure
 - a. How do I spend my resources – time, energy, finances – Kingdom work or self-indulgence
 3. Master
 - a. Comes down to – who is King?
- b. Promise – focus on the Kingdom and let God take care of you
 - i. When we are wrapped up in the systems of this age we simply blend in – when we worry like the world worries, when we mourn like the world mourns, when we lust after what we don't have, and harbor bitterness and envy just like the world does, our purpose in this life is lost – the message of Jesus is lost
 - a. The salt loses its flavor, the lamp is covered
 2. Jesus invites us to be recognizably different in nature from the world