

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear fellow redeemed,

There was a show a few years back called "Undercover Boss"; perhaps you watched it.

For those of you who haven't seen it, it is "reality show" where someone in the upper management of a company (often the CEO) dons a disguise and acts as if he is a new employee, learning how to perform the basic tasks of his company.

During the show, it frequently happens that a tragic situation comes to light from one or more of the regular employees' lives.

The CEOs listen intently to the stories – some have lived through very difficult times themselves, yet have overcome those obstacles and attained the position of the CEO.

They ask more questions, offer their sympathies, give a little advice and their encouragements, and then act, just like any other employee, unable to really do anything to help.

But then, as the episode ends, the CEO reveals who he really is and then doles out some surprise meant to help the employee(s).

Now what does that have to do with our text? See if you can figure it out from a brief excerpt.

As follows in Jesus' name:

[Jesus said:] ..."Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life... do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."^(ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

Imagine Jesus as that "undercover boss."

Here is, what seems to be, an ordinary man.

He grew up learning a hands-on trade, being the son of the tradesman named Joseph.

He paid taxes, both at the temple and to the Roman government, just like everyone else.

He traveled around to different places and likely slept under the open skies rather frequently,

So He endured the hot, sweltering days, along with the cold, frigid nights.

He ate daily meals, thirsted for water, and dressed Himself, just like everyone else.

He knows, as well as any other man, the troubles that each day can bring.

And yet, Jesus preaches "**Do not be anxious about your life....**"

Doesn't it seem a little like some new guy showing up at work, who listens to your problems for a few hours and then tells you,

"Cheer up, buddy. Don't worry. Yes, you have problems; so does everyone else."?

How does this new guy know the future, whether or not I will make my mortgage or rent this month, or be able to make the minimum payment on my maxed out credit card?

He doesn't even know half of the issues going on in my family right now.

And if He knew what I have done and what has been weighing on my heart, then He wouldn't be so brash as to tell me, "**Don't be anxious.**"

But considering that it is Jesus, the Son of God, it can be tempting to think “that’s easy for Jesus to say. He knew all things. He knew what was going to happen to Him. No wonder He didn’t worry.”

That’s like you stepping back from the “Undercover Boss” show and saying,

“Ya, ‘Don’t worry’ is easy for the CEO to say. He’s loaded.

He doesn’t need to worry about rising inflation or paying the hospital bills.”

But remember that when Jesus spoke these words, He was in His state of humiliation, meaning that He did not make full use of His omniscience as the Son of God.

Of course, looking at the OT, those prophecies can be pretty clear about His suffering, like Isaiah 53:

But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities. ^{Isaiah 53:4} ...

But then again, wouldn’t knowing all that make it harder not to be worried?

If you knew how and when you were going to die a gruesome, torturous, bloody, unjust death,

and that you had to be completely willing to do it, would that make it easier to accept & prepare for?

Wouldn’t that just make you more anxious as the time approached,

and tempt you to think of ways to get out of it?

Yet Jesus was not anxious about His life.

...

But why does He tell you this?

Because anxiety is an envious and greedy idol.

Anxiety gives you nothing good, but takes away your peace and joy and trust in God.

It does not improve your life... but makes it more unbearable.

It does not lengthen your life... but it certainly can shorten it.

In fact, the sin of anxiety can make the Christian even more anxious as we contend with Jesus’ words about the one with anxiety, saying of him, “**O you of little faith.**”

Jesus shows us that anxiety is a sin against the chief commandment, **You shall have no other gods.**

It leads us away from *fearing, loving, and trusting God above all things.* ^{1st Comm. & Expl.}

Anxiety would stand in the place of your gracious and caring God.

It would have you forget that your heavenly Father **knows what you need,** and desires to hear your prayers, **calling upon Him in the day of trouble.** ^{Psalms 50:15}

It would make you cease to remember your Baptism, where God set you apart from this world, apart from the unbelieving heathen (the Gentiles, as it were) who have no true God to trust.

As His child you are an heir to the kingdom of God’s Son, to live and rule with Him for all eternity.

You already have riches beyond your wildest dreams awaiting you in paradise.

You are an heir to a great fortune that you will never be able to exhaust in all eternity.

So Jesus comes to you now as that undercover boss,

fully revealing who He is so that you take His eternal and trustworthy words to heart,

realizing that Jesus knows exactly what He is talking about and He can truly sympathize with you.

While He was, in many ways, an ordinary man as He walked this earth,

He was so much more than just a man.

He knows what it is to be tempted. He knows what it is to suffer hunger and thirst,

and be deprived of clothing, and to be mocked and persecuted,

and what sufferings even the worst “tomorrows” can bring.

The fact is, that Jesus suffered infinitely more than any of us will ever have to endure,

because Jesus took God’s wrath against you... upon Himself,

and not only the wrath you deserve, but the wrath for every single sin of every single person, who has ever been conceived.

He suffered the torments of **hell**, "**where**," as He said,

"their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched,"^{Mark 9:48} and He did it all for you.

And all while He endured these things, He practiced exactly what He preached. He was not anxious. Though He knew from the Scriptures what He was going to endure, still He willingly gave Himself up to be arrested, condemned, scourged, mocked, and crucified; still He perfectly trusted God, crying out, "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" And as He gave up His spirit, He commended Himself into His Father's hands without fear/anxiety.

And what is the outcome of all this?

That Jesus lives... and reigns at the right hand of God the Father, and He uses that position for the good of you, His Church.

So when He says, "**do not be anxious**," He says it knowing what gifts and blessings He has for you, like the undercover boss who already has the plan and resources to give you a better life.

When He says, "**Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**," He's not lying.

He is showing you the way of true peace in this troubled and troubling life.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking...

it is not a matter of paying mortgages or rents, or medical expenses, or maxed out credit cards, **but [the kingdom of God is] of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**^{Romans 14:17}

Jesus is reminding you that God will provide you with your daily bread.

Grace is apportioned to you for dealing with each day, and month, and year.

Remember your baptism, where you were clothed with Jesus' righteousness already.

It is your daily attire to appear before God without anxiety and with a clean conscience.

And when you come forward and receive the Lord's Supper,

He feeds you, not with the bread of affliction and anxiety, but with Jesus' body and blood, showing you that God has already made peace between Himself and you.

He has taken away your faithlessness and anxiety and in return gives you Christ's perfect trust.

You are free to live this life in true peace, without anxiety, because You have a gracious God, who knows what you need... AND when you need it...

and promises **all these things will be added to you**.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria