

In Jesus' name. Amen.

...as follows in Jesus' name:

[Jesus said:] "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore 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)

People loved by God,

How well does the Lord know the frailty of our flesh?

"**Do not be anxious about your life,**" He says, because we are anxious creatures.

But neither does Jesus ignore the corruption of this world, saying,

"**Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**"

As we have been hearing over and over this Lenten season,

anxiety was an issue with the Children of Israel — 3,400 years ago.

When their food was running out, when there was no more water for them or their flocks and herds...

He says, "**Do not be anxious about ... what you will eat or what you will drink.**"

And then the Lord supplied them with water from the rock & they drank and their thirst was slaked.

And the Lord gave them manna to eat, daily! And their hunger was satisfied.

Jesus even has us look at the birds & lilies, at how the Lord cares for them, though they are temporary, yet reminds you that you are of much more value to Him than they are.

But still, we, God's children, get anxious, even with 3,400 more years of the Father

proving His provincial care and love, and sending His only-begotten Son for the world He so loves.

It's inevitable, you know, because anxiety is the result of people who think they are in control,

or who want to be in control,

or who know that they aren't in control.

It's the plight of people who don't know the future, yet want to prepare for it and mitigate every risk;

Who want, not just daily bread, but next month's bread,

and to know that there will be bread next year, and for the next 10... 20... 40 years...

It's the nature of those who have a guilty conscience and are fearful of the consequences.

Yet, Jesus still says, “**do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.**”

Anxiety is the byproduct of recognizing that you are helpless...

And that is a scary place to be for us who like to think that we are independent and are masters of our own destiny.

We worry in times of trouble because we can't do much else ourselves.

We want to do something > so we worry.

But what good is our anxiety? Does anything positive come from it?

As Jesus asks, “**which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life.**”

In fact, the opposite is true: your anxiety and worry are a detriment to your health.

But you know as well as I do, that Jesus saying, “**Don't be anxious,**” doesn't mean you can do it.

It's like someone saying to an irate person, “Just calm down.”

And focusing on your anxiety...trying not to worry, is like putting out a fire with gasoline.

If anything, hearing Jesus say, “**don't be anxious**” can make you MORE anxious,

because you know you aren't supposed to worry... because it betrays a lack of trust in God.

It's the thing that unbelievers do because they don't know their loving and kind heavenly Father.

...

So what then?

How does the Christian put aside his anxiety about his financial struggles...

his concern for daily bread?

How does she stop worrying about her physical or mental health issues... or those of loved ones?

How does the young Christian learn to stop fretting about the future: education | occupation | family?

Jesus' answer was this: **your heavenly Father knows [what] you need.**

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Notice His solution is to focus, not on yourself and your needs, but on God and His gifts.

This isn't to say “ignore the concerns, they're not important...”

its actually to direct your concerns to your heavenly Father,

to the One who can actually do something about them.

First recognize your sin, your anxiety – that it is a distrust in His proven mercy and grace.

And confess it; lay that sin before God's throne of grace.

Don't down play it or try to hide it or deny it – those solutions only give room for it to crop up later.

Then listen to your Lord when He speaks to you through His ministers or a fellow Christian,

pronouncing to you that your anxiety... your worry... your fretting has been paid for in full...

you are forgiven.

And then, seek His righteousness, not your own.

Don't be misled to think that you can now make God happy by your attempts not to worry.

Instead, bask in the liberty of the anxiety-free life of Jesus... its already yours.

... And let's take a moment to meditate on that... that worry-free life of your Savior.

We worry because we don't know what the future holds.

But He would have had every reason to worry because He KNEW what the future held.

But instead, He obeyed His own words: **He was not anxious about His tomorrow.**

He left it in His Father's hands.

And so, **on the night He was betrayed**, He took the time to **recline at table**,
earnestly desir[ing] to eat [that] Passover with [His disciples] before [He] suffered.

He spent the moments, calmly telling them what was going to happen, that they might be prepared.

He was concerned, not for Himself, but for them... that they might have a clean conscience,
even as they would struggle through His arrest, trials, crucifixion, death, and burial.

He desired to strengthen them against temptations and to hold fast to Him.

And that concern also extends to you.

That night, He bequeathed to them and to the Church – to you – Himself > His holy body and blood,
when He instituted what we call the Lord's Supper and the Holy Communion.

If you are going to seek after bread, **seek first** this bread... for it brings to you the **kingdom of God.**

Here, in this bread and wine, you receive Jesus' **righteousness**, His perfection, His anxiety-free faith.

It is given to you as a pledge and token of the Father's good will to you,

that He is at peace with you... that your sins are forgiven... and that He is with you.

...

Consider also how the Church has found this comfort from our Lord as well

when we pray the Lord's Prayer in the Divine Service with Holy Communion.

We pray it (along with the 4th Petition) just before we hear the Words of Institution and receive the Supper.

And so the Church would teach us to pray "**Give us this day our daily bread,**"

first and foremost here in the sacrament, **seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.**

And having received this bread with Christ's body, and this wine with the blood of Jesus,

and knowing that Father has already carried out His justice upon His Son,

you can rest assured of your future, not because you know how it will all unfold,

but because you know that **all** you need of your daily bread **will be added to you**

until you recline with Him at table in the heavenly home that He has gone to prepare for you.

...

And then, living in this peace, you are free to boldly ask your dear Father,

"Give us this day our daily bread," *With all we need of promised good.* ^{ELH #384:2}

For your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. ^{Matthew 6:8}

And He delights to hear your prayers and to answer you according to His grace & mercy
in Jesus' holy name.

Thanks be to God.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria