



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Matthew 6:25–34

Gospel of Matthew

“The Infidelity of Anxiety”

TRANSCRIPT

The Scripture reading is again from Matthew chapter 6, and we are finishing the chapter, beginning at verse 25, reading through verse 34. Matthew chapter 6 verse 25 through verse 34:

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye

have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be ye therefore not anxious for tomorrow: for tomorrow shall be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil.”

May God bless this reading from his Word.

Our subject for this morning in continuation of the exposition of the Gospel of Matthew is “The Infidelity of Anxiety.” Someone has called our age the ‘age of anxiety’. I think it’s an apt phrase. And the surprising thing about it is that it is not only applicable to our adults, but also to our youth. It was rather surprising for me to read, a few years ago, that a Gallup Poll was taken among our youth, and the question that was asked them is, “What is the basic feeling that you have toward life?” And 60% of the young people had replied in rather shocking and surprising unanimity: fear. That’s a very strange answer, and especially strange from our youth: fear.

The age of anxiety. I think anyone who looks out over our society and examines the everyday feelings that the average person has, must agree that a great deal of fear is found in our society: anxiety.

The word, anxiety, is an interesting word, and for those of you who are Latin students, you may remember that lying back of our English word “anxiety” is the word *angustia*, and usually found in the plural form of *angustiae*. It means something like, “constrictedness,” “narrowness,” “contractedness.” The Latin verb *ungo* means, sometimes, “to throttle,” “to choke,” and it is derived from a Greek word, *ungko*, which means much the same thing.

Perhaps we’re most familiar with the expression angina, and *angina pectoris*, which, of course, is heart disease—a particular kind of heart disease—which refers particularly to that kind of illness in which there are spasms of pain in the chest, with feelings of suffocation, usually due to anemia of the heart muscle.

Anxiety is the feeling of contractedness, of constriction, a kind of feeling in which we get the idea that we are being threatened. And so this feeling of anxiety is this indefinite sense of being threatened. And, strikingly—as most of us know who have experienced anxiety—it is not so much the object that is important, but the feeling itself. And often, the feeling so overshadows the reasons for it, that it’s difficult for us to even explain the reasons for our anxiety.

It’s probable that this fear or anxiety is not to be interpreted as a fear of death. I do not think that our age is characterized by a fear of death. Some of you who may be interested in this subject—the older you get, the more interested in it you become [laughter]—know that at the present time there is an unusual interest in death, and in many cases, an apparently honest attempt by many people to deal with the problems of death.

Many books have been written in the past few years on the subject of how to deal with death, and written by men who are totally unbelievers, and some women as well, so that I do think that our age is an age in which the fear of death has become much more of a problem than it usually is. All men are characterized according to the Scriptures by fear of death, but we have seen evidences in our society that it is not so much a fear of death as a fear of life that is a reason for our anxiety. The Buddhists in Vietnam who made themselves living torches without any kind of Christian hope illustrate for us the fact that men may not be fearful of the experience of death itself, even though they do not have Christian faith.

I think it’s a striking thing, too, that in our age we do not have the sense of spiritual reality that we used to have. One of the outstanding German theologians, Helmut Tielicke, has said that in the case of Luther, “That medieval monk was filled with the anxiety of guilt in the presence of the divine judge, and this wrung from his lips the question, ‘How can I find a gracious God?’” But today, it’s the fear of the appalling and unfathomable contentions of life that grips men.

Now, of course, I would be very happy if our age were an age in which men were gripped by the same thing with which Luther was gripped, because it is of the greatest importance that we realize that God is a judge, and that we all face him someday. And the fact that Luther was so impressed

with this fact and so gripped with it, and so stirred by it, that he was brought to his tremendous experience through seeking to find a gracious God, is itself incentive, it seems, for everyone who does not have this fear to seek the answer to the question, “How can I find a gracious God?”

But it’s shocking, to say the least, that people should be so disturbed in our day by the lesser evils, the contingencies of life. And so, it’s the fear of the contingencies, the fear of the things of life, that have gripped our society, which is perhaps insight into the shallowness of our thinking. I think this is best caught and most beautifully caught in one wise comment, “I’m not so much afraid of the end of the world as I am the end of the month.” [Laughter] All of us know that anxiety, but it’s a sad thing that that grips us more than the fact that the time is coming when society and life as we know it is going to end, and men are going to be faced with the fact of a God who judges.

Now, amid the hopeless solutions of the world, there stands the Christian good news. The Christian good news does not ignore the problem, nor does it deal with it as science does, leading inevitably to the nihilism of a Jean-Paul Satre. But it deals with it in the light of divine revelation, and in the divine revelation—the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—we have that which deals with man’s guilt, and we have that which deals with man’s anxiety.

The apostle Paul puts it very beautifully in speaking of guilt, for he says, “By him, Jesus Christ, all that believe are justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. That beautifully expresses the answer to the problem of guilt. The problem of guilt is solved in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is there that he took our guilt, he took our condemnation, and it is possible for every one of us, sitting in this room to have the sense of freedom from guilt and condemnation.

But then, having said that, the Bible so beautifully and particularly in the New Testament—although this is not absent from the Old Testament also—expresses the freedom that we have from anxiety in that little phrase which occurs so often: “fear not.” Fear not; these are the words that deal specifically with the question of anxiety, and they deal with the problem of the contingencies of life. Now this is the answer to the tranquilizers: fear not.

Well, let's look at our text, and we notice first of all the problem, and the principle that meets that problem, declared in the 25th verse of Matthew chapter 6. “Therefore”—now, in seeing the therefore, we immediately want to look at the preceding context. The Greek text has something like, “On account of this.” What is the Lord Jesus referring to when he says, “For this reason, I say unto you”? Well, the immediately preceding verse has stated, “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Now evidently the connection lies with that little statement, we are either slaves of God or we are the slaves of mammon. These in the context here are the two alternatives. You cannot serve God and mammon. And if you'll remember the message last Sunday morning, I pointed out that this word, serve, is a word that really means “slave,” and of course it would be particularly meaningful in the time in which the Lord Jesus said this, for a slave was the total property of his master. His master had total ownership. And also with total ownership, total responsibility. And so in the light of the fact that we are his slaves, ideally we are serving him. We are not serving mammon.

Well if we are his slaves, then we have no worries, because the responsibilities are his. Therefore, I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, for you are his slave. He has total ownership, and in having total ownership, he has total responsibility. So in the light of this relationship that we bear to him, why should we be anxious? As a master cares for slaves, so our God will care for us.

It's not surprising, then, that in this passage, we should have three occurrences of the expression, “be not anxious.” In the 25th verse, “Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious.” In the 31st verse, “Therefore, be not anxious.” And then, in the 34th verse, “Be therefore not anxious about tomorrow.” So in the light of the fact that we are his slaves, “be not anxious.” Anxiety about the contingencies of life have no place in the life of a slave, whose responsibilities are to his master.

This principle, I think, is related to what I have called in the notes, what we put in—that is, our labor. There are some people who have looked at this and reasoned, in the light of it, that we should do nothing, absolutely nothing, that even work is ruled out for the Christian. And as you

know, in New Testament times, the apostle Paul had to write one or two exhortations with reference to individuals who took very much the same viewpoint. Knowing that the Lord had promised to take care of his saints completely, and that Jesus Christ was soon coming, they abandoned all work. And the apostle had to exhort them to work, and, further, warn them if they did not work, then they did not have any right to their daily food and sustenance.

We are not to interpret these words, “Be not anxious; be not anxious for your life,” as references that are designed to tell us that we should not work. The point is that we should not worry. Now, God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in the ideal circumstances and told them that they were to work. They were to till that garden. And then, afterwards he said, in your work, you’re going to find it quite difficult, but the work remained the same. We are, as God’s creation, expected to work. That means all of us, even preachers. They should work, too.

So it’s not the work that the Lord Jesus is speaking against. It’s not foresight. Christians ought to exercise foresight. It’s not foresight that he’s attacking. It’s the foreboding foresight that he is attacking. He’s not talking about a shiftless, thrifless, reckless, thoughtless, improvident attitude of life, as someone has put it. He is saying that he must work, but in our work, we are not to be anxious.

Then he speaks about what we put on. He says, “Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than food and the body than raiment?” What does he mean by this? The lesson is very simple, it seems to me. Having given us life, he surely will give us the lesser thing, the daily needs. Below the question of needs is the question of life itself. The question of needs is that of a minor matter in comparison with the question of the life itself. And, every one of you is a man of faith in one respect: you must trust him for your life.

It’s been brought home to me so vividly, recently in the hospital. In fact, we have a young man now, in his twenties, still in the hospital, and his life was hanging by a thread. His heart actually stopped beating four times a week ago. You know, we can be very anxious about the things we put

on, about the food that we eat, about the clothing; what we drink. But so far as the beating of the heart is concerned, there isn't anything we can do about it. We have to trust God for that.

As a matter of fact, the Bible speaks of God as the God in whose hands thy breath. You are not sure of drawing any breath except the one you are drawing right now, for the rest of them, you have to trust God. And so, you sit before me as men and women of faith, even though it may be unwitting faith.

Now you see, the thing the Lord Jesus is saying is, why are you anxious for life—what you're eating, what you're drinking, what you're putting on—when you must depend upon God for that which is the fundamental thing: the life itself; the body itself. So, if you must depend upon him for that, can he not be depended upon for the other little things, the contingencies of life?

Now I know what you're thinking. You're thinking if, those people to whom our Lord was speaking had to live in the 20th century, they'd discover it was not so easy, what with all of the things that we have to put up with. They didn't have Washington to contend with. No, they didn't. They had Rome to contend with, and I'd rather have Washington. And I'm willing to go on record for that. [Laughter] I would rather contend with Washington than Rome, for even the simple man had to pay 40% of his income in taxes. And there's some of you in this audience who do not have to pay 40% of your income in taxes. They had excessive taxation. They had all the problems that we have plus, in addition, many other problems that we do not have. And yet, the Lord Jesus' words are, “Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, or what you shall put on.”

Now, having stated the principle, he argues it. And, after all, you might expect a preacher to have seven reasons. If he doesn't have seven reasons, he'll have three. But seven is better, because that's the number of perfection, so we are taught. So I want to, briefly, in the next ten or fifteen minutes, speak about these seven arguments in favor of this principle of trusting God that the Lord Jesus offers.

Now the first one has already been stated in the 25th verse. It's the argument from the logic of creation. His great gifts are inclusive of his little gifts, and if he has given his life, if he has given us

a body, he surely will give us all of the smaller and lesser gifts that go along with life and the body. To express it in the words of the apostle Paul, as he puts it in Romans chapter 8 and verse 32, it is, “He that 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?” So if you see, if the Lord Jesus has been given as our Savior, and as the sin sacrifice, the greatest gift of all—and through him we have life—shall not all the lesser gifts be ours as well?

This is one of the greatest of the arguments for eternal security. It’s one of the greatest of the arguments for the ministry of the Holy Spirit being given to the saints. And it’s one of the greatest arguments for the definite atonement in the Word of God. He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also freely give us all things? So if he gave us the Lord Jesus to die for us, he surely will give us the Holy Spirit to bring us to faith in Christ. He’s talking about the redeemed. He’s talking about the elect. He’s talking about those who are the sons of a heavenly Father.

Now the second argument is the argument from nature. “Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet, your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” This is one of the evidences that our Lord Jesus was “country-bred” it has been said.

Palestine was the crossroads of bird migrations. And here in our Lord’s language, there appears that which reflects his environment. And again, he argues, from the less to the greater. Look at the fowls, they do not sow. They do not reap. They do not gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they? Now as you can see, this is no incentive to idleness. I do not know of any being in this universe who is more active than the bird. Now if you have any sparrows around your house, they are the closest thing to perpetual motion that I have ever observed in all my life.

I know this is a sign of my age. When you get old, you are interested in two things: the garden and the birds. [Laughter] These are two definite characteristics of old age. Ask a young person

about the birds. He doesn't know one bird from another. Birds are all birds to him. But ask an older person. They not only know the birds. They know the differences, they know their habits, they've been sitting out on the patio observing them. And, also, they garden. Ask a young person about plants—they don't know anything about plants—unless they've been brought up on the farm.

Now birds are constantly active. In the first place, they're up long before I am. When I get up, they've already been working a good while. I remember contending with the sparrows around my house when they wanted to build a nest in a blind just opposite my desk. And all I had to do was to raise the window and reach out and pull the blind to in order for their nests to fall to the ground. This went on for a long time. And they were always up before I was. When I came into the study, I could hear them. They were already there. This was the struggle: Dr. Johnson versus the whole sparrow population [laughter], Dartcrest Avenue—a road.

And, the birds, they're constantly engaged in activity. All that they do, it's amazing. I have been constantly amazed at how they are just always active, caring for their young, building their nests, teaching bird culture to the little birds. And one thing you'll notice about the birds is they'll never sit on a limb and open their mouth toward heaven expecting God or some unknown power to drop a worm in their mouths. Always observing, always working.

Now the striking thing the Lord Jesus says here is that these birds, they have no incentive to idleness, but they are a beautiful lesson to us of what God our Father desires to do for us. For he adds, “Are not ye better than they?” We're much better in the sight of God, much more precious to him than the birds, although not a one of them falls to the ground that our heavenly Father is aware of. So the argument from nature, they work—they constantly work—but the birds do not worry. They are not disturbed by the contingencies of life. They trust. It's instinctive; but they do not worry.

Now the third argument is one from human inability: “Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature?” Stature is a word that may refer to age, or it might refer to height. Now, I think it refers here to age. You wouldn't think of anyone who would be stupid enough to think that by worrying he could add eighteen inches to his height, for a cubit was about eighteen

inches (it was the distance from the end of the fingers to the elbow, generally speaking). Now no one would think that by being anxious he could add that much height—that’s ridiculous.

But it also had to do with age as a figure of increased life. The New International Version renders this “a single hour.” Now we have an interesting way of expressing things. We speak of our years as milestones. If a person has a birthday, we say he’s past his tenth milestone, or his twentieth milestone. Or when he reaches seventy, we say he has come to his seventieth milestone. Now we mean by this that life is like a journey. Now suppose that this is a reference to age, then, of course, which of you by being anxious can add eighteen inches to his age, or eighteen inches to his span of life? Well, if you’ve traveled for seventy years, you’ve been down a rather lengthy road, and the idea of adding eighteen inches is the idea of insignificance.

The facts are that we cannot even add an insignificant cubit to our milestone or to our journey through life. We’re unable to do this. That’s why we ought to trust God. We are unable, as human beings, to do anything so simple as that. We can worry ourselves to death, but we cannot worry ourselves to life.

The fourth argument is the argument from the flowers. And why are you anxious for raiment? “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin.” This last statement, incidentally, is the origin of the statement that a humorous Christian made about “lily Christians.” He said, the church is full of lily-Christians. Someone said, “What do you mean, lily-Christians?” He said, they toil not, neither do they spin. There are many of us in the church of Jesus Christ who are not involved at all—lily Christians—but that isn’t really the point of this.

The lilies here were the scarlet poppies and the anemones, and they had a very brief life in Palestine, very much like our day lilies. They bloom for a day, and then they are gone. Now in their brief life, the Lord Jesus says, “They outshine Solomon.” But they are temporal, and we are eternal. And furthermore, God decks them with beautiful attire. And will not the God who decks the scarlet poppy with beautiful attire do not as much for those who are his eternal sons?

Will he give us ordinary garments, when he bestows upon the flower garments that surpass Solomon in all of his glory? They are the plebians of his universe, and we are the aristocrats of his universe. And surely, if you look at the flowers and see what he has done for them, you can expect that he will do a great deal more for those who belong to him in this personal way in which we do. I think now I can understand how the Lord Jesus will say, in just a moment, “O ye of little faith.”

The fifth argument is the argument from the Gentiles. Strange for us to think of an argument from the Gentiles, but you must remember that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed, primarily to Jewish believers, and the Gentiles were those who did not have the revelation of God for the most part. And the Gentiles, therefore, became almost synonymous with unbelievers, though Gentiles could be believers, of course

The lesson from nature is over, and now we have the lesson from revelation. Worry about the future is at bottom, heathen, worldly-mindedness. So, he says, in verse 31, “Be not anxious, therefore be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek),” and it’s my observation that the Gentiles are still seeking these things.

Now you can see this in two ways. You can see it in some of the more favored Gentiles heaping up for themselves great treasures upon the earth. We’ve seen the climatic illustration of it in a Howard Hughes, who at the end of his days was totally unable to control himself or his possessions, and had to leave them behind. So, we heap up treasures upon the earth. Now that’s one way in which the Lord Jesus’ words are to be applied. They apply to the rich. They apply to those who have spent their whole life in heaping up treasures upon the earth, which at one time and sometime, soon, they’ll have to leave.

But there’re others. They are the poor, the poor who do not have this. And because they do not have it, they, too, are anxious, anxious for what is going to happen to them. Suppose that trouble becomes before I reach 65, and Medicare does not apply to me. Suppose all of these other things may happen to me. And so the rich illustrate their unbelief by piling up great riches upon the earth,

and the poor illustrate their anxious care by worrying over the fact that they don't have it. Be not as the Gentiles.

The characteristics of the Gentiles pervade the church of Jesus Christ today. We are not really convinced that God is adequate. We're not really convinced of it. All of our anxieties are cribbed, cabined and confined, to borrow an expression to the visible. But the Gentiles don't have any Father. It's no wonder that the Gentiles do what they do. They don't have a heavenly Father.

The kinds of gods the Gentiles had in these days were gods that made anyone afraid. Their gods were the gods who lied, the gods who cheated, the gods who lusted. Read the stories of the gods of the Gentiles. They were men like you and I are men, except they were generally worse. They murdered. They stole. They schemed. I said they lusted. They lied. They cheated. It's no wonder that the Gentiles were fearful of their gods and had no hope in their gods. They worshiped them out of fear. They worshiped them out of anxiety. They were afraid of them.

Go today to the back parts of this universe of which we are apart, and you'll still find some individuals who have this same attitude toward their gods. But the Lord Jesus says we have a heavenly Father—a heavenly Father, think of it—and yet, we're anxious.

The sixth argument is the argument from the family tie. In the latter part of the 32nd verse, “For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” Think of it, a foreseeing, almighty Father, who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above what we ask or think, who knows ahead of time what our needs are, and has all the power within his power to meet every one of them.

It's very striking to observe the differences between the memorials of the Christians and the pagans, in their epitaphs of the early centuries. Among the pagan epitaphs, we have things like this: “To the unrighteous gods who robbed me of my life;” “Our hope was in our boy, not all is ashes and lamentation;” “I, Procepei, lift up my hands against the gods who took me undeserving.” The epitaphs of the Gentiles.

But then go into the catacombs and read the epitaphs of the Christians: “Tarentiana lives;” “Agape, thou shalt live forever;” “Marcus, innocent boy, thou art now among the innocent.” That’s all the difference in the world. The gods took me undeserving; Tarentiana lives.

Matthias Caludias was the great German consolator, and he had written, “He who will not believe in Christ must see to it how he will get along without him. As for you and me, we cannot. We need someone who will lift and hold us up when we are alive, and who will lay his hand beneath our head when we die. And this we can do abundantly, according to what is written about him, and we know of nobody who we’d rather have do it.”

The final argument is the argument from the day’s sufficiency. And here he turns from revelation to providence. Worry may be defeated by living one day at a time. Tomorrow’s anxieties are enough for tomorrow. Do not double them by anticipating them.

Now this raises the question of the prayer of trust. It really raises the question of Philippians chapter 4 verses 6 and 7. That beautiful text of the apostle Paul reads like this, “Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace which passes understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

You’ll notice the Lord Jesus doesn’t follow the methodology of modern psychology. Now let me make a very guarded statement. There are benefits from modern psychology. There is no question about that. But at the same time, for a Christian, modern psychology is one of the most deceptive disciplines that exists today. Modern psychology is responsible for a great deal of the lack of trust that exists in Christians. Now, I’m referring to those who have become enamored of modern psychology.

Modern psychology is, essentially, a discipline that leads to trust in humanity rather than in God. I do not deny that there have been some interesting and some worthwhile things that have come to our attention through modern psychology. But modern psychology is a very dangerous discipline for Christians who do not understand its true nature.

Now having said that, I want you to notice the Lord Jesus does not say, “Stop worrying; pull yourself together.” In the first place, that’s useless, because it’s impossible. We cannot stop worrying. That’s the very thing about worrying that we cannot handle because worrying is the activity of the mind and the heart that we cannot control. And furthermore, that’s bad modern psychology. That would be repression. The Lord Jesus does not say, “Stop worrying; it may never happen.” That’s popular psychology. I’ve even seen that among Christians. No need to worry about that because it may not happen, after all, it’s only something that you have in your mind, and why worry about something that may not happen. That’s of no help whatsoever to me. Do you know why? Because it may happen. [Laughter] It may. That’s popular psychology: don’t worry about it, because it may not happen. But it may. As a matter of fact, it’s biblical to say that it may. In fact, it does happen. Job said, “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.” It came.

There’s an anecdote I read just yesterday. It said, if you worry, always do your worrying in advance, otherwise you will miss most of your chances. [Laughter] Well that’s humorous, but it’s not right. There’s a sense in which many things that we don’t worry about come to pass, but there’s a sense in which some of them do—and that’s the thing that disturbs me. Some of them do.

What’s the Christian method? Why, the Christian method is take them to the Lord. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication by Thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus. You see, the great promise of the Word of God is that we cannot control our minds and our hearts and those thoughts that grip us in our anxiety, but God can! That’s the truth of the Word of God. He can do it. And not only that, but as they are brought to him, he will do it—shall keep your minds and hearts.

The Psalmist said, “I laid down and slept”—all of us can lay down with sleep, but that’s another matter; he said, “I laid down and slept, for the Lord sustained me.” It is the answer to the tranquilizers.

Satchel Paige was one of the great pitchers in baseball of about twenty years ago—in fact, for about thirty or forty years. He was one of the really, truly great pitchers but unable to pitch in the big leagues, and some of you may remember that finally Mr. Paige made the big leagues when he was really past his prime, and he was still pretty good. He has a little philosophy of life—he still goes around pushing baseball—and he gives each boy that comes to him his card, and on the back are his rules for a happy life. They are, number one, avoid fried meats which angry up the blood. Two, if your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts. Three, keep the juices flowing by jangling around gently as you move. Some of us have no problem with that; we don’t jog, we jiggle [laughter]. Go very light on vices such as carrying on in society; the social ramble ain’t restful. Avoid running at all times. And finally, don’t look back, something may be gaining on you.

[Laughter]

The answers to worry according to Scripture are this simple matter of taking things to a sovereign God, and counting upon him to meet all of our needs in his own sovereign power. And I want you to especially remember this, that he does do it! It’s not a question of making him do it, of doing something so he will do it. But he does it, as these are brought to him.

Some of us get a little magazine and last week there was a note in it about Oral Roberts and healing. Someone asked Mr. Roberts, “Why is it that not everyone is healed in your healing meetings?” He said, “Well, sometimes God acts sovereignly.” [Laughter] Well, the glory of the Christian gospel is that he always acts sovereignly, and he does his will.

The Lord Jesus restates the principle in verse 33. And may I sum up by saying simply this, that worry is needless. It’s blind. It refuses the lessons of life. It’s wicked. It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but it does empty today of its strength. The secret of tranquility is trust. There is an old Christian cliché: When we’re worrying, we’re not trusting; when we’re trusting, we’re not worrying. And that’s generally true.

I think that if we were to look at the whole matter and finally come down to the greatest illustration of all, it would be the illustration of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no one who more

beautifully illustrates the tranquility of trust than the Lord Jesus. Throughout all of his life—and he most beautifully illustrates it in the last moments when hanging on the cross—in the midst of the greatest desolation and dereliction, he cries out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

Now you’ll notice that he took his anxieties to the Lord. He didn’t throw them out to the Gentiles and ask for an explanation from them. As a matter of fact, he reached back into the Old Testament, took a text from Psalm 22, “My God my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” took that petition from the Word of God itself and offered it to his Father in heaven. And in the midst of this greatest desolation and dereliction, his trust is unwavering. It is *my* God, *my* God, why has Thou forsaken me? He let his requests be made known unto God, and the answers came. In a moment he says, it is finished.

So, we need not look into the future as if it were a befogged landscape. It’s a landscape marked out by a loving heavenly Father who cares for all of his sons. And he who possessed the last hour no longer needs to fear the next minute. May God help us to be delivered from the guilt of sin, but the anxieties of sin as well. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] We are grateful to Thee, Lord, for the great promises of the Word of God. We thank Thee for the exhortations of the Lord Jesus, grounded as they are in divine redemption and the possession of a heavenly Father.

And Lord, if there is someone here who does not know this heavenly Father, give them no rest nor peace. Give them all anxiety until they rest in him.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.