

# The Gospel and Your Anxiety

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[ 0 : 00 ] It is our general habit as a church to preach through books of the Bible, verse by verse, working our way from the very beginning to the very end of each of them. But from time to time, we take breaks from the primary text to bring up other matters, other issues.

This morning, we will once again be taking a break from our exposition of the book of Hebrews to continue what we purpose to make a periodically presented series on the gospel and counseling. Some of you may remember some months ago, we talked about the gospel and your sorrow. Beloved, it is altogether possible to understand the gospel for the salvation of your soul, which is its primary purpose.

Praise God if we understand it in this way, that you would be saved from the judgment to come. But to miss that the gospel has implications for the way that you think and feel and act today.

We flee to Christ to be saved from hell and we flee to Christ to be saved from sin, or at least we should. We have much opportunity as a church of the living God to make him known in the world through the careful application of the gospel to the daily struggles of this life.

[ 1 : 21 ] This certainly does not preclude gospel proclamation, but it should accompany it. So today's sermon is entitled The Gospel and Your Anxiety.

I shared with you last week, having, through a number of circumstances, I think kind of a pile up in my own heart, having what I only know to describe as an anxiety attack.

I kind of loaded us into the end of Hebrews chapter 7, trying to give careful application to the necessity of a foundation, a life built on a foundation that is Christ.

And I told you as I spoke about that off the cuff, that I ran for refuge to Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 through 8, each of us have and will likely experience some measure of anxiety.

In this life. Certainly some of us have a greater propensity toward it than others. But it is inevitable that fallen people living in a fallen world will, from time to time, feel the weightiness of our reality.

[ 3 : 00 ] Some people are abundantly aware that they are anxious. Many are not. The truth is that none of us escape this. Some people experience crippling anxiety.

Some of us just worry in a way that we should not. It is faithless worrying. If you aren't presently finding yourself an anxious person, you will at some point in your life, most likely.

So I hope two things for our time together this morning. Number one, that you will have a clear understanding of your anxiety, your personal anxiety, and be better equipped to fight for your joy.

And number two, that you will have a clear understanding of another's anxiety, and be better equipped to fight for their joy. This is why the title, the gospel, and your anxiety is applicable in either case.

And we're going to continue to do that as we walk through this series periodically. Beloved, we are instructed to love one another. And Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 6 and verse 2 that if we love one another, we will bear another's burdens.

[ 4 : 15 ] We are to take on the trouble of others. If you are in relationship with other people, you are going to be asked to give some measure of counsel.

If you have any meaningful relationship, relationships that step off the computer screen and sit down together, you're going to have need to pick up somebody else's burden.

And we should definitely aim to give biblical answers to spiritual problems. So I hope that you'll understand your anxiety, and I hope that you'll understand the anxiety of another.

So Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 through 8. Before I read it, beloved, let me remind you that this is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good. As such, we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

[ 5 : 24 ] The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

I was once at a biblical counseling conference some years ago, and in an afternoon session, the speaker began his lesson by saying, tell me what you worry about or what makes you angry, and I will show you your idols.

And I love this kind of teaching. Many of you are patient with me under it. I like to state the premise up front, big and strong, to make you go, huh? I have discovered that often that makes you guys shut down and not listen to the explanation of the statement, which is what happened to me in this case, but I think in a most helpful way, because I found this emphatic statement just too strong not to wrestle out its implications.

He probably did that. He was probably going on to say more about it, but the statement was so strong, I just had to say, wait, is that true? So I spent the next hour writing down things that worried me or angered me and tracing each thing to its source, really thinking about why is it that this worries me?

[ 7 : 08 ] Why is it that this thing angers me? And I was shocked to discover that most, if not all, of my worry was sinful anxiety.

It had at its base some form of idolatry, a faith in something other than God. It was a good and instructive hour for me.

Paul tells us in verse 6 of our text this morning, do not be anxious about anything. He gives the command to not be anxious.

However, in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 28, he writes, as he's concluding all of the sufferings that he experiences, he says, and apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

I take this to mean that it's possible to be faithfully concerned about a matter. Paul has the pressure of his anxiety, and I don't think he's suggesting to us that this is sinful in that case, but it is faith-filled anxiety.

[ 8 : 22 ] But the command here, Philippians chapter 4, to not be anxious about anything, is in reference to a faithless concern. And this is an anxiety that must be remedied for our good and for the glory of God.

Now, before I give you the outline for the text and we begin our study of it, I want you to see something significant. Everything Paul is teaching us is an expansion of what he has previously declared that we are.

What he's teaching us to do, he's teaching because it comes from who we are. Let me show you this by looking up at verse 1 of chapter 4. He says, Now, this is all kinds of packed with identity, right?

He calls them brothers. And ladies, even you want to be brothers in this sense, joined to the family of God, co-heirs with Christ. He says that he loves them and he longs for them, that they are his joy and his crown, and they are beloved.

All kinds of identifiers. But the encouragement here is for them to stand firm thus in the Lord. What does standing firm look like?

[ 9 : 51 ] Well, he goes on in chapter 4 to explain this. Verse 2 and 3, Paul tells us, it is working toward and maintaining the unity of the church. And then the other things that follow in our text, which we'll go on to consider.

But chapter 4, verse 1 begins with a therefore. Paul is saying, stand firm because of something. Because of a reality that he's already stated, he's saying, so stand firm. What is that something? It is the reality of who you and I are in Jesus Christ if we have placed saving faith in him.

Look at the end of chapter 3, verse 20 and 21. But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

This is the reality that he goes on then to say, therefore, brothers, the ones I love and long for, my joy, my crown, my beloved. It's coming out of this reality of who Christ is toward his people.

[11:18] Beloved, we are part of a theocracy being ruled by King Jesus, who is bringing all things under his reign. This is the reality of who we are that's meant to inform how we live.

So there's a therefore. And now we've arrived at the outline for the text, which is as follows. And I never expect that you get all this down in your note taking.

But for the sake of time, I like to give it to you, give you a structure and move on. So number one, fight for your joy. Number one, fight for your joy. Number two, be gracious toward others.

Be gracious toward others. Number three, turn to God with all of your concerns. And number four, and you won't get this in the notes if you don't write really fast.

Dehabituate by rehabilitating. Dehabituate. That makes me smile more than Sunday with Sunday, doesn't it? Dehabituate by rehabilitating.

[12:28] All right, number one, fight for your joy. Verse four, rejoice in the Lord. Always, again, I will say, rejoice. And I love that Paul adds emphasis, right, to the exhortation by saying it once again.

And that's exactly what he's doing here, right? He's saying, rejoice. I'm just going to say it again because you need to get it. Rejoice. Beloved, lasting joy is not circumstantial.

We may find temporary happiness in our circumstances. There are things in this world that are lesser joys, I would suggest to you, that are meant to point us to greater joys.

But they're temporal. They don't last. And if we find all of our happiness, all of our joy in these things, we will just as readily find great misery in our circumstances.

You have all lived long enough to have high highs and low lows. The children in the room know this. Life is tough.

[13:35] Paul here exhorts us, though, to rejoice always. To rejoice despite circumstances.

He's saying it doesn't matter what the circumstance around you is. You should rejoice. How is this possible?

It is possible if we find joy in an unchanging, eternal source of joy. And he says it in the text.

Rejoice in the Lord. This is not some far-off concept. What he's saying to us is recognize who Christ is and who Christ is to you.

Find in that an eternal source of joy. And if we rightly understand the weightiness of our sin before a most holy God, if we get our rebellion against him and the death that it deserves, if we have experienced in any measure a separation from God, how horrid that can be, then we have much to rejoice in as we draw near to God through Christ.

[14:59] And beloved, this is ultimately a battle of the mind. If you are to have joy, you're going to have to fight for joy.

And this is a battle that will happen in your mind. If it's an uncircumstantial joy, it's not based on what's happening around you.

It's based on what's happening within you. This will be a battle of the mind. I fear as a church, as I talk about the mindfulness of Christianity, that I sway us too far towards stoicism, that we separate out our thinking from our feeling.

I never want to do this. But what we see happening so much in the church in America is that it's primarily emotionally driven. People are looking for spiritual highs.

If the guitar riff is just right, it'll take us there. We should have feelings. That's what this verse is about.

[16:10] This is about rejoicing, but it's not because I've repeated the chorus for the 20th time, and everyone around me seems to be happy, and so I'm going to join in.

It's about a mindful meditation on the truth of who Christ is and who He is to us that brings about this kind of joy.

Non-circumstantial joy. Paul writes in Romans chapter 12, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed, what?

By feeling, no. By the renewal of your mind. We are dichotomous people. We are body, and we are soul.

There's an outer, and there's an inner. And the way that our inner is shaped is through our mental faculty. We're transformed by the renewal of it.

[17:11] And I wish, I desperately wish as a pastor, that all we needed to do when anybody was experiencing any trouble in this world is declare to them the truth, and it would snap into place in their minds.

And they would go, Oh, well then I have a great reason for joy. And off they'd go, joyous. It's a battle. We are left with our sinful flesh, being new creations, but we carry the baggage of who we once were.

The old Nathan shows up all the time, tempts me away, causes me not to believe the great truth of who Christ is to me, to forget it.

And so it has to be rehearsed, and rehearsed, and rehearsed. In our study of Hebrews, we will soon come to the end of chapter 10, where we see a suffering church acting absolutely bizarrely, right? Not at all like the world, but like transformed people. Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 34. The author writes, You had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property.

[18:28] I don't know. I don't think I, I don't know that anybody here would have somebody ransack their house because they're a Christian, spray paint on the wall, go away Christian, would show up happy about that.

Well, these weird Christians did. They rejoiced, and they joyfully accepted the plundering of their property. Why? Since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. You knew you had a better possession and an abiding one. But if you've been with us in our study of Hebrews, you know the reason the letter's being written is because many of them were being tempted to abandon the faith.

Things had gotten more uncomfortable. These Christians who once joyfully accepted the plundering of their property were now being tempted to forsake Christ altogether.

And so they were having to rehearse once again. And the author of Hebrews is so carefully rehearsing for them who Christ is and who Christ is to them.

[19:42] Beloved, if you are in Christ, you have a better possession and an abiding one. Heavenly treasure. A future to look forward to that is going to be beyond our wildest imagination.

And yet we get so fixated on the here and the now and the circumstance. And what Paul's here telling us is that we have to lift our minds beyond what's going on right around us.

We have to look to the future reward because of what Christ has accomplished. John Newton, 18th century Anglican minister, famous for Amazing Grace, the hymn Amazing Grace, once wrote this, suppose a man was going to New York to take possession of a large estate and his carriage should break down one mile before he got to the city, which obligated him to walk the rest of the way to the inheritance.

So his circumstance changed. He's riding in comfort and now he has to walk. What a fool we should think him if we saw him wringing his hands and blubbering out all the remaining mile.

My carriage is broken. My carriage is broken. And many of us act this way. We are headed to a great inheritance.

[21:05] And something bumps in the road and we fall apart. I fall apart. C.S. Lewis wrote in The Weight of Glory, We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us.

like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.

We are far too easily pleased. I love that. Beloved, we have to fight for our joy in the way we fight for our joy is with the truth of who we are in Christ and all that that means for our lives.

So that's the first point. Fight for your joy. Secondly, be gracious towards others. We see this in verse 5. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

Now, I think, I hope, you're listening enough to go, why is the point be gracious toward others if we're to let our reasonableness be known to everyone? And that's because the Greek word translated reasonableness in the ESV, which is what most of us here are using, is a very, very rich word.

[22:26] It's one of those difficult words where there's not a fantastic English equivalent to it. It needs phrasing and so it gets brought down to a single word which just falls a little short of what it means.

Commentators and translators have varied widely on its rendering. Here's some examples for you. Reasonableness, generosity, goodwill, friendliness, magnanimity, charity, mercy, leniency, big-heartedness, moderation, forbearance, and gentleness are some of the attempts to capture the meaning of this word.

Possibly the best word, and I am no Bible translator nor should I be. So I'm not standing in judgment over our ESV translators, but possibly the best word is graciousness.

So it has more latitude than I thought of it, even narrowly thinking of it as reasonableness as it concerns anxiety. That we want other people to see our reasonableness because the end of verse 5 says the Lord is at hand.

So we want others to see that we understand that the Lord is at hand. And it does include this idea, right? Reasonableness is a fair word to put in that place.

[ 23 : 52 ] But the aim of it is that we're doing that for the sake of others. That we're doing it in order to serve others.

Some of those words that I rattled off to you. Generosity, goodwill, charity, mercy, leniency, aiming at helping others, and some of those renderings like forbearance, magnanimity, goodwill, because we may find that it's people that are the circumstance that's causing our anxiety.

very often this can be the case. So it is a complex word and it's a many-layered word and probably we could have just talked about verse five this morning.

For the sake of time, we won't labor on with it. But how we respond to the challenges of life have bearing on other people.

And at the end of verse five, we can see that we are meant to express the reality in the way that we act that the Lord is at hand.

[ 25 : 09 ] And it's a very interesting phrase to be at the end of verse five. Some would suggest it belongs at the beginning of verse six. And these separations are not inspired.

Neither is the punctuation because there is no punctuation in Greek. So translators do this very difficult and careful work of putting a period at the end of everyone. starting a new sentence with the Lord is at hand and then a semicolon.

I am not nearly intelligent enough to tell you exactly which it belongs to, but I think that it links the two things together to be sure. Paul is not rapid fire shooting off exhortations.

He's bringing together an idea about what the Christian life should look like as it stands firm in the reality of who we are in Christ.

And so we're meant to display to other people that God is near. Beloved, this is an astounding reality.

[ 26 : 13 ] I think that I too often take it for granted that I have full unfettered access to the throne of God. It's like this assumed thing for me sometimes. It's not extremely precious that the God of the universe, infinite, eternal, all-powerful, like why should I have any access at all to such a God?

But as we learn in Hebrews chapter 7, because of Jesus' priesthood, through him we can draw near to God.

It's an incredible reality that he has great care for us, that he is in the midst of the circumstances in which we walk.

So we should fight for our joy, we should be gracious toward others. Third, turn to God with all of your concerns.

Turn to God with all of your concerns. Verses 6 and 7, Paul says, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[ 27 : 35 ] There is an alternative to your anxiety and mine. Faith. This is the alternative. Believing in the promises of God.

Paul says, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, we can turn to God. Having been granted full, unfettered access to God.

The Lord is at hand. Beloved, we can give everything over to Him. And if we have a small view of God, we will not think that He can do anything about anything.

But if we have a good and proper high view of God, that's an astounding reality. Why would I not, rightly considering who God is, give everything to Him, creator and sustainer of the universe?

I should. I should necessarily. How often do we find ourselves so very prayerless? Given the great gift of being able to enter the presence of God Almighty and we stay in our own minds, our own inner dialogues, our dialogue with one another, how often do we talk about our problems and we don't go to the Lord together with our problems?

[ 29 : 03 ] It's an astounding thing, as if He's a man and can't be bothered. He's God Almighty. He can handle anything that you throw at Him.

prayer, supplication, and requests are all synonyms. You don't have to think too far out beyond this. And they all refer to direct petitions made of God.

I believe that Paul uses this repetition to note that our going to God with all of our concerns will be often and it will be varied. It's going to have to happen all the time.

and it's going to have to happen about a variety of issues. To not be anxious, we will need to pray. And we will need to pray.

And we will need to pray. If we're going to go with thanksgiving in everything, we're going to be praying continually.

[ 30 : 06 ] And Paul instructs us to do this as we're doing it with thanksgiving. it is not unlike us to go to God demanding things of him, not humble, acting as if we deserve anything.

Paul is helping us to see that we should go to God recognizing what he's already done. The fact that God has done much, already worked in so many ways, gives to the Christian a confidence that he will continue to do so.

We're in the midst of a tough circumstance. It can be so difficult to remember or to notice anything positive. We get consumed with that.

In our sinful nature, we are this way. Somebody has a bad experience at a business, they're likely to share it with ten people. They have a good experience, they're likely to share it with two. Oh, the world of online reviews.

Just, boy, are they brutal. Boy, are they brutal. A really simple example in our life, I was just noting this to my wife, Sam, the other day. We use a stuff that gets diluted really heavily called thieves.

[ 31 : 27 ] Like thieves cleaner, it's a good cleaner. And we have a bottle that we wipe down just about everything with. And it seems like that bottle is always running out of liquid.

It seems like I'm constantly going, gosh, the thieves is out again. But that bottle gets filled up. It clearly gets filled up. Sam's not carefully metering off just a little tiny bit at the bottle to frustrate me all the time.

That bottle gets filled to the top and it gets used. And I'm never thankful when it's full. It's inclined that way. The thieves is out again.

Rather than praising the Lord that the thieves is full and half full and a third full and a quarter full. That's a lot of times. There's plenty of liquid in that bottle. But my mind attunes to the negative thing. This is what I'm trying to say. And especially when in the midst of difficult times. We have to stop this battle in our minds and reflect upon the good things that God has done and he is doing and it will give us the confidence that he will continue to do.

[ 32 : 33 ] His promises are sure beloved. By the mere fact that he's God and he said he would do it we should believe this. But he's also shown us so much loving kindness.

In our frailty we can grab on to this that he'll continue to do. We far too often find ourselves prayerless in trials.

No wonder we become anxious. No wonder. 1 Peter chapter 5 6 through 8 Peter writes humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so at the proper time he may exalt you.

Casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. He is concerned for you.

We can cast all of our anxiety on him. And as I read commentaries about this particular verse all the commentators stopped there.

[ 33 : 43 ] Stopped at the end of verse 7 casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. But I want to read verse 8 because I think it's really helpful to us as we talk about it being a battle of the mind.

Peter writes be sober minded. Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Be sober minded.

Be watchful. Why? Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking! He is seeking someone to devour.

Could it be that many of us are being devoured by anxiety? We are minimizing the glory of God the goodness of the gospel in our lives because we're not sober minded watchful casting all of our anxieties on him because he cares for us.

My mind was drawn to a hymn we sing from time to time called What a Friend We Have in Jesus to this verse Oh what peace we often forfeit Oh what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

[ 35 : 04 ] So go to God with all of your concerns. And then there's a promise in verse 7 And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Now I've wrestled with this a little this week. My immediate assumption of this verse has always been that there would be a feeling of peace that would come that I would feel peaceful if I just rightly cast anxiety and I'm just no longer so sure that that's what Paul is trying to communicate here.

I have often said it's a piece that's weird and strange. It's a piece that surpasses understanding and maybe that's still tied into the meaning. I just didn't have time to work it all out this week.

But I think as we go back to the end of chapter 3 and Paul is stating who we are in Christ and the beginning of chapter 4 and verse 1 that we're to stand firm in that reality that what Paul is talking about is the peace that we have with God.

The peace of God that we have with God because Christ has made peace on our behalf.

[ 36 : 32 ] Because we've entered in now as these citizens. We're not those if you go up further in the end of chapter 3 who are going to be cut off and destroyed. We're citizens. We have peace with God.

Romans chapter 5 verse 1 Therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think that this is a peace that surpasses all understanding. Why oh Lord such grace to me? Why would you have such kindness and compassion? Why would you be near to me? Why would you care for me? And Paul says that this reality will be set as a guard, as a sentinel, our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

He lands that reality that we are found in Jesus. And so as we contemplate in prayer with this thanksgiving who Christ is and who Christ is to us, we can be joy filled and we can be faith filled and not anxious.

[ 37 : 58 ] Jesus taught his disciples in Luke chapter 12 beginning in verse 22. Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat nor about your body, what you will put on.

For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?

Much more is what Jesus is saying. So much more. And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to a span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?

Consider the lilies, 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 which is alive in the field today and tomorrow was thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, oh you of little faith?

And do not seek what you are to eat, what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your father knows that you need them.

[ 39 : 18 ] Instead seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

If we are in Christ and we are mindful of this, we are faith filled because of this, then we have no need to be anxious.

We can have great and abounding joy. because Christ. I came across this old quotation and I stuck it here and I'm wondering now if it even fits but I'm going to read it to you all the same.

Maybe as we tie the idea of joy together. This was the account of the conversion of Blaise Pascal who was a 17th century French mathematician and it was found he had written it down on a piece of paper sewn into his coat it was found eight years after his death he had written this account of his conversion and this is what he wrote year of grace 1654 Monday 23 November feast of Saint Clement from about half past ten at night to about half an hour after midnight fire God of Abraham

God of Isaac God of Jacob not of philosophers and scholars certitude heartfelt joy peace God of Jesus Christ God of Jesus Christ my God and your God joy!

Jesus Christ may I never be separated from him that cool okay number four dehabituate by rehabilitating finally brothers whatever is true whatever is honorable whatever is just whatever is pure whatever is lovely whatever is commendable if there is any excellence if there is anything worthy of praise think about these things we are not going to take the time to talk about each of those things right there are things to be said about each of those pure lovely commendable right he's building an idea right there are many things that can be thought about that are going to be good for our thought life most often this is preached through verse 7 I think verse 8 is so incredibly important as we continue to think about taking our thoughts captive battling in the mind that we would think about stuff that is helpful to us rather than fixating on the things on the circumstance! [ 42 : 15 ] but that we would lift our minds higher we are creatures of habit we just form habits so readily most of them bad an example Sam and I recently moved we moved from Gainesville and it took me a full week of turning on to our old road to remember that we didn't live there anymore I made a lot of detours on my way to the place we're currently living because I just do it automatically right it's the impulse the natural thing that I do I bet that each and every one of you put on a particular shoe first and you probably don't know which one it is but I bet you do by habit they just tend to pick up whatever mine's my right because I paid attention to that kind of thing but you don't really give any thought to it at all at the end of the first song set Jordan prayed in a place he doesn't normally pray you guys noticed that or not he made a little comment about it he normally prays for the preaching at the end of the offering he said a little prayer at that point and

I got panicky because I thought was that the offering song I don't I sort of grabbing my stuff in the back to come up front and I went oh wait wait he broke out of the routine right because we are so geared habitually and so if we are to change in this case the way that we think we're going to stop thinking negatively we're going to stop focusing on the circumstance we're going to have to work at refocusing on something else it's not merely enough to put off sinful thinking because then there's a void well now what are you going to think about Paul tells you what to think about true and honorable and just and pure and lovely and commendable excellent things this is what you should fill your mind with and we have such a fantastic source for all those things the holy writ the scripture itself the most excellent of things are spoken about in this text we have our minds drawn to God who we are in Christ and this is a work it's a work that must be done Paul writes to Timothy 1st Timothy chapter!

4 the last part of verse 7 he says train yourself for godliness some other translation will say discipline yourself for godliness again it doesn't just happen it doesn't just click into place it's a work that must be taken up J.

Adams in his fantastic book the Christian Counselor's Manual! talks about dehabituation by rehabilitation that's why I picked up and why I love the phrasing so very much he wrote this in response to 1st Timothy 4 7 this idea of disciplining yourself for godliness he wrote how may I discipline myself first the counselor must indicate that the word discipline clearly shows that godliness cannot be zapped!

[ 45 : 35 ] it cannot be whipped up like instant pudding godliness doesn't come that way discipline means work it means sustained daily efforts the word Paul used is the one from which the English word gymnastics and gymnasium have been derived it is a term related to athletics!

an athlete becomes an expert only by years of hard practice there are no instant athletes it takes years of regular practice to achieve athletic skills no weightlifter for example says here's a very heavy weight I have never lifted weights before but that looks like the largest one I'll try to press it he's likely to break his back he can't do it that way he must start out with a small weight the first week then gradually over the months and years add heavier and heavier ones he must work up to the heaviest one nor does he decide this week I'll lift weights for five hours on Friday and then I'll forget about it for the next six weeks athletes practice regularly usually every day for at least a short period of time they work daily day after day until what they are doing becomes natural second nature right habit to them that is what an athlete does and that is exactly what is involved in the word that Paul used here continued daily effort is an essential element of Christian discipline if we are to be a people who are not anxious a people who are rejoicing always it's going to take daily work all of us all of us desire massive monumental moments in our life all of us want in an instant right like chocolate pudding to be whipped into some new maturity in our life and there have been

times maybe in your life certainly in the lives of others that we can read about that there is massive transformation in their Christian walk but most regularly it happens bit by bit degree by degree and if you are waiting around for that to happen if you are not taking up all that God has offered you right he has given to you his word he has given you Christian fellowship he has given to you prayer that you would know it believe it right be able to think upon it then you are going to falter in your Christian maturity we are meant to press into the truth and we are meant to do it every single day we are meant to be disciplined for godliness in conclusion

Charles Spurgeon quote that is on your bulletin this morning he wrote the pleasures arising from a right understanding of the divine testimonies are of the most delightful order earthly enjoyments are utterly contemptible if compared with them the sweetest joys yea the sweetest of the sweetest falls to his portion which has God's truth to be his heritage so we have great reason because of who Christ is and because of who he is to us our reigning king to fight for joy to be gracious towards others to turn to God with all of our concerns and to dehabituate by rehabilitating may we be a people who lay faithless anxiety down for joyful peaceful faithfulness may we be a people that live in a way that the world would see how very reasonable we are because of how great Jesus Christ is let's pray together thank you thank you thank you