

Cast Your Anxieties On The Lord

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in 1 Peter chapter 5 and reading verses 6 and 7. 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 6, humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

Now Peter is writing to Christians who are going through a really tough time. Christians have been scattered all over because of the fires of persecution.

These were difficult times. The early church, the fires of persecution had really begun to burn. And there's no doubt whatever that Satan was behind that, just as is in the case to this very day.

We have a great level of freedom here although I think we're all aware that these freedoms are maybe being encroached on slightly, but we still have gospel freedoms and gospel liberties by and large in our land.

But it's not the case everywhere. And we know that throughout this world there's still a lot of persecution, a lot of bloodshed simply because people love the Lord Jesus.

[1 : 2 4] And we are not to be surprised because people hated Christ. It's quite extraordinary when you think about it that the most perfect human being that ever lived because Christ in our nature was exactly like you and me with a part from sin.

The most perfect specimen of humanity ever, sinless, faultless. And you would say that automatically everybody would say, well, they're bound to respect Him, they're bound to love this man, but we're told in scripture that He was hated without a cause.

There was no rational reason why Christ should be so hated, but He was. And of course that was partly through the work of the evil one in flaming people's hearts.

And we're told that the evil one, He exerts influence all over this world. And sometimes we're given glimpses of how horrendous that is if you go to the book of Job and you see how the Lord had initially put a head-round job on all that He had.

And Satan was saying to the Lord, of course Job fears you because you put a head-round him in everything that he has. If I got to him, then you would see the real Job.

[2 : 5 1] And we know of how the Lord granted Satan permission, though he wasn't allowed to take Job's life. And we see that just the unbelievable chaos, heartache, the pain that Job went through.

And of course Satan was proved wrong because Job came out of it a better man and God blessed the latter end of Job, despite all he had gone through.

But that gives us a little glimpse of just how utterly evil Satan is and his angels. Now as we know there have been times where, particularly at the like of revival times where the landers enjoyed great freedom, but it's not like that all the time.

So Peter is here writing to Christians and in the previous chapter he talks about verse 12, beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.

Now you and I know that fire burns. If you've ever been burnt, even a little burn. You know even a simpler thing as if you're draining potatoes and you turn it over and all of a sudden all the steam comes up, oh, but if you, maybe some of you have experienced that burning.

[4 : 15] And I've never had a serious burn at all, but I could imagine this to be one of the most painful things. And Peter likens the trials that we go through to these, these are fiery trials that burning.

And I'm sure we've all experienced at different levels things that you've been called to go through and it's just like fire. It's been, it's been hard. It's been difficult.

It's nearly broken you. And yet we've got to realise the other side of the picture is that through these trials God is doing something else because fire also purifies.

And through these fiery trials, while they are difficult and painful to bear, God is at work because God is preparing us. We know that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us.

He did that on the cross. And in the meantime, He is preparing us for the place that He has already reserved for us in heaven.

[5 : 20] And so that's part of the ongoing work that takes place in our lives. And so Peter is writing here and Peter has been described as the apostle of hope and there's a lot of hope in his letters.

But in this little ladder section he's talking about humility and talking about also vigilance. And we see here the importance of humility.

And you know there's few things that mark out a Christian really like humility. It's not a cloak that you can put on or a particular posture that you adopt.

Because you can have somebody who says, I'm going to try and look humble. And I don't know what you're supposed to look like if you're trying to look humble. But people have this idea, you can bow your head and say, I don't have no idea.

But humility is not a posture, something that you can just sort of say, well, I'm going to try and look humble. Humility is an attitude of heart, an attitude of spirit, and particularly is an attitude before God.

[6 : 27] If we are suitably humble before God then we will also be humble before one another. And it is one of the most endearing graces when we see through humility in a person's life.

And the Lord indeed requires of us this humility because he's saying in this very chapter, he says, likewise you who are younger be subject to the elder.

Clothe yourselves all of you with humility towards one another. And you know, it would be when you think about it, how different our churches would be, how different our lives would be if people were to do this.

Now it requires great grace to exercise this humility before one another. Because so often in disagreements and things it's very difficult to exercise this humility.

But this is what the Lord is actually calling us to and calling us for. And we see throughout the scripture we see examples of humility and it's very hard when you're going through something difficult.

[7 : 43] And particularly if you are suffering unjustly for something. It's very hard to take that in what we term lying down of being humble in the face of injustice.

A great example of that is David. Never when Absalom had started the rebellion to try and take over the kingdom and get rid of his father.

And David had to run. And as he was running away, as he had to do initially, this man shimmy I came out and started cursing David and throwing stones at David.

And one of David's men who was with him said, let me go over and cut his head off. A pretty brutal way of dealing with things then, and David said, no, let him be.

This is of the Lord. And then David added, it may be, he said, that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.

[8 : 47] And you know, it's a wonderful example of true humility before God. Because here's this man, David, and he's a rightful king.

And yet he's been the victim of real injustice and this campaign against him. Now, you and I know when we suffer injustice, our shackles rise.

And there's within us this sort of, I've got to get this sorted. And there can often be a desire for revenge. All these kind of things come up within us and say, I want to deal with it.

This is not on. And so it's very difficult sometimes to adopt a spirit of humility in the face of being maligned and in the face of injustice.

And that is why it requires grace and it tells us that the Lord gives grace to the humble. That's one of the things that we're told. God opposes a proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

[9 : 56] It might be worth highlighting that that man, Shimei, didn't escape unpunished because David, of course, as we remember how he eventually got the throne back, Absalom was killed.

But during Solomon's reign, this man, Shimei, was put to death for disobedience. And Solomon said to him, what you have done has come back upon your own head.

There's a version of scripture which says, vengeance is mine, I will repay. And so it's very hard sometimes for us to leave things in the hand of the Lord, for him to sort out and to do.

But David is a great example of that. So we're told here in this verse that we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

So how does, first thing we'd have to ask is how does God humble us? Well, God humbles us very often by allowing humbling, stating the obvious, humbling events into our lives.

[11 : 04] It's said of Israel, remember how they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness, that God humble them in order to prove them and to test them.

So for these 40 years was a humbling experience for Israel. And God did it in order to prove them and to test them. And God often does these things with us as well.

He humbles us through these. And sometimes it might be, as we said, various tiles. It might be sickness that comes into your life.

It might be, the sickness might be physical, it might be mental. There might be all sort of things come in. And you're saying to yourself, what on earth is going on?

But you know, God has had work through these things. Sometimes you're buffeted by strong temptation. You know, that's a real trial. You might say to yourself, everybody's tempted.

[11 : 59] But there are times that Christian is exposed to an ending temptation. It just goes on and on and on, relentless.

And that is very, very difficult because the temptations are coming from every area and in every angle, hitting at all areas. And it's like the Lord has given a little time to, as it were, to the evil one to tempt you.

And there are times God teaches us through these things. Sometimes we don't get to the means of grace. The means of grace are kept from us.

All these things, we can go through times where we're misrepresented, misunderstood, slandered. These are difficult things.

What people are, if a lie is told about you, and you know in our communities, how small our communities are, and that's a really difficult thing to bear.

[13 : 04] If there's a rumor that goes around and you know it's not right. These are things really, these are real trial, these are real humbling events within our lives.

But the question is, in face of the humbling that goes on within our own experience, we ask ourselves, and how do we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God?

Well, the first and obvious thing we have to do is we have to examine ourselves in the light of scripture. And self-examination is vital because in this busy, busy life, and you know, we live in an incredibly busy life.

And even I retired now and I cannot get over how full every day is of every week. And sometimes he said, you shall have how on earth was I able to fit in all when working?

But everybody's the same. There seems to be just this frenzy of activity and demand and time. And everything has to be done now.

[14 : 11] So it's actually, it's difficult to get time just to stop. There's always a tendency even in this busyness that prayer life becomes hurried, out Bible reading becomes hurried.

Everything is just, we have to stop and reflect and take stock. It's vital to see how things are.

Do a complete check out of who we are, what we are, how things are. And we do so always with the word. Don't just look in on yourself.

It's always got to be measured against God's word. And you know, one of the things we discover about ourselves is that the seed of every sin is there within our heart.

Sometimes when we get a little glimpse of what we're really like, we're shocked. And we'll say, I can't believe, can't believe this is me. Do you ever, times you stop and you think, what am I just thinking?

[15 : 10] Your thoughts can be so perv-esh, so cruel, so impure, so evil. You get shocked and you say, what am I thinking?

What's going on? But it gives us a little glimpse of just what's really there within our heart. And again, we get humbled by looking back over our lives and realizing how little we've grown.

You know, when you became a Christian, you thought maybe in the first year that you would, my word you'd say, after 10 years, 20, 30, 40, I'll just be blossom. I'll be bearing so much fruit.

I'll be like these old Christians. I say, I'll be just a real bright Christian filled with knowledge. And you look at your life and you say, oh my, how little I've grown.

How slow I've been to learn less. I have to learn less. I'm over and over and over and over again. And then you look back and you say, how little I've done.

[16 : 12] Again when you came to faith, you envisaged doing so much for the Lord, you were on fire. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that. Then the years go by and you look back and you say, what have I done?

And it seems to be so little compared to what you thought that you would be doing. And again, when we look at our lives and with the thought of death approaching, we say to ourselves, how unfit I am.

How unready I am. Supposing the Lord says to me, tomorrow I'm going to call for you. And you'd say, oh my word, I have so much to sort out.

I'm not just talking there about the sort of the issues, the temporal issues of life. But you have this idea, I'm not fit to meet the King as I am.

You would spend so much of your time seeking to get right. Because you think you're right with God, but if there's this awareness of death that's just coming, you say, I need to get right with God.

- [17 : 13] But all these things are there. It's part of the way in which we are humbling ourselves before the Lord. But we'll notice here that it also says, humble yourselves there for under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

You see, this humbling isn't life long. Although a lot of our life as Christians involves humbling and exalting, it goes on. It's like a roller coaster.

But if you're down today, and if God is taking you down, and this is where you're going through a humbling experience, it's not forever. The Lord will lift you up again.

He will exalt you in due time. In other words, God has a time to exalt you. You look at the Bible and you see examples, say for instance, like of Joseph.

And Joseph had these dreams where he saw his brothers bowing down, and he saw these as promises from God. And they were promises from God. Samondson 5 tells us this until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him.

- [18 : 24] That's what it says of Joseph. So these dreams that Joseph had were dreams that were given to him by the Lord. He understood this as coming from God. Remember how he was sold by his brother into Egypt?

He was sold as a slave, and remember how Potiphar, he went to work for Potiphar. Potiphar's wife told lies about him. And he ended up as a prisoner in the prisons of Egypt year after year after year.

But God had a plan for Joseph. And God was preparing Joseph for a great exaltation. You see, Joseph wasn't ready for that exaltation. And at the proper time, God came and elevated him to become second only to Pharaoh in the land.

What an exaltation. You see, God was at work preparing. God's at work preparing you and me as well for the exaltation.

And of course, there's going to come as Christians the final exaltation, where we will be brought with gladness, great and mirth on every side, straight into the palace of the king, there to abide.

- [19 : 42] What an exaltation that will be. So we see that this is all part of the humbling, is in preparation for what is to come.

And then following on from that, Peter goes on and says, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Now, everybody in life has anxieties and burdens and cares.

They might, for some of you tonight, they might not be extreme, but there's always a little something that gnaws away. There's always a little, there's always a worry somewhere. Now, some people are able to cope with worries and stresses much better than others.

But everybody at one level or another has these things. But maybe tonight for some people, you carry real anxieties, they're there all the time.

And it might be circumstances in your life, there might be something that is happening that causes that constant worry, that constant anxiety. It might be something new, something that's come unexpectedly.

- [20 : 49] And it's something that you sometimes you feel panicky over it, anxious over it, troubled over it, down over it. And there are times maybe that you actually envy the birds flying around you just say, I wish I could do that.

David, in fact, in one of the psalms, he was feeling so claustrophobic through all the pressures that were on him and all the worries and anxieties. He said, oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I could fly away and be at rest.

And I'm sure there have been times you felt exactly like that. I wish I could just get away. And that's the way sometimes you feel.

But you see, whatever the problem or whatever the struggles or whatever the difficulties that we have to handle, that's what it says over to the Lord. And you know, one of the wonderful things about the verse that we have here, casting all your anxieties on him, that it's not specific about the anxiety or anxieties.

If it said, for instance, cast all your spiritual anxiety upon the Lord, you'd say, well, that's great. But that would limit what you could put to him.

[22 : 09] If it said cast your family anxieties to the Lord, you'd say, well, that's great as well. And that's only, that only limits. Or if you were to say cast your work anxieties or your lack of work or your home anxieties or your health anxieties, but you know, the beauty of it is, it doesn't specify what the anxiety is.

It's all. That's a beauty. And it's not anxiety, but anxieties. The scope of this couldn't be wider. It couldn't be greater. Casting all your anxieties, every anxiety that you have, that's what we're told, casting all your anxieties on the Lord.

Spurgeon who said there's even grace in the grammar with regard to this great invitation that's given to us. And the fact of the matter is that this is not a verse that's kind of taken in isolation in scripture.

You might say to yourself, oh, well, that's a great verse. You will find over and over and over in the Bible that our verses are similar to this, telling us to, in that very Psalm we quoted where David said that he wished he had the wings like I'd have.

In that very Psalm he says, cast your burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain you. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord and be thou doing good. And so thou in the land shall dwell and verily we have food.

[23 : 42] Over and over and over again in scripture it tells us to do this very thing. And why does it tell us so often? Because we're so prone to being anxious and concerned and troubled.

That's why we find this as being repeated over and over. And why are we like that? Well, I think probably a couple of the main reasons why, partly because of unbelief.

And that unbelief is we limit God. We limit God's power. We limit God's enabling. And part of it comes down to pride, thinking we can handle this or shalls.

And so often we try to handle things or shalls and we discover that we don't do very well. But you know this unbelief limits God because we're, you know what, and pride, because we're afraid, we're saying, well, yeah, I can hand it over to the Lord, but I don't know how He'll work it.

We've already got it planned out and worked in our own mind. How it's to be worked out and the outcome of it and such like. We've got to trust the Lord. This is where the trust comes in.

[24 : 53] Where we've got to hand it over to the Lord, lock, stock and barrel. And you'll see what it says very clearly that we are to cast our anxieties upon the Lord.

That's what we're to do. Casting all your anxieties. Now, it's not just a matter of letting go. It's not a matter of placing them and still keeping a hand on.

Because that's what we like to do. Because we're afraid of, don't want to give this completely because I don't know how he's going to work this out. It's casting.

Like you're throwing something away. When you cast a stone away, you're throwing that stone away. And that's what we're commanded to do, cast our anxieties. And anxieties and care comes from this word divide.

And that's exactly what happens. Because anxiety divides our mind. We can't concentrate. It affects our devotions. It affects our life. You know when you're anxious.

[25 : 58] You can't really concentrate. Can't concentrate at work. You can't concentrate on anything. It's kind of dividing your mind. You get back and forth.

Lord doesn't want us to be like that. And so he says cast. Cast these anxieties, throw them upon me. And we're to be done with it.

Now that doesn't mean that we just cast our anxiety on the Lord and say, well, here it is, I'm throwing it all on the Lord. It's like saying, all these troubles and cares I have, I'm done with it.

That's not how it is. Because when we cast upon the Lord, what do we do? It's important that, remember, it's the Lord is the focus.

We cast everything on the Lord and our focus is now on the Lord. It's not that our focus remains on the anxiety. It doesn't mean that our anxieties are just going to disappear like that.

[26 : 57] The Lord will deal with them. But our focus is upon the Lord. And something amazing begins to happen. Because we're told in scripture that the person whose mind is fixed, great peace have they whose mind is stayed or fixed on you.

See this is what happens when our focus is on the Lord, our returning peace comes in to our heart. The things that are making us anxious might still be there.

But because our focus is upon the Lord, a new peace and a new calmness comes upon us. The Apostle Paul was a man who had endless troubles.

And he tells us more or less the very same thing. He said in everything, by prayer and with supplication and thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.

And what's the result? That the peace of God that passes all understanding will fill your hearts and mind.

[28 : 04] It's the very same idea of bringing all these things to the Lord, focusing upon the Lord and discovering and return his peace.

And so we say after a reminder, Charles, who is it that we're giving all this to the Lord? It's to the Lord. And remember that there's nobody more powerful to deal with our problems than the Lord.

He's the God of all power. And one of the amazing things is that he can deal with everybody's problems at the same time. Now, to our human minds, we can't even begin to fathom how that is possible.

You know when you're trying to deal with one issue and somebody else is trying to give you something else to deal with, you say, some people can multitask, I certainly can't, but to the idea that not just one, two, three, or 20 or 40 or 60, but hundreds, thousands are coming to the Lord all the time at the same time.

And again, it's incredible to think of not just his ability to deal with it, but the strength to deal with it. If you've ever tried to help somebody with issues or with problems, and this person is pouring out their heart to you, and they're serious problems, and you begin to take these problems upon yourself, and you begin to, the burden that this person is carrying, you're beginning to feel it.

[29 : 35] And again, if you're dealing with somebody else, and you're beginning to feel their burdens. And that's one of the amazing things of the strength of Jesus, where he's saying, come unto me all you who labor, and are heavy laden, all of you, and I will give you rest.

And not only is the Lord all powerful to deal with it, but he's willing to deal with it. You know, you could have a person who's very strong, very able, very powerful, but not willing.

But the Lord is so willing, he invites us constantly to come to him. And why? Because he cares for us. That's what it tells us, that he cares for us.

Who's writing this letter? It's the apostle Peter. And Peter could say to you, if you sat down with Peter, you'd say, I find this interesting what you're saying at the end of that verse, because he cares for you.

And Peter would say, well, I'll tell you. And I tell you a few stories about Jesus. Jesus one day came to our house, my mother-in-law was seriously ill. What did he do?

[30 : 44] He healed her. There was another time Jesus was walking on the water, and I was so just amazed and enthralled by it.

And my heart went down, and I said to Jesus, bid me come to you on the water. He just said, come. I went over the side of the boat, and I began to walk on the water. And then I looked around, and I began to see the wind, and the effect of the wind and the waves, and I began to sink.

And I cried out, Lord, save me. He just reached out his hand, and he saved me. And then, of course, there was that awful time when I denied Jesus.

Didn't just say I didn't know him. I denied him with oaths and with curses. I thought I'd blown it all. In fact, I said to the other disciples, I'm going back fishing.

I'm going back. I'm returning to the fishing. I've lost everything. But what did Jesus do after this resurrection?

[31 : 46] He met me on the shores of Galilee. And very tenderly, caringly, he restored me back so that I became a great preacher.

Because of my preaching, and because the impact of so many people coming to faith, Herod, got hold of me, put me in prison. He was going to execute me the night before my execution.

I was asleep. The prison door opened. Lights on. There was an angel. This angel rescued me.

So you want to know that Jesus cares? I'm telling you, he cares. So it's very interesting that this man who's writing this letter says he cares for you, because Peter had the proof over and over and over of just how much Jesus cares for us.

You know, the starting point in the Christian faith is that we have a God who cares for us. He cares for us so much that he gave a son to die for us.

[32 : 53] That's how much he cares. That's a starting point. And it makes a Christian religion unique in this respect.

The God cares for us. This is it at the very start. And if we come to faith and accept a son, we have the guarantee that he will care for us every single day of our lives, and that he will take us home eventually to be with himself.

And if you tonight have never yet come to that point and to that place of discovering the compassionate, caring Christ, then ask Him tonight, Lord, bid me.

Just as you bid, Peter, come to you. Bid me. Help me to hear your voice. Help me, Lord. Take me over the things that are holding me back.

Because remember the most precious thing, the most precious possession you own is your soul, more precious than everything in this world put together.

[34 : 00] You make sure that your soul is safe and nobody can make it safe but Jesus alone. Ask Jesus, this is Jesus who bids us, casting our anxieties and cares upon him.

He said, Jesus, who cares for us tonight. Let us pray.