

Anxious

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Preacher: Archie Winnington-Ingram

[0 : 00] Well, good evening. As Alistair said, my name is Archie. I'm the pastor in training here and I'm feeling slightly anxious, so let's pray. Heavenly Father, I pray that you would still our hearts this evening.

Would you be present amongst us by your Holy Spirit, helping us to understand your word and helping us to apply your word to our lives today.

We pray in Jesus' name. I wonder, what are you most anxious about?

This evening, what worries did you bring with you through that door on your way into church? It was COP26 just last week, wasn't it?

And we're all told at the moment, aren't we, that we should be really worried about the future of our planet. Here are some quotes from COP26. It's code red for humanity.

[1 : 03] The alarm bells are ringing. We're dangerously close to spiraling out of control. We're told, aren't we, that if we don't act now, it could spell real trouble, like world-ending, catastrophic trouble.

That may well be true. Are you worried about it? Maybe it's COVID. As you look back over the last 18 months, have you been worried?

Are you maybe even worried now about rising COVID cases, about vaccines, about lockdowns?

Have you been worried about coming back to church?

Maybe you're not really worried about those things at all. In fact, maybe you're more worried that we're being lied to, or at least that this climate change thing or the COVID pandemic are not nearly as worrying as the trajectory of our culture.

Worried that the emphasis is all wrong. Worried about overreaching governments. Worried that the church isn't doing enough. Worried about the waning Christian influence in our country.

[2 : 10] What are you worried about? We're not here this evening to talk about climate change or COVID or our culture. Instead, this evening we're going to be thinking about anxiety and about worry.

And we're going to look and we're going to see what the Bible has to say to us in our anxiety. I just want to say before we dive into that, I'm aware that there are those here, maybe those listening to this, who might have been diagnosed by their doctor with anxiety.

And I want to say that none of what we talk about this evening is intended to be a substitute for that. If you're here this evening and you suffer from panic attacks or uncontrollable phobias, post-traumatic stress, debilitating social anxiety, anything like that, maybe if you haven't spoken to a doctor, can I encourage you that it might be important that you do.

Sometimes as Christians, we need to rely on medical help and that's totally okay. And so let me encourage you, if you are in that position, do go and do that. Having said that, I do also believe that the Bible has something to say to all of us in our anxiety and in our worries of our lives.

Because we all, I think, don't we know the feeling? Maybe you'll hear this evening, are you a student or a teenager? And this used to annoy me so much, constantly being asked, what's next?

[3 : 33] What do you want to do with your life? Or maybe, again, I found this annoying, my own fault, but maybe you're behind on your coursework. Or you're worried about upcoming exams. Maybe you're at work and the workload is just more than you can bear.

You've no idea how you're going to get through this week. Or you're looking ahead to a meeting, maybe even tomorrow, with colleagues that you just don't know how you're going to deal with it. I wonder if you've ever been invited to a party where you know that you're not going to know anyone. You're terrified it's going to be super awkward. We know the feeling, don't we? Maybe even as you walk into church, if you've ever walked into a church on your own, it might even be your own church, and yet we look around, don't we, trying to see someone that we might be able to sit next

For he is absolutely sufficient. Sufficient to carry us in and through our anxiety. And of course, he is ultimately sufficient to save us unto eternity.

And so, whether you're here this evening and you're worried about COVID cases rising, or you're worried about overreaching governments, whether you're worried about climate change, you're worried that the emphasis is all wrong, whatever your Monday looks like, in all the anxieties of life, in all our worries about the future, as our heart rate increases, as our palms begin to sweat, as we feel that heavy, nauseating feeling in our stomachs, would we call on our God confidently?

Would we talk to him truthfully? And would we trust in him totally? Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, I pray that whatever we have walked through the door with this evening, whatever worries we face, whatever anxieties we harbor, would I pray that we would seek refuge in you?

[28 : 58] Would you be our refuge, even as we know that you are our refuge? Lord, would you help us, even when we barely know what to think, let alone speak, would you help us to call on you with confidence, knowing that our salvation is secure in Christ, Lord, would you help us to come to you honestly, and truthfully, to talk to you about every little circumstance of our life, though we know that you already know it.

Would you help us to understand how much you care, and how much you love us? And Lord, as we look to the cross, and as we see what you have already done for us, would you help us to trust you totally this evening?

Amen. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.