

## Dealing With Anxiety In Today's World

Devotion Message for FUMC

Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>

I'd like to open with a Poem written by Wilfred A. Peterson entitled,

### **"Slow Me Down, Lord"**

Slow me down, Lord.  
Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.  
Steady my hurried pace.  
Give me, amidst the day's confusion  
the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tension of my nerves and muscles  
with the soothing music of singing streams  
that live in my memory.

Help me to know the magical, restoring power of sleep.  
Teach me the art of taking minute vacations....  
slowing down to look at a flower,  
to chat with a friend,  
to read a few lines from a good book.

Remind me  
of the fable of the tortoise and the hare;  
that the race is not always to the swift;  
that there is more to life than measuring its speed.

Let me look up at the branches of the towering oak  
and know ..... that it grew slowly ... and well.

Inspire me  
to send my own roots down deep  
into the soil of life's endearing values

That I may grow toward the stars of my greater destiny.

Slow me down, Lord.

Do you see yourself in this poem? I definitely see myself! Most of us have probably at one time or another been so anxious or worried about something that our heart felt like it was beating so fast it would jump right out of our chest! If you're like me, you probably carry the tension of your day in your neck and shoulders and as a result have tight, achy muscles. Perhaps you've experienced nights when you can't fall asleep or you wake up in the middle of the night and your mind starts racing, so you can't fall back asleep. Except of course for the 10–15 minutes before the alarm goes off! (Laughter)

So what can we do to ease this worry and anxiety?

Some recommendations I have seen and heard about are to:

- **Take a time-out** - Listen to music, meditate, or relax.

- **Eat well-balanced meals.**
- **Get enough sleep.**
- **Exercise daily.**
- **Take deep breaths.** Inhaling and exhaling slowly.
- **Try to maintain a good sense of humor** – don't be afraid to laugh at yourself.
- **Maintain a positive attitude** - Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

We know all too well that nothing in life is perfect and unfortunately that is just something we all have to deal with. We need to keep our focus and spend our energy on things that really matter. Joyce Meyer in her book, *Living a Life You Love* puts it this way: “Worry is like a rocking chair, it’s always in motion but it never gets you anywhere.” (Laughter)

How many of you have heard of the 5-second rule? No, I’m not referring to the hygiene myth that it is ok to eat a piece of food that has fallen on the floor as long as no more than 5-seconds have passed. No, it isn’t Mel Robbins theory that if you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within **5** seconds or your brain will kill the idea.

The 5-second rule I’m talking about has to do with how we deal with things that happen to us or around us in the world. Don’t spend 5-minutes or even 5-seconds obsessing about something that won’t matter 5 years, 5 months, 5 weeks, or even 5 days from now!

We often find ourselves feeling frustrated or overwhelmed by different situations in our lives and we keep trying to figure it out and come up with solutions ourselves. I’m here to tell you, that it just won’t work! The solution is right in front of us! **NOT in us!** It’s simple really, all we need to do is ask God to help us. Then when He tells us what to do, we must do it! God will give us the strength to do what he asks us to do!

In Matthew 6: 34 (taken from the Message Translation), Jesus tells us: “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.”

In other words, if we must worry, worry only for the things of today. Most of our worry is over things that we have absolutely no control over anyway, which makes it not only foolish but harmful as well. Jesus reminds us of the importance of living for the present day. It isn’t wrong to remember the past or plan for the future; to some degree both of these are good. Yet it is easy to become too focused on either what has happened in the past or what might happen in the future and in the process, we forget about living our lives today! Worry doesn’t make our lives longer; it just makes it more miserable!

Careful planning is thinking about goals, steps and schedules, and trusting in God’s guidance. When done well, planning can help alleviate worry. Worries, on the other hand, are consumed by fear and make it difficult to trust God. As a result, we let our plans interfere with our relationship with God.

Don’t let worries about tomorrow affect your relationship with God today. God wants us to remember the past, plan for the future, but live in the present.

Remember: Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That’s why it’s called the present.

Would you please bow your heads in prayer?

Dear God,

Sometimes I become exhausted, weary, and overwhelmed with worry, stress, and anxiety for the future. I pray Matthew 6:34 over my life. I don’t want to worry or be anxious about tomorrow, but instead I want to place my trust in you entirely each and every day. Father, help me remember in times of need that you have always been faithful to provide in any and every situation or challenge. Help me to remember that your plans are to prosper me, and never to harm me. Father, teach me to meet each days troubles as they come with grace, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. I know your grace is sufficient. You will help me overcome whatever this life may bring my way. You are so good to me, and I find peace and hope in knowing you will never abandon me. There is no need to worry about tomorrow, I know you will meet me there. In Jesus name, I pray.

Amen