

Being Free From Anxiety

by Ian Robson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being free from fear and anxiety, highlighting the need to rejoice in the Lord always and trust in His authority over our lives. It discusses how fear and anxiety stem from unbelief and the deceitfulness of sin, urging listeners to focus on what God has done for them rather than their own actions. The sermon encourages a life free from fear and anxiety, rooted in rejoicing in God's promises and overcoming the accuser by the blood of the Lamb.

Scripture: Psalms 46:1, Philippians 4:4, Matthew 6:24, Hebrews 3:13, Revelation 12:11, Revelation 19:7

Topics: "Freedom from Fear", "Trusting God's Promises"

Description

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Transcript

Last week, we looked at being free from fear. It's so important that, like we have that verse at the back, if we fear God, you need fear, nothing else. And we looked at Psalm 46, God is our refuge and strength, always abundantly available for help in times of trouble.

I hope that it will always be a reminder to us so that more and more, increasingly as we approach the end times, we are free from fear. Fear is from the pit of hell. I hope you recognize that.

Along with fear, we need to be free from anxiety. They both go together, fear and anxiety. Jesus spoke a lot about being free from fear.

Many times he said to his disciples, don't be afraid, why are you afraid? An equally number of times, he said to them, he rebuked them for anxiety, why are you anxious? Once, when they forgot to take bread, and he was speaking to them, something more important than bread, about the Pharisees and Sadducees, hypocrisy, and they thought that they'd forgotten to take bread. Why are you thinking about bread? I'm not talking to you about bread, I'm talking to you about something more serious. So, even when we forget things, like this morning, I forgot something and I had to go back home.

It's so easy to get into unrest, but to believe that God is in control, of course you need to be more careful, but if we really come to that place like we talked about last week, into the Sabbath rest of the people of God, we come into rest, nothing should shake us. I want to get there quickly, I hope you're on the way there. This morning I want to talk to us, to share with us about being free from anxiety, in Philippians chapter 4, we start there, Philippians chapter 4, and it begins with verse 4, lovely, Paul, and he's writing this, mind you, from prison, and he says there in verse 4, Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice, and in chapter 3 verse 1 he says, Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord, and to write the same things again is no trouble to me.

I'll go on saying it again and again, I may bore you, but this is living for me. What a life the Apostle Paul lived. He says it's no problem for me to go on telling you, rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice, and then he says in chapter 4 verse 5, he says let your gentle spirit be known to all men, the Lord is near.

It's always good, you know, when we come across that the Lord is near, the coming of the Lord, and to see what the Holy Spirit is reminding us about. Let your gentle spirit, your unselfish, considerate spirit be known to all men, the Lord is near. And then he says, be anxious for nothing, 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 comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Be anxious for nothing, nothing means nothing, that's a command, it's not a suggestion. And that's what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Apostle Paul, be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Holy Spirit tells us how we can get rid of anxiety, everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests, whatever it is that's worrying you, whatever it is that makes you anxious, make your requests known to God.

And the peace of God, this is what God promises, the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. May we seek to come into a life, my brothers and sisters, where we are free, totally free from anxiety, where we are anxious for nothing, no matter what happens. Last week we were thinking about even the world blew up in our faces, we'll not fear.

And the same thing, when things go wrong, seemingly wrong, and when there are all kinds of things that can trouble us and worry us, make us anxious, that I want to come to a place where I'm anxious for nothing, and in everything that we, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, with a thankful heart, we make our requests known to God. Fear and anxiety or worry troubles almost every child of God, I believe at some time in our lives, you've gone through it, I've gone through it, we don't seem to escape it, but we can overcome it. We must not think, oh, that's natural, you know, to become fearful, to become anxious.

It's not God's will. Jesus said many times to his disciples, don't fear, do not fear. When he was in the boat, he was at rest, asleep, and there was a storm, the devil thought, that storm, not a natural storm, you know, if you see that, a couple of times in the Gospels, you know, the devil kicked up a storm and tried to drown the disciples and tried to drown Jesus.

He thought he could. Jesus was asleep, and the disciples were scared. He said, Lord, what's wrong? We are sleeping and we are drowning.

And he got up and said, why are you afraid? Why are you afraid? And then he stilled the wind and the waves and everything became calm and still. A little before that, a little before that, before they got into the

boat, there was those two demon-possessed men who lived in the tombs and nobody can control them. And they saw Jesus and he said, you've come to torment us before the time, because Jesus was casting out that unclean spirit.

And they pleaded and said, you know, send us into the swine. Jesus asked them their name, he said, our name is Legion, we are many. And he gave them permission and they went into the swine and the whole herd went down into the sea, two thousand of them.

They said, what kind of man is this? Two thousand demons just with a word, gone, drowned in the sea. And here, he stills the wind and the waves, what sort of man is this? That's our savior. My brother says, why are we afraid? Why are you afraid? He says, you men of little faith.

That's what he has to say to us, why are you afraid? Something goes wrong in the office, something goes wrong in the home, something goes wrong in your health. And all kinds of thoughts go through our mind. He said, why are you afraid? You of little faith.

Another time, when he was teaching them on the Sermon on the Mount, where he said, do not be anxious. Stop being anxious. You have a margin there.

Stop being anxious. Why are you anxious? And we wanted to turn to that in Matthew chapter 6, and look at it in its context. It really speaks to my heart each time I read it, Matthew chapter 6. And it says there, you have to read before that, in verse 22, the eye is the lamp of the body, so when your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. And verse 24, listen to it, no one can serve two masters.

Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth, or God and money, or God and property, or God and health. You know, that also can be something that we serve.

It's good we take care of our bodies, we eat healthy, we exercise, whatever we do. But that can be a master, you know. It's a master today for many people.

They are so bothered about their health, but they are not bothered about their spiritual health. You can't serve two masters, Jesus said. And whatever it may be, for many people it's money, big thing.

How much is it going to cost? And this is going to really put me into financial problems, and they get anxious. Property, like that man who came to, Jesus said, when he's talking something serious, he said, Lord, tell my brother to divide the property. Give me my share.

He's not asking for his share, but my share. And Jesus rebuked him for his covetousness, for his greed. It's beyond God, against greed.

No one can serve two masters. You may not think you're serving money, you may not think you're serving property, but it can be something else. God plus something else.

Then he says, verse 25, read it in its context, for this reason. For this reason I say to you, do not be worried, or do not be anxious about your life, as to what you will eat, or what you will drink, for your body as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? For this reason I

say to you, stop being anxious.

For what reason that you serve two masters? That's why you're anxious. And if we are honest and see, there is another master beside God. I know what it is for you, but I've known what it is for me, and I've sought to deal with it.

I cannot serve two masters. It's God and only God, and God only. I hope it's not your job, I hope it's not your family, your children, their education, their marriage.

God plus something else. That's why we become anxious. That's the problem.

We are serving two masters. A lot of anxiety centers on money, on property, and health. You can add a long list to that.

That's why we are anxious. If we have only one master, God, and not another, and we are devoted to him, our lives will be free from anxiety. Absolutely.

This is what Jesus said. And this master is our Father. You recognize that? This master that we should be serving is our Father.

You read it there. Verse 26, in the middle of that verse, your Heavenly Father. Your Heavenly Father feeds these birds.

They don't sow, they don't reap, they don't gather into barns, they have no granaries, but your Father feeds them every day. Your Heavenly Father. My Heavenly Father.

This is a master, my brothers and sisters, we should be serving. One master. My Father.

I want to do that. And I thank God for showing me who the other masters are. And it can be more than one master.

It can be more than two masters. But it all boils down to this. You cannot serve two masters.

And that's why you become anxious. That's why we get into unrest. That's why we get afraid.

And all kinds of things. Five times in those few verses, Jesus speaks about anxiety. That's how serious he sees anxiety.

That's how serious we must see anxiety can hinder your spiritual growth and my spiritual growth. Anxiety can hinder me from knowing my Father, who takes care of me. And so Jesus said that.

Stop worrying. Verse 25. First time.

Stop worrying. Stop being anxious. And verse 27.

Will all your worries add a single moment or one hour to your life by worrying because the doctor said something to you? You've got only this much to live. Is it in the doctor's hands? Is my life in the doctor's hands? Has the doctor recorded in his register how many days I'm going to live on this earth? Or has my father recorded that? So you see how, you know, if it's not God and money and God and property, it can be God and our health. And we become anxious.

So with all your worries, the Living Bible says, add a single moment or a single hour to your life. No. No doctor, no medicine.

Doesn't mean I don't take medicine, I don't see doctors, I don't go to the hospital. But I'm not going to get anxious. And if I'm getting anxious, then the Holy Spirit told me what I should be doing.

And then again it says there in verse 28. Why are you worried? Why are you anxious? In verse 31. Do not worry.

Do not be anxious. And the fifth time. In verse 33.

Do not worry about tomorrow. Don't worry about tomorrow. It's sufficient.

Today's problems and trials and all the things that make you anxious and worried, it's sufficient. Why are you worried about tomorrow? Jesus said. Five times.

God wants us, my brothers and sisters, as His family, as a family of God, as His children, as sons and daughters, to be free from fear, to be free from anxiety, particularly as we enter the last days. I don't know what you're anxious about. Some of you are waiting for a life partner.

You're anxious. You're worried, am I going to get married? Is it going to be the end of the world if you don't get married? Good thing to get married. But that's in your father's hand.

Don't get into unrest. Don't get anxious. Why are you anxious, Jesus? You of little faith.

My husband loses his job. Has not the Lord taken care of you when your husband was without a job? Why are you worried? Why are you anxious? Will I have enough after my retirement to live? Why are you worried, O you of little faith, Jesus said? Fear and anxiety breed unbelief, my brothers and sisters. And like I said a little while ago, fear is from the pit of hell and anxiety is from an evil heart of unbelief.

Remember that. Fear is from the pit of hell. Anxiety is from an evil heart of unbelief.

That's where it comes from. And so I have to be on guard. When Peter was drowning and he cried out, Lord save me, Jesus, there was a hand stretched out.

But for a moment he took his eyes off Jesus and he thought he was drowning. And he cried out, Lord save me. And Jesus said, why did you doubt? Hasn't he said that to you many times? He said that to me many times.

He rebuked me. Why did you doubt? Whatever it is we worry about and we find we have no basis for it. Half the things or maybe 99% of all the things we worry about don't happen.

Why are you anxious? Stop being anxious. And that is what God says to us as anxious people. And that's why David prayed in Psalm 51, that penitent prayer that he prayed to God and he repented of his sin.

He searched me, O God, and try me and know my anxious thoughts. See what it is that makes you sad. That even when we slip up and fail and fall, I don't have to go on beating myself and flagellating myself like a Roman Catholic, old Roman Catholic monk.

If I confess my sin, he says it's faithful and just to forgive us our sin, cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So why do I worry? Why do I go on? I think no, it's not enough. Not enough that I've confessed.

Not enough that I've repented. I've got to do something more. I've got to do some penance.

We're good Roman Catholics, many of us. That's why we remain in that condition. We don't get to know God.

We don't get to know his mercy. We don't get to know his forgiveness, the sweetness of his forgiveness. Doesn't mean I take advantage and I can sin as I like and as many times as I like and I can always go there and ask for forgiveness.

The blood of Jesus is there. I don't treat it as tap water. But I'm afraid a lot of us are good Roman Catholic monks.

We don't believe. That's why David said, search me, your God, and try me. Know my anxious thoughts.

Will I make it? Have I lost my salvation? It's good to fear God. It's good to work on our salvation with fear and trembling. But I don't have to live in insecurity.

He says, point out anything in me that makes you sad. A good prayer to pray in, my brothers and sisters. In Isaiah 41 verse 10, you can look at it.

It says, do not fear, for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, and surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

That is God's promise for us. Do not anxiously look about you. I will surely, certainly I will help you.

Certainly I will uphold you. I will not let you go. I will not let go of your hand.

I will be with you. And that is why we are encouraged, and we are exalted in Hebrews 3, to encourage one another day after day, lest any one of you become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. What is the deceitful sin that hardens your heart and mind? It's unbelief.

Where did unbelief come from? Anxiety, fear. And that is why we are to encourage one another, day after day, every day, as long as it is still called today. I hope we do that.

Every day, the ones we can do that with is those who live with us 24 by 7. My spouse, my children. Courage one another day after day. But we think we have to exhort one another.

We have to rebuke one another. That may be necessary, but there are few people only who can do that. But all of us can encourage one another, day after day.

Let's do that, my brothers and sisters, more and more as we approach the end. Learn to encourage one another. Encourage your wife, encourage your husband, encourage your children.

They need encouragement. They need to be disciplined. They need to be rebuked sometimes.

But let's learn to encourage. We are so slow in encouraging one another. Speak an encouraging word.

You pick up the phone. You spend hours and hours. How much do you encourage somebody who is down? Somebody who is going through a hard time you don't know about.

But you can ask, Lord, please give me a word. I want to encourage my brother, my sister. And we have to do it all the more, as we see the day drawing near.

So that we are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. So we don't let anxiety and fear take over and lead me to unbelief. And what will happen? We will fall away from the living God, it says.

So let's take that to heart. The antidote or the cure for anxiety is right there. We could turn back to Philippians in chapter 4. We began with that.

Rejoice in the Lord. Always, always. Again I will say rejoice.

And that's how I can make sure that I don't slip into anxiety and unrest. Rejoice in the Lord. In the Living Bible it says, always be full of joy in the Lord.

I say it again, rejoice. Let everyone see that you are unselfish and considerate in all you do. Don't think just about ourselves.

I need to be encouraged. You encourage others, you cast your bread on the waters, it will come back to you. But say, no, I need to be encouraged.

I go to the meetings because I want to be encouraged. You come to the meetings to encourage somebody, you may not get up here to speak but you can give a word of encouragement to somebody. So that we encourage one another to rejoice, to give thanks to God.

It says there, let everyone see that you are unselfish and considerate in all you do. It's the Living Bible. Remember the Lord is coming soon.

Don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything. Tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers.

If you do this, you will experience God's peace which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Jesus. And Philippians 3.1 in the Living Bible says, whatever happens dear friends, whatever happens, be glad in the Lord.

I never get tired of telling you this and it is good for you to hear it again and again. Rejoice. Again I say rejoice.

Let's learn to rejoice my brothers and sisters. Let's stop going on looking inward. That's why we are so gloomy and so dull and that's why we can't encourage one another.

When I get up in the morning, let's learn to give thanks to the Lord. You've given me another day. You've given me health.

You've given me so many things. Let me give thanks to Him. Let me learn to rejoice always.

1 Thessalonians 5.16. Rejoice always. To give thanks always. Let's learn that my brothers and sisters.

In the very first instance in the New Testament in Matthew chapter 2, it speaks about those wise men, whether they were three or more than three. It says, when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly, I like that word, with great joy because

the star was leading them to Jesus, to the baby in Bethlehem.

And so we thank God for the Holy Spirit who leads us to Jesus in times of worry and anxiety and fear, that the Holy Spirit, like the star, led these wise men, leads us to Jesus, that we can find our joy and our refuge and strength in Him. And in Hebrews in chapter 1, here's a word for us Gentiles. Hebrews 1.9-12. It says, therefore I will give praise to you among the Gentiles, and I will sing to your name.

Again He says, listen to this, rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people. That's to us. The Holy Spirit says to us, we are from the Gentiles.

Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people. Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him. So there we see, that's a cure for anxiety.

I need never slip into anxiety and never let fear take over, that I learn to rejoice. There's so many things that I can rejoice in the Lord over. I can rejoice that He has counted me, chosen me to be part of His family.

He has called me, brought me to repentance and faith in Him, washed me from my sins. He said, I will not remember your sins anymore. Isn't that reason to rejoice, my brothers and sisters? I will not count your sins against you.

I will not remember them anymore. And if we confess our sin, He forgives us our sin. Isn't that reason to rejoice? But we are all the time thinking about other things.

There are many reasons that we can rejoice in. I just want to share with you four of them, lots of them that you can think about. I want to encourage you, make a list of all the things that you can rejoice over, in what God has done for you and in you.

Write it down, and begin there, that we learn to rejoice in the Lord always, and every day, in every moment, no matter what happens. In the first, in Luke chapter 10, you know the story there, when they came back, they rejoiced that demons were subject to them. Jesus had sent that 70 out, gave them authority, and they came back and said, Lord, even the demons are subject to us.

And Jesus said to them, I like how it is in the Message Bible, Luke chapter 10 verse 20, Jesus says there, don't rejoice that demons are subject to you. I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, nothing, all the power of the enemy, I have given you authority. Nothing will injure you.

But he says all the same, in the Message Bible, all the same, the great triumph is not in your authority over evil, but in God's authority over you and presence with you. Listen to this, not what you do for God, but what God does for you, that's the agenda for rejoicing. You got it? Not what you do, not what I do for God, no matter what we do, we may sacrifice, we may do many things, but not what you do for God, but what God does for you and in you, that is the agenda for rejoicing.

Remember that, my brothers and sisters, and every day that I can thank him, Lord, not what I do for you, it's pittance, it's peanuts. We think we have sacrificed, but when we think of what Jesus has done for us, when we think of what God has done for us, he didn't keep back his only son, he gave him up for us all. Isn't that reason to rejoice, my brothers and sisters, to always rejoice? Not what God does, not what we do for God, but what God does for us.

That's the agenda for rejoicing. And at that time, verse 21, it says, at that time, Jesus rejoiced exuberant in the Holy Spirit. I like that.

He rejoiced. Why? He said, I thank you, Father. Master of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the know-it-alls and showed them to these innocent newcomers.

Yes, Father, pleased you to do it this way. He rejoiced to see his disciples see the authority that God had given them, but he told them, don't rejoice over the authority that you have over the enemy, over demons, but rejoice what God has done for you and what he'll continue to do for you. And the second reason that we can rejoice in Revelation 12, verses 7-12.

I picked out four, you can add a lot more there. Revelation 12, 7-12. The accuser of the brethren is thrown down from heaven.

No place was found for him in heaven, and he was thrown down to the earth, and we overcome him, it says there. We don't have time to read all the passage, but that's an agenda we can add for rejoicing, that the accuser of the brethren has been thrown down. We overcome him by the blood of the lamb, by the word of your testimony, and we do not love our life to death.

No place was found for him in heaven. No place must be found for him in our homes. No place must be found for him in our hearts.

We have no accusation. We don't carry any letter of accusation against anyone. It's nailed to the cross.

That's what Jesus did. He took it out of the way. I hope there's nobody sitting here this morning who has some accusation against somebody.

No matter what you've suffered and what has been done, whether your boss or whether your neighbor or some relative, no accusation. Then you don't have an agenda to rejoice. You have nothing to rejoice in, because you're on the accuser's side.

But the accuser of the brethren is thrown down, and let's give him no place in our lives, in our hearts, and in our homes. We overcome him by the blood of the lamb, by the word of our testimony. We don't love our life unto death.

So, it says rejoice. If you look at it there in Revelation 12, let me just turn there, Revelation 12. It says, for this reason, verse 12, rejoice O heavens and you who dwell in them.

Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you having great throat, knowing that he is only a short time. I like reminding the devil, you've got a short time. You may try to trouble me and try to put fear and anxiety in my heart, but you've got a short time.

I'll overcome you by the blood of the lamb. That is how we can always rejoice, my brothers and sisters. The third reason in Revelation 18 and verse 20, it says rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her, that is Babylon.

The harlot is judged, because in her was found all the blood of the prophets and the saints, when all had been slain on earth. So, rejoice, it says, you saints. Rejoice that Babylon, the harlot, has been judged, and God is going to set up his kingdom on the earth.

Lastly, the last reference to rejoice in is the marriage of the lamb, Revelation 20. The marriage of the lamb, it says, let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to him, for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride had made herself ready. Yeah, verse 7, 19, 7. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to him, for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. And he said to me, these are the true words of God.

So, we have reason to rejoice, my brothers and sisters, a number of reasons to really rejoice and be free from anxiety and learn to find strength and comfort and encouragement in the Lord. May God really lead us into a life where we are totally free from fear, totally free from anxiety, and our life is characteristic that we rejoice not what we do for the Lord, but what the Lord does for us and what he's going to do in us and through us. Let's really give thanks to the Lord and let's decide that I'm not going to give fear and anxiety any room in my heart.

I'm going to learn to rejoice in the Lord always and give him thanks and praise for all that he seeks to do in my life. God loves us. He doesn't frown upon us.

We are sons and daughters. We are not slaves. And the slave will not be in the house forever.

It's the sons and the daughters who will be in the house. So, may God preserve us to the end. Amen.

We'll sing a song now and after that Danny will share what is on his heart. The junior church may leave while we sing the song.

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