

Resting in the Lord's Care

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of casting our anxieties on the Lord, trusting in His care and guidance amidst life's challenges.

Topics: "Trust in God's Care", "Faith over Anxiety"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the importance of resting in the Lord's care, as expressed in 1 Peter, where the Apostle Peter reassures believers of God's watchful eye and attentive ear towards the righteous. He encourages Christians to cast their anxieties upon the Lord, highlighting that this act is a deliberate and faithful response to God's concern for us. Sparks clarifies that while we are called to be responsible and diligent, we must not let anxiety distract us from our faith and duties. He reminds us that true carefreeness comes from trusting God with our worries, especially in times of distress. Ultimately, the sermon calls believers to recognize God's active involvement in their lives and to respond with faith and peace.

Transcript

"For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15).

"For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully... For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps... who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:19,21,23).

"For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication... And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled" (1 Pet. 3:12-14).

"...casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

The Lord's Care for His Own

This is just one of the many standpoints taken up by the Apostle in this letter. This one represents the position and attitude of the Lord Himself toward His Own, the realisation of which should produce a certain state in them. The Lord's attitude is one of solicitude for His Own - that is what Peter is saying. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears unto their supplication". The Lord's attitude toward His

Own is one of concern for them. He has His eye upon them, they are not out of His ken. Not only has He His eye upon them, but He has His ear open to them; and not only so, but He is taking definite care concerning them. These three things Peter says quite definitely.

Our Response to His Concern

Then he says, 'If you realise that, it will produce a state of restfulness, carefreeness, in you. You will cast all your care, your anxiety, on Him because He cares for you.' There are three things we might say about this. One - this word "casting" is a very deliberate word. This actual word only occurs twice in the New Testament. The other occasion is in Luke, where, in recording the entering into Jerusalem on the colt, it says, "they cast their garments upon the colt" (Luke 19:35). So if you can picture the people casting their garments on the colt for Him to ride upon, you get the mental conception of the word used here - "casting all your care..." I suppose the people were deliberate in what they did. It was something quite precise. They pulled off their garments and put them on the colt's back. And in our apprehension of the Lord's attitude and the resultant state produced in us, we deliberately cast our anxiety upon the Lord, put it over on to Him.

The second thing - as to the word "care" or "anxiety." It is one of several Greek words translated in the English "care." This one definitely means, as the Revisers have indicated, "anxiety." The word really means being drawn about - that is, pulled in various directions at the same time. That is what we mean by being distracted. It is the word used by the Lord to Martha when He visited Bethany. "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:41); 'All these various things you have on hand are distracting you, you are torn. Here is My presence, here is Mary sitting here, you no doubt would like to be here, you have a pull here; and then there are all these other things you are occupied with, and you are pulled that way as well; and being pulled in various directions you are thrown into a state of anxiety, of agitation, of distraction; the whole atmosphere is disturbed; you are "anxious".' It is the word used in the parable of the sower, concerning the seed that fell among thorns; the Lord interpreted the thorns as the cares of this life. "These are they that have heard the word, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word" (Mark 4:18,19). The distractions, the anxieties, of this life leave no place or time for the quiet contemplation of, and response to, the word that has come. The Lord sows the word, the Lord gives something with great possibilities in it, but then we are at once called off and engaged and engrossed with all sorts of things which spring up, and the word does not stand a chance. It is anxiety - that is the word.

Carefreeness not Carelessness

The third thing to be said is this. It is as well for us to be perfectly clear about what we have said, because we shall come upon the same English word or the same thought in other connections which seem to be a contradiction. "Be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). And you find exhortations to carefulness scattered through the New Testament; we are exhorted to take care. It is not the same original word as the one we have been considering. When He says, "In nothing be anxious" (Phil. 4:6), or "casting all your anxiety upon him," the Lord does not mean that you are to become careless, indifferent, to put the matter away as though it is nothing to do with you, that you have no place in it at all. There is a place where the Lord expects us to take care, to be careful (in the ordinary usage of the word among us), to recognise that we have responsibility, we have to be watchful, we have to come into the situation, we have to be careful in this way and in that. That is another thing.

In the passages with which we began it is this terrible harass of anxiety that is in view, and it is that that has to be cast over to the Lord. While occupation must go on, many things must be attended to, there must be no distraction resulting from worry about it. "Be not... anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Matt. 6:31). Here is the same word again. What it amounts to seems to me to be this - that it is not just a psychological decision or resolution that we are going to be careless, we are going to be indifferent, we are not going to bother. It is to be positively an act of faith. The anxiety usually comes in as to how things are going to turn out, what the issue is going to be. The right care is to do our part. The carefreeness is the result of committing the issue to the Lord and definitely taking the faith attitude that He will look after the outcome while we are looking after what is ours to look after. It is not just spineless optimism, it is definite faith - faith that refuses to be harassed and distracted by many things, by anything.

Now, you know from this letter of Peter that the people to whom he wrote might well have been, and probably were, very much in anxious suspense. The situation was an exceedingly difficult one for them. Their homes, their families, their livelihood, their lives, all were in danger, and from every direction came threats and perils. If it is said to them, surely it should be said to us. He says, in effect, 'The Lord has the issues in hand, He is taking care about all that; you cast your anxiety upon Him because He really does care.' You have to believe that He does care, and, believing that, you definitely and deliberately cast over on to Him that which would cause you to be distraught with anxiety as to how things are going to work out, and what the issues are going to be. It is the committal of faith, very deliberately casting all your anxiety on Him for "he careth for you." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication... Who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?"

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