

## May 1 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

### *Anxious for Nothing: Chapter 11: C.A.L.M.*

**What is the most meaningful lesson that God has taught you in studying Philippians 4:4-8?**

**Do you truly believe that anxiety can be a part of your life without dominating your life?**

As troubles and anxieties approach, we are to take heed of the words of the prophet Isaiah sent by God to soothe the concerns of the anxious king of Judah, King Ahaz: *Be careful, keep calm and do not be afraid. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. (Isaiah 7:4,9)*. Isaiah calls Judah's enemies for what they were, not "firebrands", but "tails, i.e., the ends," or remains of firebrand - almost consumed themselves, and harmless, incapable of doing extensive injury. In the larger picture of God's faithfulness knowing that His grace is sufficient in all circumstances, our troubles and anxieties are nothing but "tails".

In *Philippians 4:4-5*, as troubles and anxieties approach, the Apostle Paul tells us to "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." Lucado writes: "The anxiet-tree is not the only tree in the orchard. Choose the tranquil-tree by celebrating God's goodness." He asks: "What do you have to celebrate today? What do you see around you that is worthy of praise?" We can look to *Psalm 121:1-2*: *I lift my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.* We know that nothing is gained by setting our eyes on the problem but we gain everything by setting our eyes on the Lord.

We recall the story in Matthew 14: 28-31 where Peter called to Jesus as he was walking on the water, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus invites Peter: "Yes, come." So, Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" Peter gets distracted with all the problems in doing what Jesus asks, takes his eyes off of Jesus, and becomes afraid. The command for God's people not to be afraid is repeated 365 times in Scripture, one for each day of the year. Jesus does have to say over and over again: "Have courage; don't be afraid!". The lapse in faith does not ruin Peter because he knows where salvation is found. But Jesus does let Peter know that it is getting to be time for him to remove the doubt and to have a bigger faith. We too, are very much like Peter, leading us to questions that we need to consider: Is God sovereign over your circumstances? Is He mightier than your problems? Are you focused on Him?

In *Philippians 4:6*, as troubles and anxieties approach, the Apostle Paul tells us: *Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. God encourages us through Psalm 50:15: Then call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.* Lucado writes: "Fear triggers either despair or prayer. Choose wisely!

What do you need to leave completely at His feet today?"

We can find peace in times of trouble and anxiety in knowing that Jesus intercedes for us in our moments of weakness and need at God's throne of grace. *We have a high priest who has gone into the very presence of God – Jesus, the Son of God. Our high priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weakness, On the contrary, we have a high priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but*

*did not sin. Let us have confidence then, and approach God's throne... There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it. (Hebrews 4:14-16)*

*Jesus is in the presence of God at this very moment interceding for you. and (Romans 8:34).*

Lucado asks the question: "Do you believe that anxiety can be part of your life without dominating your life?" Looking to John 16:33, Jesus says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." The word trouble in the Greek can mean persecution, affliction, distress, or tribulation. Jesus is warning or foreshadowing that at some point in this life we will all face trouble. Just like every other promise God has made, this one will come true as well. However, Jesus does not want us living lives filled with panic, fear, and worry, for the rest of the promise is that He indeed has overcome the world so that we may have peace.

In times of trouble and anxiety, our response should be Philippians 4:4-8. Recalling further that the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippi church while in prison, our true source of strength and contentment in any circumstance is Christ Himself. As Paul writes: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)* Paul explains that he has learned how to be content in any circumstance no matter how severe. When things are going well or when things are going badly, he knows that contentment does not come from circumstances—contentment comes from recognizing that we can do whatever God intends for us to do through Christ who strengthens us. God is gracious to provide strength when it is needed so that we can find our identity, our confidence, and our contentment in Him. This is what God meant when He said that His grace is sufficient; for His strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)—Jesus, our Savior, is all we need.

Song to reflect and pray on:

[\(553\) Give Me Jesus-Jeremy Camp - YouTube](#)

## Looking ahead – Sunday May 8

Post-Resurrection to Pentecost Scripture Study