

Cast your Cares on Him

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[0 : 00] Our text for this morning you will find in the chapter we read in 1 Peter 5, second of our readings this morning, 1 Peter 5 and verse 7.

Very short and very simple text this morning. 1 Peter 5, 7, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

Having before you this morning a visiting preacher who is working on the mission field, you may have expected one of the classic missionary texts or passages from the New Testament. But I felt led to address our thoughts for a few moments this morning to the contents of this verse. Given that anxieties are phenomena that affect us all.

And whether we are 7,000 miles away in Lima, Peru, or whether we are here in Scotland, here in Stornoway on the island of Lewis, we all know anxieties.

[1 : 39] And our text this morning very simply sets before us a challenge and it makes us ask ourselves, first of all, how do I cope with anxieties?

Well, only I can answer that question for myself, just as you must answer that question for yourself. How do you cope with anxieties, problems in your life, when things do not go as you might have wished them to go?

When you are concerned either about yourself for good reason or about someone close to you, possibly about their health, possibly about their spiritual condition, but nevertheless you are anxious.

And this verse sets before us this morning a challenge to us to ask ourselves, how do we deal with them?

[3 : 15] And that really leads us into the text. If anxieties are indeed common to us all, Christian and non-Christian, then we have to recognize that Peter here also recognizes the reality of our anxieties, but very clearly tells us what we must do.

First of all, I want you to notice what he does not tell us to do with our anxieties, distractions, concerns, worries, whatever word we use to express the area that this word includes and encompasses.

He does not tell us that you are to deny the existence of your anxieties and pretend that they don't exist.

He does not tell us to do that. Neither does he tell us to suppress them and to push them to the background of our daily living.

They are there. They are there in the circumstances and providence that God places us in. He does not tell us to deny them.

[4 : 46] He does not tell us to suppress them. He does not tell us to run from them, to escape from them and pretend again that somehow, by some process, we can somehow distance ourselves from our anxieties.

That is most commonly seen in people who move away from a particular place and think that by moving away they will leave their problems behind. And of course, we know the falsity of that position.

Their problems and anxieties and neuroses and anxieties simply go with them. So, we are not to deny them, we are not to suppress them, we are not to run from them, neither, says Peter, are we to dwell on them and nurture them.

We are not to let them become all-important in our daily living and thinking. And we are not to make our anxieties and problems and concerns concerns the centerpiece of our daily walk.

Rather, Peter says, this is what you are to do with them. And he uses a word which is peculiarly strong.

[6 : 18] He says, you are to cast them, you are to throw them, you are to hurl them, it brings to mind the actions of the bin man, the refuse lorry.

Now, in Lima, Peru, we do not have the sophisticated refuse trucks that you have here in Scotland. Rather, we place out into the street a bag, a black bin bag, and you leave it there and during the course of the night they come and collect it.

And if you observe what the bin men do, they come along and they reach your bin bag and they pick it up and they simply hurl it onto the back of their lorry.

They don't take any care over it, they don't take time over it, their simple purpose is to lift this bag of rubbish and simply chuck it into the refuse lorry.

Peter says, do that with all your anxieties. That is precisely how you must treat them.

[7 : 41] You must throw them onto that refuse lorry to continue the image. You are simply to hurl it. Now here we have in front of us, I have in front of me the ESV version of the Bible and it renders this first word correctly, casting.

That is, it is a participle. In some translations there is a full stop and a new sentence beginning at the beginning of verse 7, cast all your anxieties on him.

It is not an imperative but a participle. And you may say to me, well, is it that important? Whether it is an imperative, a command or a participle and I say to you, yes it is.

And I am going to, I hope, show you why I think it is important. Because if this were verse 7, a new sentence, it would be separate from what comes before.

But rather, rendering it correctly as it is here, casting, it lets us see that it forms a part, an integral part, of verse 6 which precedes it.

[9 : 09] And if we look for a moment at what verse 6 says, then we begin to get some further light on what we are to do with our anxieties and concerns and problems.

Reading again from the beginning of verse 6, it says, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

And here we see that there is a very close connection between casting your anxieties on him and what we are commanded to do at the beginning of verse 6, which is very direct, humble yourselves. And as you humble yourself, part and parcel of that process of humbling yourself is to cast your anxieties on him.

Let me try and clarify that a little bit more. It seems to me that it states very clearly in these verses that the presence and practice in the Christian life of humility is directly related to the absence of anxiety.

[10 : 46] Let me say that again. The presence and practice of humility in the Christian's life is directly related to the absence of anxiety because the Christian who humbles himself under the almighty hand of God does precisely what it says here.

He casts his anxieties on him. In practical terms, you know there are people, some people, who are very self-preoccupied.

Whenever you speak to them and you ask them a simple question, how are you, you don't get a simple response, you get a fully detailed account of how they are, and their ailments, and their problems, and so on, and so forth.

They are self-preoccupied people. people, and such people exist. They perhaps pity themselves for their circumstances and their trials and their difficulties in life, and they are self-absorbed.

They are concerned primarily with their own issues in life, their own health problems, or the health problems of someone near to them.

[12 : 28] And this dwelling on our own problems, our own anxieties, indicates an unhealthy self-focus.

We are not, if we are in any way like that, if we in any way exhibit any of these symptoms, we are not humbling ourselves under the almighty hand of God, casting our anxieties on him.

We are saying, in effect, I am the center of the universe with my concerns and worries and problems and difficulties.

But there is another kind of person, and this kind of person, we see as well, who says, I can deal with it.

I can take care of it. I am in charge of my circumstances, of my life. That is a problem? Well, I can deal with that.

[13 : 38] And perhaps such people are rather used to dealing with issues and problems in their daily work, for example. And in the spiritual realm also, we can fall prey to that self-same syndrome.

And we are not humbling ourselves under the almighty hand of God, casting our anxieties on him. We are saying, I can keep them because I can deal with them.

There is an absence in both scenarios. In both cases, and they're both extremes, I recognize that, there is an absence of this practice, this practical practice of humbling ourselves.

And so, we do not cast our anxieties on him. we take matters into our own hands.

We say, I am the captain of my soul. I am the master of my fate. But all of our circumstances and all of our anxieties and all of my problems and all of your problems must be brought into the light of the fact that we serve a God who is almighty.

[15 : 06] He knows all that we have to face. He knows every detail of the daily circumstances of your life and my life and he knows what he has placed upon us.

The things about which we can become anxious and possibly here today there are some who are struggling with their anxieties.

And we have come here and the anxieties are at the back of our minds and they're not very far away because they were with us when we went to bed and slept and they were with us when we woke up in the morning and we have these anxieties which are forever present in the circumstances of our lives.

These may be things from our past. These may be concerns about the present and we don't know what the future may hold.

Well the word here in 1 Peter 5-7 tells you exactly what you must do with those anxieties. It says you've got to cast them, you've got to throw them, you've got to hurl them on him.

[16 : 36] it's hard sometimes to recognize that our times are in his hands and sometimes because of our pride and I know that I must struggle with this also that plans do not always work out the way we intended and things don't always happen when we would like them to.

And they make us anxious. And we're waiting for things to happen that we think ought to have happened, things that ought to have happened a long time ago and the anxieties and so on increase.

We must humble ourselves under the almighty hand of God. And we recognize who and what we are.

His creatures, his servants to do his will and no matter what he may send us in the circumstances of our lives and I realize that that's a very easy thing for me to say when I know so many people have experienced things that are so difficult to bear.

Nevertheless, the word tells you what you must do with those anxieties today, this morning. You must hurl them onto him.

[18 : 18] And there's a demand here from Peter that we be ruthlessly honest with ourselves when we come back to that opening question, how do I deal with problems and anxieties in my life?

Do I deal with them in this scripture ordained way? Or do I think I know better? Well, thirdly and finally in our text, we see why we're to cast anxieties on him.

It's such a simple text, casting your anxieties on him because he cares for you. There's the reason that's given.

Again, we notice what Peter does not say. He does not say, and he will solve all your problems. That's not the Christian life.

He does not say, I will take away the circumstances that are causing you anxiety. That's not here.

[19 : 37] That's not the Christian life. rather, he says, cast your anxieties on him in the process of humbling yourself because he cares for you.

We're assured of his willingness to help. The question for us this morning as we read these familiar and very simple words is, do I believe that?

Do I really believe that? That the very real anxieties and issues that plague my days, I'm going to cast these on him because he cares for me.

Do I believe that? Now, just as the issue of having anxieties was not a theoretical issue for Peter's first listeners or readers, they faced the very real prospect of suffering and persecution and separation from loved ones and possible loss of livelihood and certainly possible loss of their lives. Peter addressed these words to people with those kind of anxieties. things. And just as it was not a theoretical thing for them in what situations they faced, the rest of chapter 5 mentions the sufferings

that they were going to face.

[21 : 19] So it was that when Peter says to them in the second part of this verse, because he cares for you, that that was a revolutionary idea.

He was writing in the context of a world of classical pagan deities. And the gods of the Greco-Roman world used human beings as their playthings in their so-called gods. And to have these words addressed was utterly a new idea. He cares for you would have struck the first readers as something quite revolutionary and remarkable.

How can it be in a world of pagan impersonal deities that here is the one true living God who cares? for individuals that has a personal interest in you, in me, in my life, in my problems and my difficulties.

And I suggest to you that it's the same for us today when we read these words of Peter, when we read, for he cares for you, that we need to remember that this is something that the world out there needs to hear.

[22 : 58] They do not know that he cares passionately and deeply for you.

Society today, as we know, I'm not going to dwell on to dwell on the failings of modern society, you know it, but it's largely embraced the concept of Mother Nature, the goddess of nature, so-called, as if Mother Nature cared for you or me.

Nature is impersonal in that sense. And nature does not have a personal caring concern for you or me in our circumstances and lives, but we have the one true living God who does care for us, and that's what Peter presents us with this morning.

He says, here is the God who cares, our young people go away and they go to the cities and they're in a vast impersonal crowd of perhaps a million or more people lost in the city, and they may come to the point where they believe no one cares for me, no one will notice what happens to me.

Peter's message here counters that, and he says very clearly, he cares for you, it's that simple, and that profound, and we ask ourselves how do we know?

[25 : 03] I must cast my anxieties on him because he cares for me, are not empty words, they're not simply I'll be there for you, kind of empty caring that we hear so much of, rather, we see behind these words what Peter himself knew, and of course experienced, firsthand, witnessing, the care of almighty God in sending his son, his only son, to die on a cross, and to die on the cross bearing my guilt, my shame, my sin, your guilt, your shame, your sin.

why? Because he cares for you.

You want to see the proof of it, you see it in the transformed lives, in the disciples and the early church, and those who are willing to die themselves rather than deny the one who cares for them. And that love that's alluded to in this verse is something you know very well and I do not need to expound any more fully. I cast my anxieties on him who cares for me.

Who is that? He is the Lord and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and I see the love of my Father, my Heavenly Father, in that death on the cross, on that being nailed there to carry my guilt and my shame.

[27 : 09] And I hear it in his prayer, Father, forgive them because they don't know what they're doing. I see that care expressed when he turns to another hanging on the cross beside him and says, today you'll be with me in paradise.

That's the care. And that magnificence far out shines the little anxieties and problems that I thought I had a few moments ago.

and I take them and I cast them on him because he cares for me.

May the Lord bless his word to us this morning. Let's bow our heads in prayer. We bless you, our God and Heavenly Father, for that love, for that love that is shown on that cross.

So, Lord, help us to humble ourselves as we contemplate, as we meditate on that immense, infinite love so that we may indeed cast all our anxieties on him knowing that he cares for me.

[28 : 41] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.