

Social Distance From Anxiety

Kevin Crittenden

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Thus starts *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Were we to write a book today, we might say, “It was the worst of times” and leave it at that.

Each day, we awake to frightening statistics about the pandemic, this endless quarantine, the plunging economy, schools caught in limbo, businesses fighting for survival, and a growing, pernicious divisiveness in our country. We all imagine something disastrous is crouching on our doorstep and its desire is to have us.

For me, it’s a struggle to stay afloat in this maelstrom. But I am not lost and neither are you, for we have a solid Rock under our feet upon which to stand and weather this storm. His name is Jesus. And right now, today, He is talking to us in the same manner as He talked to Martha: “*Martha, Martha,*” *the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,” (Luke 10:41).*

Can you hear His calming voice talking to us?

Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee and He has the power to calm the storms of anxiety that rage within us. The Bible is a **living** document, so it still speaks to us today. Jesus knows our worries and speaks to us in **Matthew 6:25-34**. He says:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life” (Matthew 6:25).

“So do not worry . . .” (Matthew 6:31).

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34)

He knows that people are worriers; back then and even more so today. Anxiety is the chronic pandemic of our age, countered with medication and therapy. However, medication and therapy are not the **ONLY** resources that we have. Christ's counsel is sorely needed, and what He says can profit every one of us.

Christ is telling me, “Kevin, Kevin, you are looking intently at a blip in time. Up your game, son, lift your head and behold the Glory of the Future when you will enjoy the unfading splendors of a home in that eternal city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

I hear in my mind the tune from, “This World is Not My Home” based on Hebrews.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:8-16).

Quite frankly, I am amazed that the Creator of All takes the time to sit with insignificant me, as if I were important to Him. I’m sure that He is very busy and needed elsewhere. He’s probably looking at his watch.

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I then suddenly realize that this way of thinking is the source of my anxiety. I realize that I simply have **NOT TRULY ACCEPTED** in my heart His unconditional love for me. I can see the Cross from where I am. but it is at a distance.

We have so many Biblical verses that speak of God's love for us, such as: "*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*" (1 John 3:1b). This verse is in my head, but is it really in my heart? Do I trust in God's promises? Would I still worry if I did? "*Yet man is born to trouble [worry] as surely as sparks fly upward*" (Job 5:7). So my issue is a continuing one – truly pondering these things in my heart.

Jesus speaks again and says, *“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”* (**Matthew 6:34**). The familiar refrains drift through my head, “Stop worrying. Anxiety is futile. Do not borrow trouble. Don’t let worry about tomorrow rob today of its strength.”

How can I possibly do this?

Jesus is very patient with me. He says, *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”* (**Matthew 6:33**). When we are in a continual quest for God's kingdom, our focus is no longer on worldly cares, and so we are freed from the chains of anxiety.

Do not live in the uncertain future. Live in this moment. Glory in the fact that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Hug your family. Take a walk with your child today. Drink that coffee. Enjoy the life God has given you as His beloved child.

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