



Prelude – Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Welcome/Announcements

- October 29th Silent Retreat & Picnic
- Series & Resources |

Escaping disquieting, never experiencing anxiety and restlessness, is neither the goal nor possible. As long as today is called today, there will be moments of racing hearts, speeding minds, and tightened stomachs. They just don't have to be constant or crippling. Instead, our disquieted sensations can and should be a flashing light calling our attention to the under-the-surface happenings (in us, one another, or even the world seen and unseen). It's what we do once our attention is turned that helps us and those we share life with flourish.

- Weekly Practices & Resources: In the App & On the Website
- Monday Psalms, Pastoral Notes, & Collective Prayers: In the App

CALL TO WORSHIP | Psalm 119:105-112

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous decrees. I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word! Accept my **freewill** offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your just decrees. *I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law.* The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts. Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. *I incline my heart to perform your statutes; the reward is eternal.*

Song #1 – Only You by Young Oceans

Song #2 – I Set My Hope on Jesus by Papa, Boswell, Getty

Dismiss Kids

PRE-SERMON READING | Matthew 6:25-34

Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not *life* more than food, and the body more than clothing? **Look** at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? **Consider** the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore **do not be anxious**, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But **seek first** the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious (divided instead of whole) about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself (giving plenty of opportunity for effective concern for properly relating to the whole). Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

SERMON |

“Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Matthew 6:43)

Don't we know that to be true? It doesn't take much perspective to recognize that each day has more than enough to face, whether plenty or hunger, abundance or need, or more often, some mingled mess of more and less. There is no need to go looking for, much less create drama. Still, we, especially we raised and shaped in our era of history and global positioning, adore drama. We are drawn to it like moths to a flame! The stories that permeate our landscape, from bestsellers to the most watched and top listened, are an amalgamation of dramas good and bad, compelling and corny, tragic and triumphant. We are suckers, it seems, for the troubles of life.

While it is true that what we take in affects what we put out and that the stories we read, listen, and watch influence our experience of the world, still, I think there is something deeper driving the appetite for drama. We are, as we said last week, all looking or longing for the truly good (blessed, happy, purposeful), the manifestation of something substantial, a real that occurs in the granular interaction, collision with another. And doesn't drama give us a bit of that, the collision of one with another and the energy of that reaction, the feeling of life really happening before us? Drama sparks our senses of life, subtly or sensationally, drawing us into the passion in guarding and giving up what is most treasured, the emotions of losing sight of life and efforts to regain it, the heat of love and hate blending.

If the old adage that our hearts are idol factories has any validity, I'd argue that our souls are drama gluttons.

Whether the collision is with a problem, a competitor, an interior alignment, or an exterior force, the interactions that hold our attention and inform our imagination are processes of soul, the granular interaction of souls reacting—whether to one another or circumstances or itself. The problem is the drama we are perpetually pulled into is often an act—the Latin root of the word drama is an “act;” it's an embellished production that depicts reality but is just that: a depiction, a representation that only captures a part of the story (whether because of its inherent limitations or biased structure or both). **Life, truly, is not a drama, no matter how much we feel like it is.**

And when our souls get drawn into the particular dramas of life, the parts of felt conflict, these part-but-not-the-whole depiction of life fosters the kind of under-the-surface anxiousness that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 6. A word when used negatively, as in “do not be,” refers to functioning on “a part as opposed to the whole” or “divided into parts...going to pieces.”¹

We've said the unease and unsettledness churning under the surface of our everyday lives has less to do with the particular people and circumstances of our individual moments; it's not the workloads or workspace, the politics or personalities, the economy, or the wars and rumors of wars. Those “troubles” are as typical as the day. No, we've said the source of the subtle and overwhelming anxiousness and restlessness of our cultural moment finds its source in the processes (the series of interactions) that make up our daily living.

SOURCES OF UNEASE & RESTLESSNESS

¹ HELPS Word-Studies, [accessed here](#).

- Navigational Processes
- Relational Processes
- Soul Processes

Our **navigational processes**, our interactions with and formed by our maps and models for knowing where we are and what lies between where we are and where we are going, is one process. And so [Jesus opens his famed sermon](#) by reorienting our position, reframing “the” question of life, and providing us with a new (but not totally) map and model.

Our **relational processes**, the nature of our granular interactions, the dispositions we bring into them, and the dispositions brought into them by the other are another source, maybe the most prominent source, of our reactivity *and our peace*. And so [Jesus implores us](#) not to guard against such but to move towards these collisions, attentive to the little things using the map and model as retrospective tools rather than turn-by-turn directions.

And now, our **soul processes**—interactions within and between where the collision of *desire and discernment and devotion manifest into everyday living*—is our next process to look at.

Now, I am using the word “soul” to describe where our reactions to life resonate. Some would argue our reactions are a matter of reason, that we react to life the way we do because of what we know and believe and the convictions that move us. Others would argue that our reactions come from our desires, what we want, and the emotions that move us. In other words, we see reason and wanting as two autonomous forces in constant drama. Yet, the place from which our reactions manifest, the seat of our movement into living, at least according to our scriptures, does not disassociate our reason (ability to discern) from our desire but brings them together in *mutual submission* in the word translated as “wholehearted”:

Whatever you do, work **wholeheartedly** as for the Lord and not for men... Whatever you do, work *from the soul* for the Lord... (Colossians 3:23)

“Wholeheartedly” has another translation: *from the soul*. And so our scriptures imply, and social scientist Jonathan Haidt affirms (at least in my interpretation of his findings), “our soul” is actually the interaction of reason and emotion and can be described more like an elephant (emotion/desire) and a rider (reason/discernment) rather than two conflicting forces. This not necessarily proportionate give-and-take nevertheless works together in submission (mutuality) to get us somewhere (to an end), to “a righteous mind”² in Haidt’s terminology, a life with others that is abundantly for good, or “the kingdom of God and his righteousness” in Jesus’ terms. And so, the interaction of the soul, in truth, scripture, and social science, is the complete collision of affection, reason, and submission. To have a non-anxious (contented) soul is to react to life from submitted reasoned affection: with heart, eyes, and devotion drama-free. And when we live wholeheartedly, working from the soul, as Paul encouraged us, we not only experience but foster reactions that lead to what is good, true, and beautiful for us and those we share life with.

² See Jonatan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: why good people are divided by politics and religion*.

Our problem and the source of our anxiousness is when we get pulled into the made-up drama of the pieces, into the conflict of one or more of the parts, whether of desire or discernment or devotion (our own or others). Paraphrasing Matthew 6:19-24

Don't lay up for yourselves treasures that will need to be guarded, protected, coddled, and cared for out of fear of loss, for your heart will be taken when they are. [Have you ever felt the drama (the heightened energy/reactivity) that accompanies protecting something the heart is bound to?]

You need a light to get around, and if you have one, you can go just about anywhere. But, if you don't have a light, how much darker is the dark?! [Have you ever experienced the drama (the elevated energy/reactivity) that accompanies certainty that is uncertain?]

You cannot give yourself wholeheartedly to more than one life. Love and hate, devotion and despising don't actually mingle; their conflict will split you to pieces. You cannot give yourself to life whole and holy with God and any other version of life abundant. [Have you ever experienced the drama (the sensationalized energy/reactivity) that accompanies the dissonance of devotion?]

When we are not operating wholeheartedly, from the soul with submitted reasoned affection (heart, eyes, and devotion drama-free), we find ourselves getting entangled in treasure, darkness, and mammon dramas (partial (limited & biased) depictions/dramatizations of real troubles). So we feel anxious—pulled into the parts but not the complete, accurate picture and issues of making a life good.

Now, we have to acknowledge that there is an *internalness* to this process of soul (discernment and desire and devotion), the drama we make up that puts us at odds with God and others and ourselves. And there is an *external* component of this process of soul: being pulled into the drama of others (not their troubles, but their depictions of trouble (i.e., drama). So, what are we to do? Well, Jesus encourages us to do what the psalmist did:

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother...my soul is a child content. (Psalm 131:1-2)

Jesus says, in the verses ____ read for us earlier, to calm and **quiet your soul so you and others can flourish.**

1) To CALM (step out of the drama)| don't be anxious, get sucked into the made-up drama (your own or others) of surface desires (the desire for food isn't false or wrong, but the drama of getting/keeping the desired thing is, just look at the birds) or blinded reason (the need to clothe the body is reasonable enough, but the drama that is figuring out all the things and ways necessary to do so is a bit exaggerated, look at the flowers) or split devotion (just look at what the Gentiles, the culture/world give themselves to).

Identify the source of the unease and restlessness, then step back because the source is not the trouble (i.e., something you can fix with a few practical adjustments—a program, a thing, an answer, etc. It's a soul issue). Plus, no evidence exists that more drama makes a life longer or better.

2) Once QUIETED by giving to God what is his and not ours, you can step back into the trouble | Discern (look, Jesus says, (see clearly) and observe (thoroughly grasp) what really under the operations of life's troubles, and desire (seek, get to the terminal, the end) of your devotion, the kingdom of heaven (life with God and others that is already and forever) and his righteousness (experienced in the granular relations that make up today). You can live contented, in **a state of self-sufficiency** in relationship with Life itself, the experience of being sufficient within my soul, possessing the ability/competence to flourish in my life, in every circumstance in which my life is lived, because my life is lived in God's life, in his kingdom and righteousness.

You'll find, as Jesus said, not a life without conflict and struggle (trouble), but a life whole, complete—"added unto you" means put together. Again, we can't escape trouble, but we can do something about reacting to the drama.

REFLECTION & COMMUNION INVITE |

CONSIDER

Where am I being pulled into the drama of the soul within myself and with others? How can I calm and quiet my soul?

PRAY

Father, my soul is like a content child, free in your concern for the troubles of the day and freed from the drama of partial depictions.

I'll give you a few minutes to listen to the Spirit's examination and leading. When the music begins to play, that is your cue to pray and then make your way to the table and receive the elements of communion. Hold on to them as you return to your seat and remain standing as we sing together.

Song #3 – Mercy by Chris Renzema

COMMUNION with CORPORATE CONFESSION |

Our Father in heaven, hallowed is your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We receive from you all we need for life today, knowing there is plenty more for tomorrow.

We're forgiven, and so we forgive. Led not into the conflicts within and quarrels between, but delivered from all that thieve life.

Yours is the only and forever Kingdom and power and glory;
all of which you graciously share with us through Your Son.

In His life, we live. Amen.

Song #4 – Jesus Is by Paper Horses

BENEDICTION | John 1:1-5

As we conclude the day made for us, we enter into the work for which we are made [LIGHT THE CANDLE], remembering:

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!— came

into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.