

**“LIGHT THIEF”**

**Date:** November 14, 2021

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Each of us in this room must determine how we will use the time we are allotted...

- How do we not live a life of Missed Moments, and instead savor every God given moment in Time... “From Now to Forever.”
- Walking this out in real time requires some planning and foresight.

**Today we are going to talk about something that keeps us from experiencing and so engaging with all the beautiful moments passing in front of us...**

- ... Something that, especially at this moment in time, can cause us to be locked in our old and predictable ways...

**Today, I’d like to speak with you about... “Anxiety or Worry.”**

- This is not a topic I enjoy thinking about...
- Being honest... I try and avoid these feelings the best I can... As do many!

**It’s said that an average Bible translation has the phrase... “Fear Not” 365 times in it.**

- ... One for every day of the year...
- **Anxiety Facts:** Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older.
- During August 2020–February 2021, the percentage of adults with recent symptoms of an anxiety or a depressive disorder increased from 36.4% to 41.5%.
- The State with the highest reported level of Mental Illness is Oregon. Many of us aren’t surprised by this...
- Perhaps we ourselves, or some people we love dearly, wrestle daily in this way.

**Simply put... “Anxiety feels like a darkness that’s everywhere and covers everything.”**

- So, I believe... The more we can ‘See’ this darkness for what it is... The more we can learn to face and even strive within it.

**The opening verses of John’s Gospel introduce us to Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God.**

*(Vs) John 1:1-3 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”*

- John wants his readers to know that Jesus is fully God in human form, but it's not just that Jesus is introduced; that I want us to focus in on... it's HOW He is introduced.

*(Vs) John 1:4-5 – "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

- ...In this little verse... John is revealing the purpose of God coming to earth...

**"Jesus came to bring LIGHT to the darkness."**

- He's reminding all readers for all time, that in the same way God the Father, through light, brought life to the great void, and He hasn't stopped shining since...
- **Therefore, this means...** "Jesus Christ is the light we need to see by, and so capture the ever-fleeting moments in life that matter most."

**The Bible teaches this over and over...**

*(Vs) Ephesians 5:8-10 – "...at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true) and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord."*

- Seeing as 'Moments' are continuously fleeing our notice; it would make sense to me that light is an important requirement for noticing and so catching them.
- AND why, without this light... The creeping darkness of Anxiety and Worry so easily move in...
- Often keeping us in the dark and feeling alone. Cut off from experiencing many of the lifegiving Moments passing before our very eyes...

**So many of us "Just Live" this way... Acting like it's natural to live hidden in the dark, unexposed, and unknown, pretending this is normal...**

- IT IS NOT!
- If you've ever been trapped here, then you know that you can literally feel your life dimming...

**"Let each one examine his thoughts, and he will find them all occupied with the past and the future. We scarcely ever think of the present; and if we think of it, it is only to take light from it to arrange the future. The present is never our end. So, we never live, but we hope to live; and, as we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable we should never be so." - Blaise Pascal**

**Jesus Himself calls us out of this place, addressing our need to face these things head on...**

*(Vs) 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? <sup>26</sup> 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? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> 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? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. <sup>34</sup> “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

**He’s literally teaching us to capture the moments of the day... The ones standing right in front of us...**

- ... And not just the easy or “Good” moments...
- ... And not just once.
- To “Walk in the Light” is not a one-time decision, but instead something that takes thoughtful intentionality... Jesus is saying, today is the day to choose life and light!

**But you can’t do it unless you first recognize the darkness, you’re standing in...**

- In my own therapy, one powerful way of breaking many of the holds anxiety and worry had on my life was through standing in, and so claiming, that these traumas existed in the first place...
- ... It’s like being afraid of the dark and then taking some time to face that fear by standing out under the night sky...
- **This feels a bit unnerving:** Which is why some of us in the room want to walk in the light... We just don’t want to stand in the darkness to do it.

**So, this morning I’d like us to walk out into that darkness together...**

- Let’s start by recognizing the things in your world that bring you the most anxiety or worry...

**Because... “Anxiety and worry are the great Light Thieves of the world.”**

- Imagine them as a heavy darkness rolling in and around you... Feel what it is that keeps you up at night...
- Now recognize that within this dark place, you are not alone...

*“Jesus is here” ... (Vs) John 8:12 – “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”*