

1 Kicking the worry Habit

- Isaiah 43:1-7

2 Isaiah the Prophet

- But now, this is what the Lord says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. (Is 43:1–2 NIV)

3 Isaiah the Prophet

- For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. (Is 43:3–4 NIV)

4 Isaiah the Prophet

- Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth — everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” (Is 43:5–7 NIV)

5 Introduction

- It has been said that the some of the most useless words in the English language is the phrase, “Don’t worry about it.”
- They're useless not because banishing worry isn't a good idea. Generally, it is. Most of us worry far too much.
- But "Don't worry about it" is advice routinely ignored and impossible to obey. Or so it would seem.
- With the events of recent days where terrorists have killed innocent people indiscriminately in the streets of Paris, it makes us all wonder if it could happen to us.
- I don't know about you, but every time I go swimming in the ocean, I wonder if I'm not alone in the water.

6 Introduction

- Some psychologists -- borrowing language from medical science -- draw a distinction between acute anxiety and chronic anxiety.
- Acute anxiety, they say, is related to some immediate threat.
 - If you step out of your front door and come face to face with a grizzly bear, that's acute anxiety you're feeling.
- Yet, if you wake up each morning with a sense of free-floating dread, but have little idea where those dark forebodings are come from—nor any idea when or how you'll break free from them—then chances are, you're a victim of chronic anxiety.

7 The Meaning of Anxiety

- The word "anxious" is historically related to a Latin word, *angere*, which literally means "to choke or strangle."
 - Should anxiety get its bony fingers around your neck for any length of time, you'll soon be gasping for breath.
- There's another English word that traces its lineage to the same Latin root. The word is *angina*—the sharp, piercing pain that precedes a heart attack.
 - Angina arises when one of the coronary arteries becomes choked off by arterial plaque, blocking oxygen from reaching the heart muscle.
- In other words, anxiety comes from two Latin words that both can kill you.

8 Ancient Anxiety and Ancient Comfort

- Although we may imagine ourselves the most anxiety-ridden people ever, a quick look at the Scriptures reveals this was hardly the case.
- Part of Israel's problem throughout the Old Testament was that they were surrounded by problems and anxieties.
- The reasons for much of their trouble was their habitual backsliding—adopting the values and practices of the nations around them.
- Because of this they were constantly under the Lord's discipline and subject to oppression by their enemies.

9 Isaiah 42

- We need to look no further to Isaiah 42 to see how much Israel had fallen.
 - "Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the Lord?" (Is 42:18–19 NIV)
 - "You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing." (Is 42:20 NIV)
 - It pleased the Lord for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious. But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, "Send them back." (Is 42:21–22 NIV)

10 Isaiah 42

- Who handed Jacob over to become loot, and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned? (Is 42:24a NIV)
- For they would not follow his ways; they did not obey his law. (Is 42:24b NIV)
- So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war. (Is 42:25a NIV)

- It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand; it consumed them, but they did not take it to heart. (Is 42:25b NIV)

☐ Reflection

- This reminds me of the Scripture in Proverbs that says, But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. (Prov 4:19 NIV)
- And according to the Apostle Paul, They (the wicked) are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Eph 4:18 NIV)

11 ☐ Isaiah Calling - Isaiah 6:1-4

- In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.
- Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."
- At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. (Is 6:1-4 NIV)

12 ☐ Isaiah Calling -

- "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." (Is 6:5 NIV)
- Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." (Is 6:6-7 NIV)
- Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Is 6:8 NIV)

13 ☐ Isaiah Calling -

- He said, "Go and tell this people: "'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes." (Is 6:9 NIV)
- "Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." (Is 6:10 NIV)
- Then I said, "For how long, O Lord?" And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, (Is 6:11 NIV)

14 ☐ Summary

- Isaiah's purpose was to preach to a people who had crossed the line and had become reprobate—hopelessly backslidden and objects of God's wrath.
- They were so far gone, that preaching now hardened their hearts instead of softening them.
- To them, there was only one certainty and that was judgment.
- Their cities would become ruined and left without inhabitants, houses would be left deserted, the fields ravaged, and the land utterly forsaken.
- However, as there always is in the Bible, there is a ray of hope.
- As Isaiah declares at the end of this passage, "But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land." (Is 6:13 NIV)

15 Summary

- So then, Israel must pay for her sins. She can't continue to raise her fist and rebel against the Lord without suffering the consequences.
- God has been patient with her, but time has run out—judgment will come and the nation will go into exile.
- However, ultimately God has a plan for Israel and especially for us.
- According to Jeremiah the prophet . . .
 - This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. (Jer 29:10 NIV)
 - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jer 29:11 NIV)

16 Isaiah 43

- However, Israel has never ever been able to see the complete fulfillment of that promise.
- Her sins and enemies have made sure of that.
- However, the day will come, when the Lord will redeem Israel out of the Great Tribulation and she will become the chief nation of all the earth—the home of righteousness.
- This is where Isaiah 43 comes in, as it will be fulfilled when the Lord returns with all his saints.
- "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." (Is 43:1–3 NIV)

17 Worry

- This, of course, speaks to us as well.

- We are not the first generation of human beings to feel inundated by worry.
- True, we often use our mass-communications technology to construct an echo chamber to amplify our natural anxieties, but the fundamental psychological fact of worry is no different.
- By nature, we are a worrying people.
- At times, worry keeps us appropriately vigilant so we may fend off tangible threats.
- Yet, more often than not, it's simply a burden.

18 **Promise**

- Yet the Bible Text tells all of us that we need not fear.
- The reason being . . . we are special to Him.
- He has called us by name and given us new life in Christ.
- Even though He disciplines those He loves, He does so for our good, so that the deceitfulness of sin won't harden our hearts.
- Therefore, we can revile in His promises and set our hearts at peace in His presence.

19 **the Secrets of the Kingdom**

- When Jesus quoted Isaiah 42 and referred to the unbelieving Jews of His day as people whose hearts have become callous where they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes (Matt 13:15 NIV), He also says something very special to His disciples.
- He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance." (Matt 13:11–12 NIV)
- God has an abundant of good things to show us about the covenant we have in Jesus Christ.
- If we really understood them all, we would have little room for fear and anxiety.

20 **Fear Not**

- Again, let us look at the promise of Isaiah 43 . . .
- "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." (Is 43:1–2 NIV)
- So then, why should we "fear not?"
- Because the Lord has promised to be with His people through all their trials.
- Did Jesus make the same promise?
- "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt 28:20 NIV)

21 **Cure for Chronic Anxiety**

- So why should we not give into “chronic” anxiety.
 - The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. (Psa 23:1 NIV)
 - The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. (Psa 118:7 NIV)
 - The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. (Psa 28:7 NIV)
 - Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me. (Psa 54:4 NIV)
 - Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. (Psa 63:7–8 NIV)

22 **Cure for Chronic Anxiety**

- More Examples . . .
 - Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint [serving Him], and I know I will not be put to shame. (Is 50:7 NIV)
 - If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the Lord, who is my refuge — then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. (Psa 91:9–12 NIV)
 - God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Heb 13:5–6 NIV)

23 **What God Has Promised**

- Remember, God has not promised a “trouble-free” life.
- He has promised to his faithful people whom He has chosen that He will never leave or forsake them.
- This means He will be with us in times of trouble—giving us strength, encouragement, and help.
- As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 8, We are not sheep ready to be slaughtered. We are instead more than conquerors . . .
- Why? Because nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:39 NIV)

24 **Trouble in our World**

- There are a lot of things in the world to be anxious about.
 - We see the Middle East in turmoil.
 - We see terrorism on the rise.
 - We see an economy that is lethargic and weak.
 - We see society where the phrase, “all lives matter” is considered racist.
 - No doubt there are a lot of things to be worried about.

- But the one thing we ought not to be worried about is God's faithfulness.
- In fact, according to Lamentations, great is your faithfulness. (Lam 3:22–23 NIV)

25 **Conclusion**

- So then, how can we kick the worry habit?
 - Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lam 3:21–23 NIV)
 - I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; (Lam 3:24–25 NIV)
- The reason again why we can set our hearts at peace and kick the worry habit is because God is good and has promised to help us in the midst of all our problem.
- Let us therefore, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Phil 4:6 NIV) AMEN

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