

DON'T PANIC! Part 2 - Trusting God

Scripture used: Philippians 2 (NIV)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon preached the second message in a series of five on the theme "Don't Panic." Last week we learned how to contend with anxiety. We remembered that, through our relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ, we can develop the internal spiritual capacity and the resources to deal with a complex and anxious world.

The Apostle Paul has something important to say to us about the anxiety that could define us and cripple us if we allow it to dominate our lives. Paul offers several lessons on how to overcome this challenge and lead a life of grace. In the end, it is nothing less than a realization that Jesus holds our destiny, that we are freed of apprehension and crippling doubt, and that the light of Christ flows through us.

KEY POINT

The Big Idea: We can live a life where anxiety doesn't defeat us!

- 1) Anxiety is about expecting negative results - We have a natural tendency to worry about things going wrong, which can morph into an expectation that things will go wrong and we will be dreadfully disappointed. The solution is NOT to stop anticipating the future. When Paul was in jail, and his destiny was in the hands of Nero, Paul was under no illusion about the ultimate outcome. He was lucid and aware. The lesson is to trust God instead of the idol of Panic. "We are slaves of Jesus" means that we have turned over our lives to Jesus' ownership, and that Jesus will always have the last word.
- 2) Turning our life over to Jesus - Pastor Hurmon used an anecdote from his high school days. Occasionally pretty female classmates would gently flirt with him with the hopes of getting his assistance with homework. In a way, it is a metaphor of our flawed relationship with Jesus. We "flirt" with Jesus as the object of our affections when we need help. Instead, we need to fully turn over our lives to Jesus.
- 3) Paul offers several pro-active lessons to overcome existential anxiety:
 - a. Don't Choose Panic. Choose Purpose. Our musical performer on Sunday, saxophone player Antonio Allen, was a pastor's kid and firmly believed that his musical talent was a gift from God. Yet he was playing in clubs, constantly on the road exposed to temptations, and his marriage to his high school sweetheart was fraying. Antonio heard God request that the gift He gave him be returned to its original purpose of serving the Kingdom. Antonio chose purpose, not panic.
 - b. Do Not Lead a Life Defined by Selfishness. Obsession about gaining position will not bring any reward. To use NBA terminology, do not "block out" others and fight for position and advantage. Instead, fight for the mutual accountability, common goal, and collective win of the team. The team here is made up of your fellow brothers and sisters in faith.
 - c. Don't Strive to Impress. This is not to say "Don't Impress." But don't let comparison and competition be your aim. Your fellow human beings will be impressed by generosity, not by prosperity. Pastor Hurmon remembers a Town Hall meeting with Pastor Rick Warren at Harvard University. Many in the audience were skeptical and even slightly hostile towards Rick, and resented him being given such a platform on campus. Rick Warren meekly explained how, after selling 24 million copies of "The Purpose Driven Life", he and his wife made deliberate decision to "reverse tithe" (give away 90%, live on 10%). Their aim was to honor God and bless others, and the by-product was inspiring countless others thru their example.
 - d. Value Others. Forget about yourself long enough to help others. In your own life, advertise the needs of others. Be humble. Treat others better than yourself. If you belong to Christ and are united with Christ, you will truly find comfort and safety in His bountiful love.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Paul shines a spotlight on areas of our lives where we struggle with crippling doubt and anxiety. Have you experienced this? Where does it stem from? How can you face your situation in a new way, by taking your relationship with Jesus to a new level of submission, trust, and absolute hope for the future.

- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Paul highlights that the path to Jesus-driven serenity is through faith / belief / redemption / grace; service to others; and self-knowledge that is in turn applied to helping others. What are concrete steps you're taking to implement these steps in your life?
- 3) **DO** - Think of five practical scenarios where you can relinquish the need to impress & to fight for position, but instead focus on valuing others and, as a result, be an example of the light of Christ.