

DON'T PANIC! Part 3

Scripture used: Philippians 3:13 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon preached the third message in a series on the theme, Don't Panic. The focus is on anxiety. For some of us, anxiety cripples our lives, causing many to literally shut down. The Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle while in prison. Yet, he talks about joy sixteen times. So, what is his secret?

KEY POINTS

The Big Idea: A growing relationship with Jesus enables us to overcome our anxieties.

Some of us need professional help for anxiety -- such as therapists, prescribed medications etc. We can and should make certain choices in our lives:

- 1) Choose to trust God. The Apostle Paul made this choice.
- 2) Choose to focus. Anxiety will cause you to act irrationally. Paul took the position that even in death, he was going to be okay. Why? Because he belonged to God. Knowing that you belong to God -- there's a spiritual resource in that.

When you're living differently, for God:

- 1) You're not obsessed with gaining advantage. Competition.
- 2) You don't have to work on impressing people. Comparison.
- 3) You can forget about self long enough to help others. Control.

We need to distinguish between perception and perspective.

- 1) Perception: What we observe about what we experience.
- 2) Perspective: How we interpret what we experience.
- 3) Let's focus on applying lessons learned to the future.
- 4) God has shaped us in such a way that we are not to be trapped in the pain of yesterday. Perhaps you can't do anything about what happened to you. But, you can do something about how you interpret it.
- 5) In Verse 12, substitute the word perfection with what God has for me.
- 6) In Verses 13b, Paul says that he looks forward to what lies ahead.

Additional points:

- 1) God has an imagination. This is expressed by His creativity.
- 2) Paul, as a member of the Tribe of Benjamin and as a Pharisee, had believed that what was most important was to keep the Jewish Law to be right with God. Verses 6 and 7 (in Philippians 3) illustrate that Paul now counted all of that as less pertinent. He realized that God had something greater in mind for him.
- 3) God's best life for us entails having a relationship with Jesus.
- 4) Wealth is not promised to us. Mother Teresa epitomized this by having a global impact even with her vow of poverty.
- 5) God's working in us depends on [our] faith.
- 6) In Verse 10, Paul said that he wanted to know Christ -- even the suffering of our Savior. This tentmaker (the Apostle Paul) wanted to experience it all. He wrote about suffering in Romans 5:3-6. We know that suffering produces perseverance.
- 7) No matter what else, we should know that Jesus is the X Factor in our lives.

DISCUSSION Philippians 3

- 1) **HEAR** - The Apostle Paul gave us his testimony for not just dwelling on the past but focusing on the future. How is anxiety affecting your life right now? Is there someone in your life whom you may help with their anxiety?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - How do you handle anxiety in your life? Does it prevent you from doing the things you should? Which do you think is greater: The life you imagined or the life God imagined for you?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon directs us to read a Chapter a week in Philippians. Highlight key Verses. Note what is significant for you, in addition to what is taught on Sunday. Pastor Hurmon recommends this book: *The Little Things*, by Andy Andrews. Pastor Hurmon counsels those who are going through hardship to mark their calendars on a date that is one year ahead with these words: Things will be better when I get here. Like the Apostle Paul, we should strive to forget what's behind while remembering the lessons.