

Habakkuk 3: 17-19
"WHEN CRISES COME"

17

Although the fig tree does not bloom,
There are no fruits on the vines,
Although the produce of the olive tree is lacking,
And the carved ones do not give maintenance,
And the sheep are taken away from the fold,
And there are no cows in the pens;

18

Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
And I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.

I would say that there are two types of anxiety and striving.

One is what we might call general anxiety. The other we could call specific anxiety.

The first has to do with an essential attitude towards life, a general disposition of the personality towards excessive worrying and placing too much importance on people, possessions and life events.

This type of person lives an anxious life, driven by one project after another, dedicating himself too much to work, sacrificing human and family relationships,

preoccupied with success and social position, attached to material possessions.

This type of person is focused on success, and on achieving material goals, or that have to do with his image before others.

Even many Christians live that way. This is why Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:

17 God commands the rich of this world not to be haughty, nor to put hope in riches, which are uncertain, but in the living God, who gives us all things in abundance for our enjoyment.

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, generous;

19 laying up for themselves a good foundation for what is to come, that they lay hold of eternal life.

Because the things of the world are so important to the person who displays this type of general concern for the world, the circumstances and events of life, the ups and downs of daily living, has great power to affect their emotional state. If things are going well and the proposed goals are being achieved, the anxious individual feels happy and satisfied.

If things go wrong and something threatens the long-awaited prosperity and success, the person falls into anxiety and depression.

And so life goes on like a roller coaster, with continuous ups and downs and emotional instability.

The second type of anxiety is what we have called specific anxiety. This refers to an unpleasant emotional state that to some extent is legitimate and very understandable.

It is about those moments in life when we are going through a crisis situation that threatens our well-being.

For example, the loss of a job that we need to pay off our debts, The threat of losing our home and family through a divorce or family crisis, a diagnosis of a severe illness such as cancer or a chronic and debilitating illness. Or a long period at work with many demands, and situations in which we feel deficient and overwhelmed by the tasks that lie ahead.

In these cases, it is understandable that we might feel anxious and worried. It is easy to identify why we are experiencing anxiety. **It is due to a specific and identifiable situation.**

These two conditions, general anxiety and specific anxiety, are different and require different solutions.

In fact, properly treating these two conditions would require at least one sermon for each.

The words of Jesus in **Luke 12 verses 22 to 34** are more appropriate especially for the first condition, general anxiety, the exaggerated love for the world and the things of the world, which keeps us in a perpetual state of excitement and uncertainty.

Regarding this attitude, the Bible tells us:

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father[d] is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

The Bible calls us to set our sights on things above, not on things in the world. Our priority should be the things of the spirit, growing in the knowledge of God and his word.

Sanctify ourselves and grow spiritually every day; conforming our personality each day more and more to the principles of the Gospel and the character of Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that if we have sustenance and shelter we are happy with this.

This is not to say that we do not strive for excellence and to live a comfortable and enjoyable life. But we are warned against clinging to material things and basing our happiness on the objects we accumulate and the success we can achieve.

As children of God, our happiness must depend above all on our relationship with our heavenly Father, on knowing that our eternal destiny is guaranteed by Jesus Christ, on being useful to the kingdom of God, and on winning souls for Jesus Christ.

We should strive to live lives of excellence and achieve high goals, but our peace and contentment should not depend on these things.

If we get them, we enjoy them and we thank the Lord.

But if we don't get them or lose them, we can still recover and live happy lives, knowing that life is more than clothing or material things.

Another thing: the word of God calls us to live simple lives. To be content with simplicity, the simple pleasures of family, friendship, nature, rest, and meditation on spiritual and eternal matters.

The values of the Quakers: simple, elegant, durable (a chair, functional architecture).

When we learn to be content with simple things, then we are able to enjoy riches if God grants them to us.

With that attitude, material things do not control us; we manage them instead of them controlling us.

Having clothing, food and shelter, we are content with this.

Material possessions have their advantages and pleasures, but they also bring their worries and burdens.

Psalm 62:10

Do not trust in violence,

Not in the getting things; do not be puffed up;

If wealth is increased, do not put your heart in it.

The Bible says that when wealth increases, so do those who consume it. Solomon says: "sweet is the dream of the laborer, eat a lot or eat little. But wealth does not let the rich sleep."

So, we have to take possessions and success in the world with a grain of salt.

These are preventive attitudes that protect us against emotional instability and anxiety and anxiety.

We often discover when we acquire possessions and status that they are not all that they promise.

The things that truly provide happiness cannot be bought. They are generally simple, and are available to anyone.

Finally, the Bible calls us to recognize the **illusory character of the world**. The word reminds us in Psalm 103 that:

Man, like grass are his days;
He blooms like the flower of the field,
16
That the wind passed through it, and it perished,
And her place will not know her anymore.

Solomon also reminds us: "vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

The sooner we become disenchanted with the world, the more prepared we will be to be content and to live in peace. The world is fleeting and imperfect. It specializes in giving us affliction, as Jesus says.

The only thing permanent and real is the eternal. We have to practice this type of thinking and internalize it until it becomes a philosophy of life.

What truly matters is what lies on the other side of this world. Faced with the illusory, passing character of this world, the Bible opposes the ultimate reality and the durability of the eternal. And it counsels us to strive above all to accumulate points for eternal life.

In that same Psalm 103 where we are told that man is like the flower of the field, which is fleeting, we are also told:

17

But the Lord's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him,

And his justice over the children's children;

18

On those who keep his covenant,

And those who remember his commandments to do them.

The Lord Jesus Christ warns us:

Luke. 12:19-21

19 Do not lay up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves neither break through nor steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

SECOND PART

We have discussed the antidote to general anxiety and anxiety. What can we do when our life is attacked by some bad news, a bad result, or something that truly threatens our survival or our happiness? How can we deal with specific anxiety?

How to react when a cherished dream collapses in front of us, or when we lose a loved one, or when we are diagnosed with a serious or incurable disease?

This has a lot to do with what we've been talking about resilience, and I'm referring to that series of sermons.

How to regain contentment and peace when we experience something that shakes us and threatens our stability in life?

The first thing we have to do is turn to prayer and to the Lord for wisdom on how to act specifically. Sometimes we will have to ask for understanding to find specific solutions to the problem.

We have to identify and name the problem, take action, and proceed to make the necessary changes to counteract and resolve it.

This is important, because many times anxiety paralyzes us and we feel unable to do anything, and that inability leads to anxiety and prolonged suffering.

Simultaneously, we have to arm ourselves with the idea that if the problem has no solution, we can survive and find a new state of normality. Ultimately, every situation has a solution.

1 Corinthians 10:13

13 No trial has come upon you that is not human; But God is faithful, who will not let you be tested more than you can bear, but he will also give the way out together with the trial, so that you can bear it.

Knowing that there is a solution encourages us, and keeps us from succumbing to despair and anxiety.

Many people commit suicide because there comes a time when they feel that there is no solution, and that they are inevitably doomed to suffering and failure.

The child of God knows that there is always a way out of any situation. The challenge is how to find it. There is always hope.

A very simple yet profound Pentecostal chorus says:

// I will praise him with my heart,
I will praise him with my voice //.
And if I'm missing my voice
I will praise him with my hands,
And if I'm missing my hands
I will praise him with my feet,
And if I'm missing my feet
I will praise him with my soul
And if I'm missing my soul,
It's because I went with him.

In other words, there is always a reason to retain hope.

Another thing: we must cultivate an attitude of complete trust in God, of knowing that God knows what is best for us and that he always has a plan, even if we cannot discern it at the moment.

Over time, we often discover that the unpleasant alternatives God sometimes offers us are blessings in disguise, and that what we feared so much turned out to be exactly what we really wanted and needed without knowing it.

By the way, many of these resources to which I am referring require continuous practice, continuous self-administered indoctrination, until they become an ingrained attitude of life.

This comes through continuous meditation on the word, prayer, experience and continuous reinforcement of these truths until they become a firm posture of life that we apply automatically every time we find ourselves in crisis situations.

The best time to develop these attitudes is when we are in times of normality and peace, not when we are in the midst of crisis.

Another thing when we find ourselves in adverse situations that we cannot resolve: we have to completely abandon ourselves to God's grace and entrust our destiny exclusively to him. Like Esther, before appearing before King Ahasuerus when she said, "If I perish, I perish."

Many times we have to stop fighting and adopt a posture of aggressive abandonment to God's mercy and divine intervention.

"Let go and let God." Let go, and let God work. in that posture there is great power.

Earlier, we referred to when David had to find peace despite the death of his son after the sin with Bathsheba.

Another thing that helps us, when we cannot solve a situation, and what we have arrives, we must adjust to the new normal and find conformity in the new situation in which we find ourselves.

It is no use continuing to fight and become bitter with something that we cannot solve. Better to find conformity in the new situation. "If there is no cure, why are you rushing? And if it has a cure, why do you hurry? "

Another thing that helps us to confront the crises of life: we must reach that attitude in which we recognize that the world is illusory and fleeting, and that the only thing that matters is the eternal and the spiritual.

We have to relativize the world.

This is a conviction that the great philosophers of history have always found helpful in living a stable and peaceful life.

Finally, we have to find the good in the new normal that we are experiencing.

Finish with the illustration of the closure of Hopkinton State Park last week. We looked for solutions, we recognized that there was nothing we could do about it. We adjust emotionally, we look for an alternative, we get used to the new reality, and we take advantage of the day off we had.

Everything turned out much better. Other people were able to get baptized, etc.