

JESUS IN YOU AND AT EASE
Patterning After The Healthy Christ
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Rarely on Sunday morning have I given a series that was topical in nature. We generally we are in a book of the Bible and systematically going through I but I really felt impressed in my spirit to share with you a series of messages on really developing the temperament of the Lord Jesus. Or Patterning After the Healthy Christ. I believe Jesus is healthy. And I believe that we can pattern after Him. In these next nine weeks we're going to be looking at our life as compared to the Lord and seeing what resources are in the Lord's life that we can draw upon to live a more Christ-like life.

As we think about patterning after the healthy Christ I just want to at the beginning note two foundational principles that are involved in patterning our life after the healthy Christ. One foundational principle is this that when we think of Jesus and being able to come after Him we ought to recognize that the resources which Jesus drew upon to live a whole some emotional and temperamental and mental life are also available to us.

I think we do violence to the person of Jesus if in looking at him we'd say, "It was easy for him to live like that because he was divine. He was the Son of God." Of course that's true. But Jesus also was human. In a mystery, in a way that we cannot grasp or ever fully understand, fully God and fully man. The scriptures tell us in Hebrews 4 that "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but we have one who was tempted in every way as we are. Yet without sin." If he was tempted in every way as we are this means to me that he really aced the things as a man, as a human being that you and I face as a human being. If in his human nature he could be successful in developing as he did then we ought to look at what resources the Lord drew upon as a human and recognizes that we ourselves could draw upon those same resources.

In fact, Jesus said, "I am not alone. The Father is with me." Cannot we say the same thing? I am not alone for the Father is with me. And can we not also say the words that Jesus gave to us, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Part of being the healthy person that the Lord wants us to be is learning to recognize that we can draw resources from God to enhance our life.

I think though that our ability to draw upon these resources is directly related to your obedience to the Lord. If we feel when it comes to some of the traits and temperaments that I'm going to be speaking about over the next weeks that those belong to someone else and those are idealistic and those could never apply to me. They may well apply to the Lord but you don't know the kind of rough pattern and personality pattern I'm in. How could I ever be like that? I think to have that attitude is to really throw in the garbage heap a whole lot of scriptures which tell us that we can be like the Lord Jesus. Philippians 2:5 says "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." 1 Corinthians 2:16 says, "We have the mind of Christ."

Can you look at all the things that you're wrestling with and looking at in your life and say that with the apostle Paul? If you can't say that from truth at this moment can you begin to say it from faith. We have the mind of Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:5 Paul notes "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." In Romans 12:2 we are exhorted "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be

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transformed by the renewing of your mind.” All these scriptures are talking about our mind belonging to Christ being in our mind and the opportunity that our mind can be renewed. We’re told by Peter in 1 Peter 2 “To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving an example that you should follow in his steps.”

Join me in bringing your life to the Lord and in these coming weeks consciously seek to have the mind of Christ in you and pattern after Jesus.

Our subject today is “Jesus in You and At Ease.” There are many people, myself among them, who at times are quite frankly not at ease. Who may be bothered with worry and anxiety and a great deal of nervousness. I think it’s well when we look at the theme that Jesus can be in you in such a way that you are at ease, inwardly relaxed and calm. When we look at a subject like that I think it’s best to start with an inventory. To begin to measure the level of peace in your life.

If your life would be equivalent to a car motor holding car, the dipstick in a car, you take it out periodically to see what the level of oil is. What’s the level of at ease in your life? Are you a quart low? Two quarts low? Or is the red light coming on all the time and your motor is just about to burn up.

The inventory of the level of peace in the Lord’s life is fascinatingly presented to us at a time, which we might well expect that the level of at ease would be very low. When Jesus gives us the inventory of what his level of at ease-ness is, it is in the day or the evening before his crucifixion. The evening before he is to be betrayed by one of his own, when he is to be led out and mauled by soldiers and put upon a cross. I would expect him to be very anxious and fretful in that moment.

But what does he do in that moment? He speaks to his own, John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid.” If you knew that in just a few hours you were going to leave your family and friends and never to come back what would you give to them as the leading attribute of your temperament could you say with the Lord Jesus of your family or friends, “My peace I leave with you.” Or would it be “My fears I leave with you. My anxieties I leave with you... I’m sure glad I leave my worries with you and my bills as well.”

How do you know what level of at ease or peace you have in your life? Let me ask you a series of questions and take a mental note as to whether you answered yes or no.

Do you let things build up inside of you until you’re about to explode and you feel ready to explode? That may be suggesting that you’re really not being able to live a day at a time. You’re keeping stuff within you and that’s acting against you.

Do you use pills and medicines to help you relax? Here I’m not talking so much about a one in a while kind of thing but as a regular pattern do you find yourself in such a nervous condition or anxiety condition that you need to use pills or medicine or perhaps alcoholic beverage or some other inducement to be able to calm down. Isn’t it very striking to look at the Lord as he comes to the cross and they want to offer him some pain killer? And he chooses even at that moment to refrain from the painkiller so at ease is he within himself that he can refuse the intoxicant.

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Do you worry a great deal about anything? Maybe about your health?

Do you get tense and upset when there is a lot of work to be done in a very short period of time? Can you imagine Jesus how he could have wrestled with this temptation from time. He has literally all the world on his shoulders, so little time to do so much. Can you see him snapping at the disciples? Do you get tense and upset when there's a lot of work to be done in a short amount of time?

Another question: is it hard for you to relax because you're busy all the time? Do you almost feel guilty if you set down and take five minutes of complete relaxation? You've got to go, go, go! Remember what Jesus says when everybody is around him and he's the center of attention and everybody it seems like needs him. He comes to his disciples and says come a part and rest for a while. What actually happened, the crowds followed him and he didn't get that moment of rest. At least he was willing to break off and say there are moments in our life when we need to rest and relax. We don't have to stay uptight and driving all the time.

Do you have difficulty falling asleep on a regular basis? Look at the Lord. He is on one occasion in a dangerous situation. A storm at sea, everybody else is panicked. Where's the Lord? Asleep on a pillow in the back of the boat. That suggests to me that he was able on a regular basis to sleep. He did not have a regular home. "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." Yet he seems to be able to get a good night sleep. There are other occasions when he chose to put himself to waken and continue in prayer.

Another question: do other people think of you as a tense, high strung nervous person? Do you think of the Lord that way? Do you think of Jesus as a tense, high strung nervous kind of a person who rolls over everyone because he's got a job to do and he's just up tight to get it done?

One last question: Do you often feel restless or jittery without knowing why?

What were the levels of yeses and nos? If you have a whole lot of yeses it may suggest that you're a person who's finding it difficult to relax and be at ease. A whole lot of nos and maybe you don't need this message so much. Maybe you're already patterning after the Lord. What's your level of at ease? I think if you find yourself saying a lot of yeses to the questions which I have asked today we need to look at the examples that Jesus gave in order to assess results of the pattern of worry and anxiety which is being built in your life.

Worry, as I would understand it, is a state of fearfulness imagined or real. It blows a problem completely out of proportion.

Anxiety is the feeling of dread or apprehension or uneasiness. There is by the way, a difference between worry and concern. We do wrong if we do not have proper concern at times in our life. Worry is blowing that concern out of proportion. Anxiety is simply a bad way of fear. There are proper fears that we ought to have. There are right kinds of fears. There are wrong kinds of fears where we become so anxious and in some ways become helpless.

What is the pattern of worry and anxiety doing in your life? As you look at you relief this past week what did you worry or get tense about this past week? Anything? How much time did you

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spend in worry or tenseness this past week? What did your worry or tenseness accomplish? What really came out of it? Do you know what comes out of worry and tenseness? The Lord very clearly taught about this.

Three examples. One from Matthew 25:24-25. The man with the one talent. Remember the story? Where the Lord had given people different levels of talents. Five, two, one. It doesn't seem like all that big a sums of money to us but in biblical days we'd probably calculate the value now as a thousand dollars. But that's not a true value of the talent. Because that was based on the average working laboring man earning twenty cents a day. He'd have to work five thousand days in order to get a talent figured on our average economy the sums of the talent in our culture would be about a quarter of a million dollars. I would suggest if all of a sudden somebody dropped a quarter of a million dollars on you that you may be a little bit anxious about what to do with that money as well. Especially if you knew you were going to be held accountable for it. The guy who gave it to you was going to come back and ask of you a proper accounting.

Jesus critiques the man with the quarter of a million dollars. Matthew 25:24. The man who had received the one talent came "Master," he said, "I knew that you were a hard man harvesting where you had now sown and gathering where you had not scattered seed so I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See here is what belongs to you."

What had kept this man from being more and doing more with his potential? Simply worry and anxiety. Worry and anxiety in this man stifled his initiative. He couldn't do anything because he was so anxious with the money, which he had. It drained his courage. He didn't have the capacity to act because he was afraid. It inhibited his productive activity. He couldn't take on meaningful planning to realize the good effect of that money. And therefore wound up squelching his responsibilities.

When we live in a pattern of fear and anxiety we really become incapable of planning from faith or making good decisions or taking action. It becomes something, which closes in more and more on us.

Martha is a another example of worry and anxiety. Luke 10:38-42. Verse 40 "But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to do work by myself? Tell her to help me.' 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'You are worried and upset about many things. But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her.'"

What about Martha? Martha as a worrier assumed needless responsibility. That's what worriers tend to do. And they tend to dump guilt upon others. They're not worried and concerned as I am. They really have a problem maybe with other people being perfectly at ease. Martha winds up therefore missing the best because she's so anxious. She can't really figure out or follow through with what the Lord may have for her life.

Notice in contrast to Martha is the example of Jesus right after that in 11:1. "One day Jesus was praying at a certain place." Notice where his priorities were. He had just told Martha her priorities were in the wrong place. That she wasn't really spending time with him. She was anxious about too much. She'd taken on too much responsibility. Mary had the better part.

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Now the Lord himself examples that and he's not so anxious doing the Father's work that he has neglected having a relationship with the Father.

There's one other scripture where Jesus talks about the bad patterns that happen as we assess the results of the pattern of worry and anxiety. And that's in Matthew 13:22, the parable of the sower and the seed. "What was sown among the thorns is the man who hears the word but the worries of this life and the deceitful of wealth choke it and make it unfruitful." The worries of this life choke the seed of the kingdom, which has been planted.

What does worry do? Chokes your potentiality and produces death in you. If you assess the results of the pattern of worry, tenseness and anxiety it is bring you down. One of the things we need to do if we want to begin patterning after the Lord Jesus in terms of being at ease is to start where we're at and to recognize that continuing in that kind of pattern is going to lead to further undoing on our part.

We are given an opportunity to imitate the response of Jesus to pressures and situations which produce anxiety and worry and fear.

Let's look at how Jesus dealt with the temptation of anxiety. Since Jesus was himself tempted in all points like we are I believe that he must have had moments of anxiety. Moments when he could have been tempted to be anxious.

What was one of the great anxious things that Jesus could have been bothered with? I would identify one that Jesus could have been anxious about as this: would the Father come through? Jesus was on his rode to Jerusalem to die on the cross. Would the Father come through? Remember on the cross this appears to initially be his concern. He cries, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" Of course we know from psalm 22 that that Psalm goes ultimately on to affirm the nearness of the Lord. But those beginning words quoted on the cross at that moment Jesus could have been entering in had he allowed himself, to a deep level of anxiety. Would the Father come through?

As we look at Jesus' teaching of would the Father come through his classic teaching on worry is in Matthew 6:25-30 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important that food and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they are? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith. So do not worry saying What shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear. For the pagans run after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you need tem. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well."

Notice several things that Jesus is doing in this passage which reflect his own ability to realize that the Father will come through.

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He is on the one hand saying why are you worried about the smaller when God has given you the greater? Inasmuch as God has given you life why worry about the things it takes to keep life going.

Another thing that Jesus is doing here is he is not appealing to our emotions in respect to laying aside worry. He is appealing to our reason. To our rational thought processes. He's saying think like this. You might say, My problem is with my emotions so why give me a whole set of reasons why I shouldn't worry when it's really an emotional thing. Why don't you just come in and heal my emotions? The Lord is saying I want you to get a proper thought process. If you will start conditioning your emotions by the right kind of thinking I have given to you, things will fall in line.

Maybe one thing we ought to do when it comes to worry is to take a card and write on it "Stop" on one side. On the back side of the card write the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-34. Whenever we find ourselves beginning to worry have that card with us and pull it out and say "Stop!" And turn it over and begin reading what Jesus has said. He relied upon the Father in the simple things of life, he could rely upon the Father in the great things – going to the cross.

So much of worry and anxiety really comes down to a question of whether or not we are trusting God in our life. The Lord is asking you to trust him. This is what Jesus does on the way to the cross. He falls into the arms of the Father. He knows that underneath are the everlasting arms. You're not going to fall and break yourself. When you're in a panicky situation and it looks like everything is about to come unglued, the arms of the Lord are beneath you. Jesus was so confident of the presence of the Father that in the midst a great storm he could nevertheless fall asleep in the back of a boat. That's what I call being relaxed. He was sure the Father would come through.

I believe that Jesus was a person that developed not only divinely but humanly in terms of his human side. Jesus learned this trust and confidence in the Father through a right understanding of the Old Testament. There are plenty of examples in the Old Testament that show us that persons who preceded the Lord who walked in the faith learned also this great confidence in God.

A classic illustration of developing confidence in the Lord is 2 Chronicles 20. A king by the name of Jehoshaphat. He was a time of real danger in the text, 2 Chronicles 20. The danger is described in verse 1. "After this the Moabites and the Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to war on Jehoshaphat. Some men came and told Jehoshaphat a vast army is coming against you from Hazazontamar, from the other side of the sea. Alarmed [notice that. There is a time to be fearful. If an army were coming against me I'd be alarmed as well. Jehoshaphat had a proper instinctive reaction.] Alarmed Jehoshaphat went into his chambers and resolved to inquire of the Lord." That is where he made his beginning to solving the problem. He took it to the Lord. "And he proclaimed a fast for all of Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord. Indeed they came from every town in Judah to seek him. Jehoshaphat stood up 'Oh, Lord, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand. And no one can withstand you.'" Then again in verse 12 at the close of his prayer, "O our God, will you not judge them for we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do. But our eyes are upon you."

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Then the word of the Lord comes to Jehoshaphat through a prophet, verse 15 “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God’s.” He comes before the Lord with the confession that he has no power but he recognizes that they are God’s children, and it really belongs to him. That the Lord has the power. Then the confirming word comes: the battle isn’t yours after all. It is the Lord’s.

What a beautiful way to set back and be at ease and trust the Lord. Isaiah 41:10 says “So do not fear for I am with you. Do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah again says in chapter 43 “But now this is what the Lord says, He who formed you O Jacob, he who created you O Israel, fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine. 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 your Lord, your God, the holy one of Israel, your savior.” In Jeremiah, the words the Lord would have drawn upon as well says, “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.’” Will the Father come through? I think our response in life must be yes, the Father will come through. My heavenly Father watches over me.

I can, in the words of Peter “Therefore cast all my cares upon him for he cares for me.” That learning to cast your cares upon the Lord may require a long-term process, a learning to begin to think the way the Lord wants you to think. Or it may even come in an instant act of obedience where the Lord causes you to have a gift of faith and at that moment literally cast your anxieties and cares upon Him.

Learning to trust the Father.

I’ve got as far as I think the Spirit wants me to get in this service to perhaps awaken your consciousness to the need to relax in Jesus and to trust in him anew.

How different, Lord, all of our lives would be if we would be able to let go of ease-ness which comes to us in our freeway culture here where we are rapidly hurdling by one another all the time and always it seems like going someplace to do some thing. Or maybe if we’re not doing that, setting alone maybe really lonely and worrying about things in the past that we can’t live over and worrying about things in the future that haven’t come yet. We can be very coiled up on the inside. Lord, you so much want us to be at rest in you. To be anxious for nothing. To be able to live the plan with the opportunity to use the full range of our emotions and mental faculties so that part of our potential as people in your kingdom is not cut off because we’re trapped in the pattern of anxiety and nervousness. It’s through your teaching, Lord, that you’ve set us free. And it’s also through your own person coming into our lives that brings us a new level of freedom. As we measure the level of at ease-ness in our life today, Lord, if there is a very low level of ease may we come to you in a new way and determine even in this moment to say, Thanks Lord for speaking to me today. I know that with your help I can begin to develop the resources which will help me to be calm even when things about me might be breaking loose. I can have your peace. Thank you, Lord, for saying to us “My peace I give to you.” In Jesus’ name. Amen.