

SOUL FOOD

July- August 2020



*If I say, “My foot slips,” Your mercy, O Lord, will hold me up. In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.
(Psalm 94:18-19)*

Try reading the Psalms as if Jesus were speaking—because ultimately they are His words. See if that brings some hope or comfort.

Trying times can bring fear and anxiety. Here are some ways to cope. Rev John Odhner

..... many of us struggle with fear, anxiety, and panic, and sometimes it is hard to stop being anxious.

You might have observed **that fear and anxiety are even more contagious than viruses**, and like viruses they can make us miserable and emotionally sick to the point of interfering with our work, relationships, and health. Just as we need to learn practices that can help us mitigate the spread of the virus, we need to learn spiritual practices that can mitigate the spread of fear and anxiety.

God loves everyone and does not cause anxiety, but instead brings peace and joy. Yet God works through our efforts, so when we understand and do our part in letting go of fear, we allow the Lord to bring us a deep sense of peace. Here are some practices that can help you overcome anxiety.

1. Breathe.

“Breath” in the Bible also means “spirit.” In the parable of Adam, God breathed the breath of life into the human He had formed from clay and Adam became a living soul, (Genesis 2:7). In another parable the people of Israel, depressed and lifeless from being in captivity, were compared to dead bones. The Lord promised, **“Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live,”** (Ezekiel 37:5). Symbolically, Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, **“Receive the Holy Spirit (or Breath),”** (John 20:22). This gift of life and spirit comes with breath because breathing is the basis for the thought of our spirit. Without breath we become unconscious.

We cannot think at all without the concurrence and support of the breath of our lungs. So quiet thought is accompanied by quiet breathing, deep

thought by deep breathing. We hold and release our breath, we suppress or intensify our breathing, in response to our thinking—in response, then, to the inflow of some feeling related to what we love, breathing slowly, rapidly, eagerly, gently, or intently. (Divine Love and Wisdom 382)

This is why we often find it **easier to let go of anxiety and stress and to reach deeper, more peaceful thoughts when we deepen and calm our breathing.**

2. Pray for peace

Peace doesn't come simply from the absence of conflict and danger, but rather **from our connection with God.** Through prayer we can open our hearts and minds to God, so that peace can flow in.

If I say, “My foot slips,” Your mercy, O Lord, will hold me up. In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul. (Psalm 94:18-19)

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:25-27)

Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When a we have this faith, we have peace, for we then fear nothing, and no worry about things to come disquiets us. (Secrets of Heaven 8455)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

3. Enjoy music

Music can change our mood. When Saul was troubled by an evil spirit, David played his harp, and “Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed,” (I Samuel 16:23). Songs about the Lord and His kingdom give people “heavenly gladness from the holy and blessed influence” of heaven, (Secrets of Heaven 8261). Music can lift even evil people outside themselves to feel heavenly sweetness, (Spiritual Experiences 2112). One of the things Jesus did when about to face His most difficult trial was to sing a hymn, (Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26). Paul tells us to **“be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God,”** (Ephesians 5:18-20).

4. Recognize the source of anxiety

Ever notice that some people seem able to remain calm in crises? Is it possible (as Rudyard Kipling said in his poem "If") for you to "keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you"? One key to staying calm is to recognize that **evil desires, along with the anxiety and fear they cause, come from hell.** Jesus was tempted by Satan, (Matthew 4:1). Paul spoke of the "thorn in his flesh," which was sent by Satan to buffet him, (2 Corinthians 12:7). Actually the name "Satan" in the Bible simply means "The Enemy." It is just another name for hell, which is the real enemy of our spiritual life. Often Jesus' brought healing and peace to troubled souls by sending away the evil spirits that disturbed them.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
(Ephesians 6:12)

Fear and anxiety result from the influence of hell stirring up conflict within us, but few of us believe it. Instead, we tend to blame ourselves, other people, or our circumstances.

An eternal truth is that the Lord rules heaven and earth, also that no one but the Lord lives from self, so every impulse of life flows in—a good impulse of life from the Lord and a bad impulse from hell. This is heaven's faith. When we have that faith (as we can when in a good state), then evil does not stick to us and become our own, because we know that it is not from ourselves but from hell. When we are in this state then we can be given peace, for then we trust in the Lord alone. Peace is given only to those who have that faith from goodwill, for others continually wallow in anxieties and desires that produce agitation. (Secrets of Heaven 6324)

5. Resist anxious thoughts

Jesus tells us not to worry. **“Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on.”** Your heavenly Father provides food for birds and beautiful clothing for flowers, and you are worth much more than them. So **“seek first the kingdom of God,”** and **“do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things,”** (Matthew 5:25-34).

The command **“Do not be afraid”** occurs about **100 times in the Bible**. It's not there to make us worry about being anxious, but to reassure us and **encourage us to make repeated efforts to let go of fear**. It is repeated again and again because the Lord knows that we need that reassurance often.

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10) Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

It can be discouraging to send away anxious thoughts only to find yourself obsessing about them five minutes later. But the effort is not wasted. One reason why the Lord allows anxieties to pop up again and again is that **each time we resist them our faith becomes a little stronger. We can't get rid of fear by telling it to go away once, but by telling it a thousand times**, just as your muscles will not become strong by doing one push-up, but by doing hundreds or thousands over time.

Before their battles, the officers of Israel would send home any soldiers who were afraid, because fear is contagious. **“What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart,”** (Deuteronomy 20:8). Those who **“fear the evil, also cause others to fear them,”** (Apocalypse Explained 734:13).

“When there is fear, then those who want to inflict evil are at once at hand,” (Spiritual Experiences 4744m). Consequently, “no one is reformed in a state of fear . . . **for love opens the interiors of the mind, but fear closes them.** . . . and makes it impossible that a person can be reformed,” (Divine Providence 139).

6. Trust the Lord

A passage in *Secrets of Heaven* (8478) indicates that **people who trust God feel less anxiety.**

People who do not trust the Lord:

- are always worried about the future.
- are not content.
- grieve when they do not get what they want.
- have no consolation.
- feel angry with the Lord.
- curse themselves.

- continually draw evil upon themselves.

People who trust the Lord:

- are not worried or anxious about the future.
- are unruffled, content, peaceful not dejected.
- do not grieve over losses.
- are not made sad by poverty.
- are always advancing towards a happy state.
- are in the stream of Providence.
- continually receive good from the Lord.

Of course, it is easier to *say* that we should trust the Lord than to actually do it. Jesus' disciples didn't know how to trust, so they said, "**Lord, increase our faith,**" (Luke 17:5). The Lord answered that **faith as small as a mustard seed would be enough**. That, of course, is because **a seed starts small and then it grows**. Just as we make many efforts to send away fear, we repeatedly try to trust God. Contrary to the cliché, we don't **learn to trust God** through one huge "leap of faith," but rather **thousands of very small baby steps, each one increasing our faith a little bit and bringing us closer to God**.

Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:5)

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.... In God I have put my trust. I will not fear. (Psalm 56:3-4)

7. Think about Jesus' trials

Some people talk as if Christians should never have doubts and anxieties because they trust Jesus to solve all their problems. But even Jesus suffered with human diseases and weakness.

He is despised and forsaken by men; a Man of pains, and knowing sickness.... Surely our sicknesses He has carried; and our pains, He

has borne the burden of them; and we reckoned Him plagued, smitten by God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:3-4)

Jesus felt fear and despair. He was repeatedly tested by the devil, even to the point, on the cross, of crying out, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34). Because Jesus overcame hell through these trials, He is able to help us overcome by fighting against hell on our behalf in our trials.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

Jesus helps us through our challenges as Someone who has been through the same struggles, and from compassion joins our efforts.

8. Read God’s Word, especially the Psalms

The Bible is filled with examples of people who felt fear and anxiety, and were able to find hope and comfort by turning to the Lord. The Psalms especially treat of David's troubles, and how the Lord helped him:

The pangs of death surrounded me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of hell surrounded me. The snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears. (Psalm 18:4)

These descriptions aren't just about David. On a deeper level they tell the story of spiritual crises of every person of faith.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (Psalm 34:19)

On the deepest level, the Psalms are all prophetic of the life of Jesus Christ, and how He overcame hell through struggling against the same hells that challenge us. **Try reading the Psalms as if Jesus were speaking—because ultimately they are His words.** See if that brings some hope or comfort.

9. Think about eternal life

Jesus said that instead of worrying we should “**seek first the kingdom of God,**” (Matthew 6:32). Paul tells us not to set our minds on earthly things, because our citizenship is in heaven, (Phillippians 3:19-20). "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth," (Colossians 3:2). This idea is echoed here:

*Many people have a sense-oriented life—people who indulge in physical pleasures, and also those who have altogether rejected thought beyond what they see and hear, and especially those who have rejected thought about eternal life. Consequently people like this despise all these things, and when they hear of them, they loathe them. **Spirits like these abound in the other life these days**, for mobs of them come from the world, and **they influence us to indulge our natural inclination**, and to live for ourselves and the world, but not for others except as long as they favour us and our pleasures. **In order to be uplifted from these spirits, we must think about eternal life.** (Secrets of Heaven 6201)*

One effect of thinking about eternal life is that we realize that the troubles of this world are soon over.

*Divine Providence pays no attention to things that only last a short while, and come to an end when our life in the world is over. No, **the Lord is concerned with things that last forever — things that have no end.** Things that never end really exist. Compared to them, things that come to an end do not really exist. Consider, if you can, whether even a hundred thousand years means anything compared to eternity. You have to admit, it does not. So how important are the few years we live on earth? (New Jerusalem 269)*

Some people would say that it is unrealistic to think about eternal life when faced with real-world problems. But **heavenly things are not a fairy-tale future, but the love, compassion, and integrity that are the most real part of our life, and make it worth living.** What is unrealistic is thinking that worry, fear, and anxiety can ever bring us enduring happiness.

Therefore let those who wish to be eternally happy know and believe that they will live after death. Let them think of this and keep it in mind, for it is the truth. (Secrets of Heaven 8939.3)

10. Practice Gratitude

One reason why we find so many things to worry about is that we practice finding problems, so we become experts. Like any habitual practices, **the more we worry, the easier it is to worry.** One way to take our mind of life's problems is to **focus on the good things in life.** If we aren't used to giving thanks, it can be hard to feel grateful. Many people find that **writing down what they feel grateful for each day changes their whole outlook.** Try this experiment: each day write down three things you feel grateful for. After a month you will have a list of almost 100 things; after a year you will have over 1000. I predict that as you do this **you will find it gets easier and easier to notice good things in your life, easier to experience joy, and easier to appreciate other people. This in turn will help you feel less anxiety.**

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2-3)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases. (Psalm 103:2-3)

As a result of Covid 19 the rent at Mc Dougall House has changed to block bookings of 3 hours which are beyond our budget.

Sunday worship at Westville South Africa is broadcast live 3pm WA time at Westville New Church Face Book, or can be viewed later.

Programme

July

<i>Sun 5th</i>	<i>10:30am Worship and Godly Play</i>	<i>Aubin Grove</i>
<i>Sun 12th</i>	<i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	<i>Aubin grove</i>
<i>Sun 19th</i>	Worship 10:30 <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	Perth Society at Moffat's <i>Aubin Grove</i>
<i>Sun 26th</i>	<i>10:30am Worship and Godly Play</i> <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	<i>Aubin Grove</i> <i>Aubin Grove</i>
August		
<i>Sun 2nd</i>	10:30am Worship <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	Perth Society TBA <i>Aubin Grove</i>
<i>Sun 9th</i>	<i>10:30am Worship and Godly Play</i> <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	<i>Aubin Grove</i> <i>Aubin Grove</i>
<i>Sun 16th</i>	10:30am Worship <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	Perth Society TBA <i>Aubin Grove</i>
<i>Sun 23rd</i>	<i>10:30am Worship and Godly Play</i> <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	<i>Venue TBA</i> <i>Aubin Grove</i>
<i>Sun 30th</i>	<i>10:30am Worship</i> <i>5:30pm Observing Spirit</i>	<i>Aubin Grove</i> <i>Aubin Grove</i>

Online enjoyment at your leisure. Links below

Zoom church and Godly Play: Due to lockdown from the corona virus we have been meeting at **10 am on Zoom for Godly Play**. Contact Anni.

Hurstville: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAGnuXghYSi5ILGHmZETbFw>

Westville : <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/new-church-westville-weekly-sermon-podcast/id437213305>

Bryn Athyn: <https://newchurchaudio.org/>

Logopraxis: <http://logopraxis.online/sermons/leave-your-gift-at-the-altar-part-i/>
<http://logopraxis.online/guided-meditations/psalm-46-guided-meditation/5947/>

www.newchurch.org

***We are all created to become angels of Heaven
which is a kingdom of communities.***

Based on the Holy Bible, **The New Church** gains further inspiration and understanding through the Heavenly Doctrines revealed by the Lord and published by 18th century scientist and theologian **Emanuel Swedenborg**. In the 35 volumes of this new Revelation we see the Lord's plan for a rebirth of Christianity, a clear vision of God in His own Word, and what that means in our lives.

The venue for worship will be at the venue in the programme. Phone Mary at 0407448405 to enquire.

ONLINE donations Westpac

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