

June 18, 2017

"Fathers, Do Not Eat the Bread of Anxious Toil"

Psalm 127

Intro

- "Prozac Nation is Now the United States of Xanax,"
The New York Times (June 10, 2017)

"If you're a human being living in 2017 and you're not anxious, there's something wrong with you."

- There is a whole worldview behind anxiety.
- Anxiety can wear multiple masks.

"I've discovered that pacing skills are in short supply among Christian men, with the result that too many—especially those most committed to serving Christ in their families, in the workplace, and in the local church—are crashing or fading fast before their race is over. It's not just a 'Christian' problem though; it's also a culture problem. Some 225 million workdays are lost every year in the United States due to stress; that's nearly a million people not working every workday. The data on pastors is especially worrying, with high levels of stress, depression, and burnout leading to broken bodies, broken minds, broken hearts, broken marriages, and broken churches." -**David Murray**, *Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture*, 11

God Builds the House (v. 1-2)

Dependent on God to *Produce*

- There are things that need to get *done*. And this requires something of you. How do you handle that?

- Much that we're called to engage is complicated. It takes patience and skill.

"The fact that you live in a broken-down house in the midst of restoration makes everything more difficult. It removes the ease and simplicity of life. It requires you to be more thoughtful, more careful. It requires you to listen and see well. ...It requires you to contemplate and plan. It requires you to do what you don't really want to do and to accept what you find difficult to accept. You want to simply coast, but you can't. Things are broken and they need to be fixed. There is work to do. You can tell if a house is being condemned or restored by the size of the tools that are in use. If there's a crane equipped with a wrecking ball out front, you can give up on restoration. But if there are a lot of hand tools around, that's a sign of hope. True restoration takes patience, subtlety, skill, and grace." —**Paul David Tripp**, *Broken-Down House: Living Productively in a World Gone Bad*, Loc. 166

- Solomon & building the "House of the LORD."

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ...According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:6, 10-16)

- We are absolutely dependent on God to produce the most important things in life.

"Apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5)

 Do you believe this?

Dependent on God to *Protect*

- We live in a world that makes us vulnerable.

Dependent on God to *Preserve*

- “The bread of anxious toil.”
- Don't let your motive for rising early and going to bed late be selfish ambition or fretful activity.

“And he said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. 28 The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’ (Mark 4:26-29)

“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” (1 Cor. 15:10)

➤ *Motivating Grace & Moderating Grace*

“Without motivating grace, we just rest in Christ. Without moderating grace, we just run and run—until we run out. We need the first grace to fire us up when we're dangerously cold; we need the second to cool us down when we're dangerously hot. The first gets us out of bed; the second gets us to bed on time. The first recognizes Christ's fair demands upon us; the second receives Christ's full provision for us. The first says, 'Present your body a living sacrifice;' the second says, 'Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.' The first overcomes the resistance of our 'flesh;' the second respects the limitations of our humanity. The first speeds us up; the second slows us down. The first says, 'My son, give me your hands;' the second says, 'My son, give me your heart.'” –**David Murray**, *Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture*, 13

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15:58)

God Blesses the Household (v. 3-5)

Heritage

- If you have children and grandchildren, *God* did that!
- Whether we have toddlers or teenagers, we can begin to see them as a drain on our happiness rather than as a means that God has designed to give us *joy*.

Weapons

- God has bigger plans for your kids than just their safety or academic success. He wants them to be an *assault* on the world.
- Shaping the arrows...

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

"To this end we must have our children in hand while they are yet children, or they are never likely to be so when they are grown up; and we must try to point them and straighten them, so as to make arrows of them in their youth, lest they should prove crooked and unserviceable in later life. Let the Lord favour us with loyal, obedient, affectionate offspring, and we shall find in them our best helpers. We shall see them shot forth into life to our comfort and delight, if we take care from the very beginning that they are directed to the right point."
-Charles Spurgeon, "Psalm 127," *The Treasury of David*

- What if your children have been launched into the world, and they haven't landed in the direction where you aimed?