

**Introduction:** Our theme is about total well-being of a person and resonates with apostolic benedictions:

*“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” -1 Thessalonians 5:23*

*“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” – 3John 2*

Our specific topic suggests that Fear and Worry are adversaries to be conquered, and that is rightly so!

- **Fear is the body’s auto-response** (breathing/pulse, dilation/blinking, posture/motion [hasten |reduced| stillness], etc.) **to perceived danger**; it means to be somewhat cowed or afraid of something, someone or a situation; it might seem justified but should not be our portion -1 Jn 4:18, Rev 21:8.

- **Worry resides in the mind; a constant reflection** upon something that cannot be wished away, a brooding **on a potential or present or past issue**... that needs resolution. Settle it with God -1 Pet 5:7, 1Jn 3:21-22

Worry when mixed with fear, becomes anxiety which affects both the mind and the body, see **Mk 4:35-40**.

E.g. a child informed that there is a snake in a bush might worry there is a snake in every bush she comes across. This lesson is about *wresting with and dominating the thoughts that persistently scare us to make us act in certain sub-optimal ways*. The aim is attaining peace of mind, enjoying a relaxed body, having a calm spirit and being a gentle soul. It is not unusual for anxiety in isolation without remedial steps to lead to depression or mental disorder, which could result in self-harm or suicidal tendencies. The topic is timely given the stressful economic and security situation of the country. Let us face individual and collective challenges with faith so as to overcome.

**Thesis:** The Lord recognizes these are real issues that confront mankind hence exhorted us thereon repeatedly:

- *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.* Lk 12:6-7
- *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* -2 Timothy 1:7
- *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* -Matthew 6:27 -32

Some practical steps to effectively overcome fear and worry: (“**Fear not**” occurs in 61 verses in scripture)

- Identify and acknowledge the actual situation, is your fear reasonable? Prov 28:1, Mt 10:23, Acts 8:1
- Reassure yourself with God’s promises: Isa 41:10, Lk 12:32, Rm 8:28, 1 Jn 5:14
- Focus on the present: Pls 118:24, Mt 6:34 (the day the Lord has made... Do not worry about tomorrow...)
- Seek support from those who know better or have experience and overcame righteously: Prov 11:14, Gal 6:2
- Act in faith and pray to God, don’t merely complain or be paralyzed with fear: Prov 14:23, Jms 2:26
- Encourage yourself with scripture and positive thoughts: Pls 42:5, Phil 4:13, Heb 13:6
- Develop a growth mindset: Prov 3:5-6, Rm 5:3-4, Jms 1:3-4
- Relax rather than fret e.g. turn off the news, play a game, listen to music, exercise; thereafter seek *serenity to accept the things you cannot change, courage to change the things you can, and wisdom to know the difference*

**Conclusion:** *Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**.* -Phil 4:6 -8