



#5 "Today Is All You Have"
Rev. Dr. Jeremy Mahood
November 12, 2017
Small Group Notes

INTRODUCTION: Modern society seems to function in a way that is creating worry, fear and anxiety. The pace of our lives, the material goods we have acquired and the amount of activities we are involved in are just a few of society's norms that seem to be creating an anxious lifestyle. Much of the marketing that is directed at us, along with the news media, the pace of life itself and the speed of change all contribute to feelings of uncertainty. It is these feeling of uncertainty that cause us to react in ways that can be unhealthy for us spiritually, emotionally and physically.

1. DISCUSS:
 - a. In what ways do you see people trying to manage the uncertainty of life?
 - b. What are some of the unhealthy ways you see people trying to manage uncertainty?
2. READ Matthew 8:23-28
 - a. Explain how this story is an illustration of uncertainty.
 - b. Why do you think Jesus called them people of 'little faith'?
3. COMMENT: Some people try to manage uncertainty by living in the past or worrying about the future. Discuss this quote and explain why carrying the baggage of the past only weighs us down in the present.

Odds are, you have luggage in your hands right now. Somewhere between your first step out of bed this morning and your last step out the door, you picked up some overstuffed bags. You stepped over to the baggage carousel and loaded up. Don't remember doing so? That's because you did it without thinking. Don't remember seeing a baggage terminal? That's because the carousel is not the one in the airport: it's the one in your mind and the bags we grab are not made of leather: they're made of burdens.

The suitcase of guilt. A sack of discontent. You drape a duffel bag of weariness on one shoulder and hang a bag of grief on the other. Add on a backpack of doubt, an overnight bag of loneliness, and a trunk of fear. Pretty soon you're juggling more luggage than a sky cap. No wonder you're so tired at the end of the day. Carrying all that baggage is exhausting.

---Max Lucado

4. Explain this statement from Sunday's sermon:
"YOU CAN OVERSTUFF YOUR SUITCASE BUT YOU CAN'T OVERSTUFF YOUR MIND"

5. READ Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)
 - a. What instruction are we given in verse 18?
 - b. What does it mean to "dwell on the past" (from the NIV)
 - c. "YESTERDAY HAS NO POWER EXCEPT WHAT WE GIVE TO IT TODAY"
What do you think this statement means?
 - d. In what ways do we give yesterday power in today?
 - e. Explain how we are powerless to change the events of yesterday.

6. Discuss these statements from the Sunday message:
"To live in yesterday is disempowering. Powerlessness leads to hopelessness. Hopelessness leads to disappointment. Disappointment leads to depression."

7. READ James 4:13-14 (NIV)
 - a. What idea is James trying to get across to us?
 - b. In what way does James put our lives in perspective?
 - c. How do you see people attempting to control their future?
 - d. In what way can worrying or trying to control the future rob you of the joy of today?
 - e. Explain why worrying about the future can create a sense of powerlessness, hopelessness, disappointment and depression.

8. READ Isaiah 43:18-19
 - a. What is God saying to His people?
 - b. In verse 19 explain how living in the past or worry about the future could cause you not to 'perceive' the new thing that God is doing.
 - c. How is it possible to miss the present when we live in the past or the future?
 - d. What is God's promise here in the face of uncertainty and the impossible?

9. READ: Hebrews 10:22-23
How can this verse help us live in the present while trusting in God's future?

10. READ: Philippians 4:6-7 (try the Message version)
 - a. What are we told to do to replace worry?
 - b. When we pray to replace worry what promise is given to us?
 - c. Who is it that displaces the worry in our lives?
 - d. Explain how prayer can bring you back to the present reality and keep you from dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

11. Discuss this statement from Sunday:
"PRAYER CONNECTS YOU WITH THE PERSON OF HOPE"

12. READ: Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)
 - a. What is the promise?
 - b. What will you need to do this week to keep your thoughts fixed on Jesus?
 - c. How can moment by moment prayer help you keep focused?

13. Discuss with your group what you could do to help each other refuse to worry replace your worry with prayer. What steps can you take this week to live only in the present?

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Note all the times when your mind drifts back to the past with a negative emotion. Note all the times you are trying to control future outcomes in a worry some way. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw your attentions to these issues and cause you to remember to

STOP!

GIVE THANKS

And PRAY

BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS PACK SACKS/GIFTS

Through the ministry of our **Small Groups** we have the opportunity to help teenage boys and girls who are connected with Big Brother/ Big Sisters. To date we have helped over 250 teenagers have a Christmas they would not otherwise have. This season we have the opportunity to help *21 teen boys* and *12 teen girls*. These teenagers are not helped by other agencies as they do not qualify for Christmas funding because they are no longer considered 'children.' Information is available at the Welcome Centre or through your small group. Thank you for reaching out in love to these teenagers.

LIVING NATIVITY

This is our thirtieth year presenting the gospel and the birth of Christ outside at Science North from December 20-24th 7:30 pm nightly. Please pray for God to move in the hearts of those who witness this moving event, pray for people to participate as cast and crew and pray for the funds to cover the cost of this free gift to our community.