ANXIOUS *for*

NOTHING

FINDING CALM *in a* CHAOTIC WORLD

By Max Lucado with Jenna Lucado Bishop

**Meditate on These Things**

 Read Philippians 4:4-8 / specifically v 8 Specifically

OPENING REFLECTION

Satan loves to fill our minds with comparisons. He wants to fill our heads with a swarm of anxious and negative thoughts. But the good news is that while there are many things in life over which we have no control, we get to choose what we think about. We get to select our own thought patterns. ~ Max Lucado

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ~ Philippians 4:8

Martha. She’s always had a bad rap. Probably because she stuck her foot in her mouth at times. She was judgmental, demanding, and maybe a little too opinionated.

But Martha had another side. She was a servant and a nurturer, and boy could she throw a dinner party. Everyone in her village of Bethany probably called her the “hostess with the moistest.”

Luke’s Gospel tells us of one occasion when Martha discovered Jesus was in town. Immediately she opened the front door and welcomed him in for dinner … and possibly some stinky, sweaty disciples too.

Soon the aromas of the kitchen filled the entire house. The oven was full, pots were boiling, Martha was chopping, and time was ticking. “Harrumph!” she muttered with tight lips. “If my sister would come in here and help me with all this, maybe dinner would make it to the table before breakfast.”

While Martha was stewing, Mary was listening. She had started out across the room from Jesus, but as Jesus spoke, she couldn’t stop listening. She inched closer and closer, till she sat at his feet. All her thoughts were fixed on Jesus, while all of Marth’s thoughts were “distracted by all the preparations” (Luke 10:40).

Martha finally reacheda point where she was boiling hotter than the soup on the stove. She marched into the living room where Jesus was teaching. “Lord,” she said, “don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell er to help me! (V 40).

Mary was embarrassed. The disciples were wide-eyed. And the whole room waited to hear what Jesus would say.

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” (v 41-42).

When it comes to our thoughts, we have a choice. We can focus on the worries of this world. Or we can fix our thoughts on the “only one” that will not be taken from us.

“Mary has chosen what is better,” Jesus said.

Let’s do the same. Just as Jesus entered into Martha and Mary’s living room, he has entered into our hearts. That means no matter where we are or what trials come our way, we can sit in his presence and fix our thoughts on his truth.

Luke (v 40) tells us that Martha was “distracted”. How did her concerns lead her to treat Jesus and her sister? When your mind is fixed on concerns instead of Christ, how does it lead you to mistreat the ones you love?

 As in the video using technology. Has technology or smart phones or laptops, tablets, caused you more anxious thoughts or allowed your life to be more organized?

Have you had challenges, problems, issues, in your life, can you remember that what you thought about the challenge was bigger than the challenge itself?

Our minds are constantly under attack. The good news is that while there are many things in life over which we have no control, we get to choose what we think about.

We occupy the control tower of our mental airport.

The bleeding woman had every excuse not to go to Jesus. Her disease had made her and outcast. She could have believed in the lies that said she was unfit or too dirty to touch Christ. But instead she chose to believe that she would be healed.

Paul’s words in Philippians 4:8 make it clear that the best way to face anxiety in this life is with clear-headed, logical thinking.

When unknowns come our way, instead of responding with anxious thoughts, we need to hand our minds over to Christ. We need to let him control our thoughts with his truth.

The best way we can filter our thoughts is by clinging to Christ, abiding in him. He is the true vine, and as we hold onto him, he will produce fruit in us.

Our goal is not to bear fruit but to stay attached to the vine. We are to make Christ our home and hold onto him.

What was the reward Jesus said to the bleeding woman’s determined faith? (v 33-34) What promise can we take away from his response to her?

One of the best ways we can think on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, and excellent is by attaching ourselves to the One who embodies truth, nobility, righteousness, purity, love, and all things good and excellent.

What does it mean to abide in Christ?

Who or what do you find yourself abiding in more than Christ? How can you attach yourself to Christ more than the people and or things of this world?

What are the fruits we produce when we remain in Christ? (see Galatians 5:22-23.)

Our Goal is not to bear fruit but to stay attached to Christ . What is the difference between these two goals?

Farmer jones sensed trouble in the trellis. His grape givers groaned. Leaves drooped. Vines dragged. Listless loganberries sighed in chorus.

The Farmer listened for a time and decided to do what grape growers have done since the beginning of the writing of this chapter. He talked to his crop. A boss to branch chat was in order. He set a stool between the rows, pulled off his straw hat, took a seat, and invited, “Okay, guys. Why the gloom? This is not the whine I had in mind.”

At first no one spoke. Finally a slender tendril opened up. “I just can’t do it anymore!” he blurted. “I squeeze and push, but the grapes won’t come.”

Leaves bounced as other branches nodded in agreement. “I can’t even get a raisin to pop out,” one confessed.

“Call me cluster barren,” shouted another.

“Forgive me for being sappy,” offered one more, “but I’m one burdened branch. I’m so tired my bark is barking.”

Farmer Jones shook his head and sighed. “No wonder you guys are unhappy. You’re trying to do what you can’t do and forgetting to do what you’re made to do. Stop forcing the fruit. Your job is to hang on to the vine, to keep connected to the trunk. Get a grip! You’ll be amazed by what you will produce.”

Far-fetched conversation? Between a farmer and a vineyard, yes. But between our Father and his children? He must hear multiple moans a minute.

“I’m a spiritual flop.”

“The only fruit I bear is fear.”

“Perfect peace? I feel like a perfect mess.”

Make it your aim to cling to Christ. Abide in Him. Is he not true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and worthy of praise? Is this not the message in John 15:4-10.

Our assignment is not fruitfulness but faithfulness! The secret to fruit bearing and anxiety-free living is less about doing and more about abiding! God Bless!!!