

TEXT SERMONS

DO NOT WORRY!**Matt. 6:24-34**

We are living in tough times. The unemployment rate is high, companies are going out of business, foreclosures on houses escalate, wars drag on and on, cancer claims more and more lives. "Do not worry," you say? If we do not worry what do we do?

Before I attempt to answer that question, there are several misconceptions regarding the subject of worry that I want to clear up before we deal with the problem of worry itself. I begin by pointing out that there is a difference between watchful concern, wise planning and worry. I'll explain:

"Do not worry" does not mean do not be concerned.

Concern is connected to living in and dealing realistically with life situations. Worry is anxiety over not being able to control the future. There are things we need to be concerned about: daily demands, responsibilities, our families (*"if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."* 1 Tim. 5:8); our Christian testimony, the Church, our duties as good citizens, etc.

You may be worried about the medical difficulties that you are having or the economic situation you are experiencing, but worrying will not change the matter – it will only bring fear, frustration and spoil your enjoyment of good things in life. It is right to be concerned and to take proper action to resolve the dilemma, but to worry only compounds the difficulty.

"Do not worry" does not mean do not make plans.

Jesus talked about the wisdom of planning before either building or battling in Luke 14 as follows: *"Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost... or what king, going to make war.... does not sit down first and consider ..?"* (Luke 14:28-31)

It's not a sin to plan for your work, your family, your retirement, vacations, church programs, etc. James writes in his epistle that it's alright to plan as long as we subject our plans to God's will. He wrote: *"You ought to say, 'If the Lord wills we shall live and do this or that.'*" (James 4:16) Concern and planning are needed – worry is not!

Let us go back to Jesus statement: *"Do not worry"* and consider the subject in five steps: first,

I. THE PRINCIPLE WE MUST FACE.

Matthew 6 is part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In verse 24 He speaks about the root cause of worry. He is saying, "Who are you following?" "Who is your Master?" "If I am your Master, you do not need to worry – I will take care of you!"

Notice His words: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

Here we see:

A. The disaster of dual leaders. *“No one can serve two masters....”*

Trying to please two Masters, two supervisors, two overseers will result in displeasing both causing conflict, confusion and frustration which are the symptoms of worry.

B. The discord of divided loyalties. *“...either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”* Or, as another translations reads, *“You cannot serve God and worldly riches.”*

Jesus is telling us that the weed of worry that grows in the lawn of our lives is the result of being double-minded. The Greek word for "worry" means "to divide the mind." Living as though we are totally responsible for everything in our lives, while saying that we believe that God is responsible is to have a divided mind.

James, in his letter, says that such a person is *“double-minded, and unstable.”* (James 1:8) The principle that we must face is this: We have a loving heavenly Father Who is our Master – we should trust Him, be loyal to Him and not worry!

II. THE PROBLEM WE OUGHT TO ADDRESS.

Our Lord was clear when He said: *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”* (Matthew 6:25).

“I tell you” - This is Jesus speaking - this is the Holy Word of our Heavenly Father to His children! What does He say to us? *“Do not worry.”* Three times in Matthew 6 the Lord Jesus said, *“do not worry”*:

- *Do not worry about your life – v.25*
- *Do not worry about food, clothing – v.31*
- *Do not worry about tomorrow – v.34. Consider:*

A. The Meaning Of Worry. The words *“take no thought”* in the King James Version is *“do not worry”* or *“do not be anxious”* in other versions.

Our English word *“worry”* comes from an old German word *“wurgen”* which means *“to choke or to strangle.”* *“Worry”* came to mean: *“mental strangulation from anxiety over something anticipated.”* Worry clouds the mind and keeps us from seeing and comprehending things clearly.

Illust. Worry is a lot like fog. The Bureau of Standards in Washington, D.C. put out an article about the composite elements of fog. It said that a dense fog that covers a city block 100 ft. deep is composed of approximately one 16 oz. glass of water divided into 60,000 million drops. There is not much substance to fog, but it can cripple an entire city. Worry is like fog. There is not much to it - a few drops of fear, anxiety and imagination and we are all fogged up with worry!

B. The Menace Of Worry. Worry is a very dangerous thing. It takes an awful toll on our bodies, minds and spirits.

It affects us physiologically.

Dr. Charles Mayo of the famous Mayo Clinic said, "Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands and the whole nervous system. I have never known a man to die of overwork, but I have known a lot who died of worry. Ulcers are caused not so much by what you eat, but by what is eating you!" A John Hopkins U. doctor says, "We do not know why it is that worriers die sooner than the non- worriers, but that is a fact."

Illust. My wife had a friend in college who had an assignment for speech class. Her assignment was to give a speech on "Worry." In her introduction she said, "*I was awake all night worrying about this talk on worry!*" Worry is a thief – it robs of sleep, peace of mind, etc.

It affects us psychologically.

Psychologists have now come up with a name for chronic worriers: GAD – Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Think of the many that it has driven to the point of mental imbalance. We have heard the common statement: "*He is worrying himself to death.*" That is no exaggeration in some cases.

It affects us spiritually.

Jesus said, "*do not worry*" – that is a command just as forceful as the commands: "*You shall not murder*"; "*You shall not commit adultery*"; "*You shall not steal*" etc. Worry is sin! It is understandable for sinners to be worried about food, shelter and clothing. But Christians should know better! Why would Jesus suffer and die for the same children He planned to neglect? Worry causes us great harm physically, mentally and spiritually.

Jesus not only talks about a principle here and our problem, but He talks about our Parent, and therein is the reason why we should not worry.

III. THE PARENT WE CAN TRUST.

Two times Jesus used the phrase "*your heavenly Father*" when speaking about worry: "*Your Heavenly Father feeds them.*" (v.26) "*Your heavenly Father knows you need them.*" (v.32)

The emphasis that we must not miss is this: we have a Parent; we are not God-forsaken orphans! Our Heavenly Father, who cares for birds cares for our earthly needs, therefore, we should not worry, but trust!

A. He Provides What We Consume.

"*Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink...*" (V. 25)

In v. 26 He cites the birds as an example of His care: "*Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*"

The psalm writer said, "*These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up.*" (Psalm 104:27-28) "You give – they gather." God provides but they must peck! You've probably heard about the two birds talking:

"Said the robin to the sparrow,

*I would really like to know,
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so.*

*Said the sparrow to the robin,
I don't know, but it must be
They have no Heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me."*

B. He Provides Our Covering. Vs. 28-32

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them." (vs.28-32)

He clothes fowls, fields, flowers; will He not care for His followers? We worry about earthly problems because we do not trust our heavenly Parent's promised providential provision! He knows that we need food and clothing; we are more important to Him than fowls, fields and flowers. He will not forget us! We are not to live like the "pagans" who *"run after all these things."* (v.32)

Illust: Martin Luther, the great church reformer, was going through an extended period of depression and worry. One day his wife dressed in the black clothing of a mourner – a black dress, veil etc. Martin said to her, "Who has died?" His wife replied, "God." "God!" said Luther. "How can you say such a thing?" His wife said, "I am only dressing like you are living. You are acting like God died." He realized he was denying his belief by his behavior and changed from worrying to trusting.

Let us do the same for we have a Parent Who is too good to be unkind and too wise to make mistakes. He never slumbers or sleeps, He has never lost a sheep and He is a Father Who is always *"near at hand."* (Jeremiah 23:23) Take comfort and encouragement from the testimony of David: *"I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; and his descendants are blessed."* (Psalm 37:25,26)

IV. THE PRIORITY WE SHOULD PURSUE. V. 33a

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." There are two essential thoughts to take away from this verse:

A. The First Concerns The Primary Thing in Life.

The main priority to pursue in life is to put God first: *"Seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* - that is to be the preeminent priority in our lives - more important than food and clothing, life or death.

Earlier in this same chapter we have what we call the Model Prayer. Notice that the model reads: *"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, **your kingdom** come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today **our daily bread**...."* (Matt.6:9-11)

Did you notice that His Kingdom interests are mentioned first and our "daily bread" is mentioned second? The eternal has priority over the temporal, the Kingdom first then Bread! The #1 priority is to put God first in our lives. That is the antidote to worry. If we are not seeking God first, no wonder we are worried!

Worry is the warning light on the dash-board of our lives, warning us that God is really not first in our lives at that particular moment. You see, when we worry we are acting as though God is not big enough to handle whatever problem it is that is causing us to fret and be anxious. The cure for worry? Put God first! If He is not first in your life, rearrange your priorities.

B. The Second Concerns The Secondary Things in Life.

*".... and all **these things** will be given to you as well."* What things? All the things that we are so prone to worry about: food, clothing, care etc. Who made you? Who established the requirements for food, shelter, and clothing? God did! He is our Creator, and He is also our Sustainer. God takes care of His creation!

Illust. Hymn: "God Will Take Care of You"

*"Be not dismayed what'er betide,
God will take care of you;
All you may need He will provide,
God will take care of you."*

Illust. As I went walking recently I met one of my neighbors who was on his daily walk. As we walked and talked, I asked him about his upcoming doctor's appointment. He made a very revealing statement when in all seriousness he said, *"I am worried that I am worrying too much!"* Worried about worrying is double jeopardy! If our priorities are properly arranged we need have no worry at all.

V. THE PROMISE WE NEED TO EMBRACE.

"....and all these things will be given to you as well."

A. The Guaranty That Jesus States.

Do you want a written guarantee that God will provide? Here it is in writing! Note:

1. The *nature* of that which He promises: *"things."* Most worrying is about "things" – tangible things like food, drink, and clothing. Let us keep "things" in proper perspective.
2. The *number* of that which He promises: *"all"* – *"all things."* He promises not "some" but "all." *"My God shall supply **all** your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 4:19)

B. The Generosity That Jesus Shares.

“....**all** these things will be **given** to you as well.”

The grains that the birds peck a seed at a time are gifts – they do not pay for them; they do nothing to earn them. God’s generosity is demonstrated throughout the natural world. “*He gives, they gather.*” (Psalm 104:28) To us, likewise, He gives and we gather – we gather by our labors. No mature bird sits on a limb and waits for another bird to put worms in his mouth. The early bird gets the worm! God sent manna from heaven to the children of Israel in the wilderness but they had to gather it. Life and that which sustains life are gifts from our generous God and He assures us that we will have enough, therefore, do not worry!

CONCLUSION

- Worry is an inconsistent activity for if we are trusting we are not worrying;
- Worry is irrational for it does not solve anything;
- Worry is illogical for the Christian who calls God his Heavenly Father;

Illust: A man said he had found a unique way to take care of worrying. He explained: “I don’t worry about anything. I have a mountain of credit card debt, I have lost my job. My car is being repossessed and our house is in foreclosure, my family is broken up, I’m in bad health but I am not worried about it.”

His friend said, “You’re not worried about it?” “No”, he said. “I’ve hired a professional worrier. He does all my worrying for me, and that way I don’t have to think about it.” The friend exclaimed, “That’s fantastic! How much does your professional worrier charge for his services?” “\$50,000 a year” was the reply. The friend said, “\$50,000 a year? Where are you going to get that kind of money?” “I don’t know,” came the reply, “that’s his worry!”

You can’t hire a professional worrier, but there is One who will take all your cares and worries away – for free. His name is Jesus. He said, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things will be **given** to you.*”

When Jesus Christ became our Savior, we became children of the Heavenly Father Who cares for us. If you have not received the Lord Jesus as your Savior, confess that you are a sinner and receive Him as your Savior and you too will become a child of the Heavenly Father and the recipient of His loving care!

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