

The Sermon on the Mount

"Do Not Worry" (Matthew 6:19-24)

INTRODUCTION:

- I. If you were to search through a concordance based on the King James Version or the American Standard Version of the Bible, it might surprise you to discover that the word "worry" is not listed.
 - A. This DOESN'T mean that the Bible says nothing about "worry" – because the Scriptures say A LOT on the subject.
 1. It's just that some translations don't use the word "worry."
 2. Instead, you'll find the subject of "worry" disguised by several other words.
 - a. Words like: care, anxiety or anxious, burden, trouble, fear.
 3. In fact, depending on the translation you use – such as the one I use, the New King James Version, Jesus uses the word "worry" no less than 6 times in 10 verses in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew in **Matthew chapter six**.
 - B. Let's take a look at these verses and see what the Lord has to say to His disciples about this troublesome subject of worry.

1. **Matthew 6:25-34** – *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 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? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

2. The word “worry,” used here by Jesus, carries the idea of “being divided or distracted.”
 - a. That’s because worry always divides or distracts our attention from the things of God, and shifts them into another direction altogether.
 - b. Worry is meant to trouble and distress us – to cause mental and emotional distress that keeps us from having the right focus.
- C. Therefore, when we take a closer look at Matthew chapter six we’ll see that Jesus presents five reasons why we should not worry.
 1. Let’s look at these together and learn what we can do to either lessen or completely eliminate worry from our lives

BODY:

- I. First – Jesus says we shouldn’t worry because it keeps us from enjoying what we already have.
 - A. **Matthew 6:25** – *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”*
 1. Unfortunately, we live in a society that encourages worry.

- a. We're constantly bombarded with advertising that always shows us something WE DON'T HAVE, but something WE'RE MADE TO THINK WE NEED!
 - (1). We don't have the right body weight -- so there's this diet program or that one.
 - (2). We don't have "natural color hair" anymore (because we've turned gray) – so there's this instant hair color (some "Just For Men").
 - (3). We don't have the right breakfast cereal --so now they've made one that's "Just Right!"
 - (4). We don't have:
 - (a). The right deodorant...
 - (b). The right jeans...
 - (c). The right shoes...
 - (d). The right car...
 - (e). The right house, or the right neighborhood...

- b. Is it any wonder why we're all a little neurotic, especially since none of us have it all, and the one we have isn't the RIGHT one?

2. Sadly, anxiety robs us of the ability to enjoy the things we HAVE (or the things we can AFFORD to have) by keeping our eyes on things we DON'T HAVE (or CAN'T afford).
3. Worry "distracts" us from things of real value, and causes us to become pre-occupied with things that really are aren't all that important.
 - a. This was Martha's problem (Mary and Lazarus' sister).
 - b. **Luke 10:38-42** – *Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

- II. Second – We shouldn't worry because it makes us forget our worth.
 - A. **Matthew 6:26** – *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?*
 - 1. Scientists tell there are well over 8,000 species of birds, and the Scriptures tell us that God feeds them all.
 - a. And yet, for all their beauty and diversity, JESUS DID NOT DIE FOR A SINGLE BIRD!
 - b. He died for US!
 - 2. It's hard to imagine that we could EVER doubt our value in God's eyes.
 - a. And yet, when we begin to worry, the first thing that often goes out the window is our memory of the Savior's love.
 - (1). Our minds become flooded with, "Why me? Why this? Why Now? What does God have against me?"
 - 3. When you begin to forget your worth in God's eyes, just remember:
 - a. No bird was:
 - (1). Ever the object of God's SACRIFICIAL love in the giving of His Son (i.e. Jesus never died for a bird).

- (2). Ever created in the image of God.
- (3). Ever made an heir of eternal salvation.

III. Third – We shouldn't worry because it's a waste of time – it causes us to focus on things we can't change!

A. **Matthew 6:27** – *Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

1. More literally translated, Jesus says, "Who of you can add any length to your lifespan by worry."
 - a. Worry certainly won't INCREASE our life span – if it does anything, it will probably SHORTEN it!
2. Furthermore, we can lie awake all night, fret all we want, but when we wake up in the morning those problems will still be there.
 - a. So, worry never solves problems – but getting up and DOING something about the situation will (if it's in our power to solve the problem).
 - b. And, if it's NOT in our power to change the situation, then we need to turn the problem over to the Lord and lay it at the feet of Jesus.
 - c. We'll say more about this in a moment.

IV. Fourth – We shouldn't worry because it makes us to forget about the promises of God (about God's providential care).

A. **Matthew 6:28-31** – *"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"*

1. When difficult times come, it's easy to forget how much God has actually blessed us.
 - a. When we're all knotted up with worry, we forget about all the times in the past when God saw us safely through similar situations.
 - b. Instead, we become obsessed with questions like:
 - (1). "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"
 - (2). "Where will we live?" or "What job am I going to get now?" or "How am I going to support my family?"
2. There is a great promise God made to everyone of us:

- a. **Hebrews 13:5** – The apostle Paul wrote: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*
- b. This doesn't mean that God promises a care-free life, but He DOES promise to take care of us and our needs.

V. And finally – We shouldn't worry because it's characteristic of the unbeliever, not the Christian.

A. **Matthew 6:32** – *For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

- 1. Brother Homer Hailey once said, "Worry is the sign of unbelief in the Christian."
 - a. How true!
 - b. Worrying about tomorrow is something the "unbelievers" and the "unbelieving Christians" do."
 - (1). As long as the "unbeliever" or "unbelieving Christian" keep their backs turned toward God, their lives will be spent serving that tyrannical master called "Worry."

- c. But the Christian has a solution – We don't need to worry about a matter; instead, we need to turn the matter over to God and leave it there.
 - (1). We need to lay the matter at the feet of Jesus.
 - (2). And, once we've done that, we need to believe that the Lord will deal with the situation in a way that will be in our best interest.
 - (3). It may not be the way we would like, but if we fully trust in the Lord to do what is in our best interest, we won't need to worry anymore.

VI. So, how to we handle worry? Actually, I think there are four specific things the Scriptures tell us about how to get a grip on worry.

A. First, we need to claim God's presence (We are NOT alone).

1. God has promised to ALWAYS be with us.

- a. **Isaiah 41:10** – *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

- b. **Joshua 1:9** – *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*"

B. Second, we need to discover God's promise in His Word.

- 1. God not only promises to be "WITH US," but He also promises peace and consolation.

- a. **Isaiah 26:3-4** – *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. 4 Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.*

- b. **Proverbs 3:5-6** – *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.* (literally, God "will make smooth and straight your path").

- c. **Psalms 4:6-8** – *There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us. 7 You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased. 8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

- C. Third, we can pray for our specific needs.
1. Be specific when you bring your concerns to the Lord.
 - a. **Philippians 4:6-7** – *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
(Literally, "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will stand sentinel around your hearts and minds...")
 - b. **Psalms 55:22** – Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. (quoted in 1 Pet. 5:7) (Literally, "*throw far away, with all your might, your burdens on the Lord...*")
- D. And finally , we can be patient and let the Lord solve the problem His way, and in His own time.
1. The Lord can do wonderful things for those who "wait on the Lord!"
 - a. **Isaiah 40:28-31** – *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His*

understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

2. There are 4 things we can gain from "waiting on the Lord":
 - a. Get new strength.
 - (1). "...shall renew their strength..."
 - b. Get new perspective.
 - (1). "...shall mount up with wings like eagles..."
 - c. Develop endurance.
 - (1). "...shall run and not be weary..."
 - d. Deepen our determination to stay strong.
 - (1). "...shall walk and not faint!"
3. In time, the Lord will bring about what is best for us (although it may not be WHAT we want, WHEN we want it, or the WAY we want it).
 - a. **Romans 8:28** – *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

VII. Let's return to Jesus' teaching on worry in the Sermon on the Mount and notice two things Jesus says we can do to overcome worry.

A. First, we need to see two things (seek these two things FIRST):

Matthew 6:33 – *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

1. First, Jesus said seek the "kingdom of God."

a. This is seeking God's authority over every area of our life.

b. It means placing the Lord Jesus Christ in control of our will and truly making Him the "King."

(1). Remember Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is within you!" **(Luke 17:21)**

c. I have to RELEASE my grip on my desires and PLACE THEM IN GOD'S HANDS.

2. Second, Jesus said seek "His righteousness."

a. This means seeking to be LIKE HIM – to foster the character of Jesus Christ in our own lives during the MIDST OF TRIALS!

(1). This is what Peter meant by our becoming a *"partaker of the divine nature."* **(2 Peter 1:4)**

B. The second thing we can do to overcome worry is to take one day at a time: **Matthew 6:34** – *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

1. Live for today!

a. Don't live in the backwash of all the mistakes of "yesterday."

(1). No matter how much we would like to go back and re-live some of the days of our past, we can't.

(2). There is simply no way we can erase the mistakes we made then.

(3). But we can learn from those mistakes, and avoid making the same ones in the future (or help others avoid the mistakes we made).

b. And don't live in the fear of "tomorrow."

(1). No one can predict tomorrow!

(2). We don't even know if there will be a tomorrow (the Lord may come, or this may be our last day on earth).

(3). Montaigne (the great French philosopher) said it best: "My life is filled with misfortunes, most of which never happen."

- c. So, "LIVE FOR TODAY!"
- 2. Let the Lord handle tomorrow.
 - a. "Cast all your cares on Him..."

CONCLUSION:

- I. Are you a worrier?
 - A. Remember what Jesus said:
 - 1. Worry keeps you from enjoying what you already have.
 - 2. Worry keeps you from seeing your worth.
 - 3. Worry keeps your focus on things you can't change.
 - 4. Worry is characteristic of the unbeliever, not the Christian (it's a sign of unbelief in the Christian).
- II. And, remember all those wonderful promises of God?
 - A. So, why aren't you able to enjoy them? Let me suggest two possible reasons.
 - 1. One reason could be that you're not in God's family.
 - a. The promises He makes to be the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" are made to His children.
 - b. Therefore you need to be a part of God's family.
 - 2. Another reason could be you've never truly surrendered your will to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ.

- a. Are you a Christian who is still struggling with manipulation – trying to "do it my way" rather than letting Him "do it His way, in His time?"
- b. If so, you need to trust in the Lord to keep His word, and **RELEASE** your situation into His hands – never forget
What we have a friend in Jesus!