

“The Cure for Worry” Matthew 6:25-34, Sermon Notes
Pastor Marc Wragg
Saving Grace Bible Church
November 22nd, 2017
Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service

Text:

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* 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, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?²⁷ "And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life?²⁸ "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,²⁹ yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.³⁰ "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!³¹ "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'³² "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:25-34 NAU)

Title: The Cure For Worry

Focal Point: Do not be anxious vs 25, 31, 34

Homiletical Keyword: Worry

Interrogative: How? (How do we put off being anxious?)

Teaching Aim: to encourage us to put off anxiety and trust God

Introduction

Thanksgiving is a season where we get to stop and look back at what the Lord has accomplished, and give Him thanks

There are many reasons for us to give thanks this time of year

- The Lord has secured His ministry here
- He has added to our number with many spiritual gifts
- He has given us more ministry to do
- He is growing families
- He is producing a stable spiritual life
- He is equipping us for future ministry work

Sometimes we come to a season where we, by remembrance, take the time to stop and reflect upon what God has done for us and we find it hard to give thanks

- Something strange occurs within us
- Our minds go blank
- Our joy is lost
- What is missed in all the noise of life is an awareness of what we should thank God for in our lives
- We can see all the future's problems. We can see today's frustrations. We can see yesterday's failures. But we forget the daily mercy and grace which has sustained us

The noise of life presses in on us and drowns out the many sources of thankfulness we should have

If you stop and listen there is so much noise around us

- We are told that we are about to face a financial collapse in the stock market
- We are about to face the collapse of the housing market
- We are about to head into nuclear war with North Korea
- Our President is going to destroy our nation

I am sure if I keep up these illustrations some of you will need your prescriptions updated

That is the noise outside, there is also noise within the Church

- How is the ministry going to work?
- Who is going to handle this or that service?
- Why is this or that happening?
- How are we going to work?

Fears and worries creep into the Church as well

- Is God going to build His work?
- Is God going to sustain us through the ministry life?
- Will God supply for our needs?
- Can we make it another year?

Worries and fears, which give birth to frustration and bitterness, creep in around us all the time and rob us of the privilege and joy we have to give thanks to God for all that He does for us

- Worry comes in like a thief and robs our spiritual stability
- Worry like a murderer, kills our joy
- Worry causes us to be suspicious and chokes out our love
- Worry keeps us from striving in spiritual strength
- Worry gives birth to bitterness at others because we fret others do not take the concerns seriously
- Worry gives birth to frustration because we fear the weakness and immaturity of others will take us down
- Worry and anxiety act like a spiritual noose, killing our joy and thanksgiving

Worry and anxiety are like a weed growing in our spiritual garden. It chokes out the beauty of life. Give it enough time to grow, it will dominate the whole garden. Feed it and it will gain enough strength to resist many attempts to slay it

- It grieves me to see spiritual giants fall to worry and anxiety

Worry compels us to compromise our integrity and convictions.
Worry is the cause of great spiritual decline

Our Daily Bread

Worry is fear's [interest charge]. It extracts interest on trouble before it comes due. [Worry] constantly drains the energy God gives us to face daily problems. . . [Worry] is therefore a sinful waste.

A woman who had lived long enough to have learned some important truths about life remarked, "I've had a lot of trouble, most of which never happened!"

An unknown poet has written:

"I heard a voice at evening softly say,
Bear not your yesterdays into tomorrow,
Nor load this week with last week's load of sorrow.
Lift all your burdens as they come, nor try
To weigh the present with the by-and-by.
One step and then another, take your way;
Live day by day!"

I know what it is like to wrestle with worry:

I have wrestled with Giant Despair

- That grisly old friend who lumbers in uninvited and stays longer than he should

I have wrestled with Giant Despair

- When we planted this Church and I wondered if it would ever grow and survive

I wrestled with Giant Despair when there are troubles in the Church. When people seem to think about themselves first and Christ second

I wrestle with Giant Despair when finances are tight, when health is fleeting, when evil is prevalent

I wrestle with Giant Despair when I am not in control, when I am forced to walk by faith, when my interests are not in line with God's interests

When the ugly weed of worry creeps into my spiritual garden, when the unwelcome house guest, Giant Despair, lingers in my private sanctuary, I know for certain one thing is true, my focus on God and faith in His promises is weak and needs to be restored

In our text tonight, Jesus teaches us how to be strong in the face of worry

- Our Lord is laying our hearts open as He unfolds His message to His hearers
- As He teaches he reveals more and more about the nature of earthly possessions, our attraction to them, and the fears and anxieties which often times fills our hearts because of earthly treasure

What is your priority in life? Jesus gives us, in these verses, what our priority should be

- Our greatest priority in life should be our spiritual development
- This is the most crucial pursuit of our whole life

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matt 6:33

- Our greatest concerns should be on heavenly matters

The truth of this section is a promise to us. God cares for His people and God will protect them. That is a promise that God will prove Himself faithful to keep

- Our God cares for our every need
- Our God knows what we need to survive
- Our God is kind to us at every stage of our life

Now we often miss this because we have expectations of what these verses must mean

- The expectation is that no one should go hungry
- This verse is incompatible with hunger

But notice what God is promising here

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25 NAU)

- The key here is to see that God is going to preserve our life
- He knows what we need to live

Basically we could go hungry for a day and God is still faithful to this verse

- The only time God is not faithful to this verse is if we starved to death
- There is not a single American who could possibly doubt God on His faithfulness here

God is faithful but this does not mean that

1. God is required to take care of our every hunger pain
2. It does not mean that God is required to give us the kinds of food we want.
3. It does not mean that God will over rule our Bad theology:

- a. Someone might say God spoke to me to share the gospel with people in the Amazon jungle
- b. So he goes and dies of starvation in the jungle
- c. God is not obligated to protect us from our bad theology

This verse is teaching though

1. Despite the ugliest conditions God is faithful to preserve life
2. Second God does care about His people and will continue to demonstrate His loving care just as He continually cares about the birds of the air and the grass of the field

BTW the world continues to produce enough food to survive

- You hear all the times the world's food supplies are running out
- We continue to produce more than what is needed both in the US and world wide

<http://www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde/latest.pdf>

- God is faithful in all of His provisions
- It has also been estimated that only 10% of the agricultural land in the world could supply enough to feed the whole planet, even by the standard of U.S. consumption

God cares for our needs therefore there is no reason to be filled with anxiety:

There are 6 truths we must remember in the face of worry. We do not have time to cover them all tonight. I would overwhelm you I think. So let me give you two lessons we learn about worry from this text

For the sake of time, I will summarize this in two parts

The Cause of Worry

The Cure of Worry

1. The cause of worry is unbelief

"And which of you by being anxious can add a *single* cubit to his life's span? ²⁸ "And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹ yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. ³⁰ "But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *do so for you, O men of little faith?*" (Matthew 6:27-30 NAS)

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' ³² "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." (Matthew 6:31-32 NAU)

The average godless person today is consumed with what they are going to gain

- Build a career
- Make money, lots of it
- Retire to the good life and never work again
- Vacation, retire

Around this American dream is the constant worry and struggle to make it

- Increasing credit card debt
- Out of control personal habits
- Increasing costs and lower paying jobs
- Higher rates of debt in their 50's

This has led to great anxiety and depression

- Anxiety has turned into big business
- Drugs.com reports 71 different drugs used for depression/anxiety
- Most popular is Prozac

Based on a 2013 New York Times Article

- America spends 150 Billion treating 11.5 Americans for depression and mood related illnesses
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/02/magazine/the-half-trillion-dollar-depression.html>

Huffington Post reported:

Depression is the leading cause of medical disability for people aged 14 to 44 (Stewart, Ricci, Chee, Hahn, & Morganstein, 2003). Depressed people lose 5.6 hours of productive work every week when they are depressed (Stewart, 2003). Eighty percent of depressed people are impaired in their daily functioning (Pratt & Brody, 2008). Fifty percent of the loss of work productivity is due to absenteeism and short-term disability (R. C. Kessler, et al., 1999). In any 30 day period, depressed workers have 1.5 to 3.2 more short-term disability days (Druss, Schlesinger, & Allen, 2001).

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-leahy-phd/the-cost-of-depression_b_770805.html

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality reports

- In 2009 22.8 billion was spend on treatment for depression

Here are the statistics on depression in the US:

- \$11.3 billion dollars is the annual amount of money spent on anti-depressant medications in the US
- Americans consume more anti-depressants than any other developed nation
- 17 million American's take anti-depressant drugs
- From 1988-1994, the use of anti-depressants increased by 400%
- 1 in 10 Americans over the age of 12 take an anti-depressant

Nobody knows why:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/real-healing/201202/do-anti-depressants-really-work>

It's difficult to explain why so many Americans are depressed and anxious and why this number has increased so dramatically. Is it possible that our lifestyle — the Western diet, lack of activity, stress — is really the cause of this problem? It is known that high levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, is associated with a higher risk for depression. The Traditional Chinese medicine viewpoint is that all

illness is due to an imbalance. Rather than going for the quick-fix — a pill — maybe the focus should be on modifying our lifestyles to be more in balance — at least as a first step.

Jesus gives an answer to His hearers here about anxiety and worry

I know why, Jesus tells us right here, “you of little faith,” it is the result of an increased atheism

- When man who is not God tries to play God or do the works only God can perform, he is left emotionally empty

Anxiety is big Business

- More and more young people are growing up coming out of school
- Have large school debt and little job opportunities and are falling into depression and anxiety

The vicious cycle of poor thinking, high expectations, low efforts, weak work ethics, and no self control has led to greater amounts of depression and other anxiety fueled problems

- We have countless examples around us
- Jesus says here: we are not to be like the gentiles

The idea is that we are not to be like the World

- The world is hopeless, we are not
- The world is consumed by carnal lusts not us
- The World wants earthly treasure and financial success that should not be our drive
- The world wants something for nothing, not us
- The World is consumed with having security in treasures we find our security in God

The World is consumed in its fears because it has nothing else to live for

- The world lives hoping mother earth will take care of them
- The world lives wishing for blind luck
- The world is filled with superstition
- The world is filled with speculation all hoping that life goes in their favor

But we do not live this way:

- We have the God of the Universe at our side

For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things

- Your heavenly father knows you need to survive and God will protect you
- God supplies for His people
- God does not leave us in want
- Even in times which are lean, God is gracious to supply

We must always remind ourselves that we are not to operate in godlessness when it comes to our daily needs

- We are different than the World and God uses our testimony to silence the World and to bring Him glory

2. The Cure for Worry is Faith

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."³⁴

"Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. *Each* day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:33-34 NAS)

- How many times do we spend all of our time seeking everything but what we should be seeking?
- It can be easy to come in here and worship on Sunday and then leave and come back later to have never prayed, read the word of God, or even worshipped God except what was done on Sunday.

Here the greatest cure against anxiety: have your priorities in the right order

- If our priorities are not in order our emotional wellbeing will not be in order
- I know we have the book knowledge but look at your life
 - Does your life demonstrate the belief that God is your most important priority?
 - Do you spend more time working, thinking about work, planning about work, than you do worshipping the God who provides the work?

Here Jesus says this is the most important pursuit of our lives:

- Seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness

We are to be consumed with seeking the kingdom and the righteousness of God

- This is normal Christian living
- Col 3:1

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4 NAU)

- Matt 6:19-20

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; (Matthew 6:19-20 NAU)

- Matt 4:4

"But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Matthew 4:4 NAU)

The most important pursuit is God's righteousness and His kingdom

- Think about this
 - You are an eternal being
 - You have one life time
 - Some it's short
 - Some it's long
 - With that one lifetime the rest of your eternity hinges on what you have done in that one lifetime
 - You waste this life, reject God, seek earthly treasures and earthly pursuits, you will be under God's eternal judgment
 - You take this life and give it to God, seek His glory and Kingdom, He supplies your needs here, and you have an eternal reward
- What is more important? What is the better road?

If you do not believe in God, then this is it? This is your best life

But if you do believe then follow His command and stop worrying about earthly treasures and seek His Kingdom

Why?

He promises here

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
(Matthew 6:33 NAU)

- All these things will be added to you
- What things? Food and covering
- God will supply our food and covering

Is a house covering?

- He does not say a house is covering
- Jesus does not say he will promise that God will give us a house
- He says we will be covered and we will be feed so that we can survive

Basically the point is this: As you seek God's work you will not die

Remember to Live by faith one day at a time vs 34

"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:34 NAU)

- Part of the problem with anxiety is that you start worrying about things that do not exist yet
- What is going to happen tomorrow, next week, or next month?
- Paralysis by analysis
 - Keep look tomorrows problems
 - Weigh them
 - Determine they are too big for you
 - And you do not act
- Here Jesus says look, take life one day at a time.

- This is a great principle to live by
 - You cannot control tomorrow
 - You do not know what is coming
 - At best you can say “If the Lord wills”
 - Worry about today
- Put your energy and effort into today’s work
- Strive to care for today’s needs
- Strive to fulfill today’s responsibilities
- Strive to seek the kingdom and the righteousness of God today

This means we should not be about building security for ourselves

God is our security

- As God supplies we are obviously to be faithful with what He supplies
- Sometimes God supplies the busy season where you continually reap
- Sometimes God supplies the slow season where you need to be dependent
- The point is in this we out to conduct ourselves in such a way that we are living a day at a time
- We are keeping our priorities on the important matters
- We are not controlled by fear and anxiety
- We are increasing our faith and investment in heavenly treasure

When we live by faith, trusting in God to be faithful to us, we will seek to be faithful to His kingdom activities and righteous living, and will find in each day enough to keep us busy

- There is no good reason for the Child of God to live in faithlessness when God has demonstrated Himself to be so faithful and caring.
1. He graciously supplies
 2. Anxiety is useless
 3. Anxiety is faithlessness
 4. We must be different than the gentiles
 5. God’s kingdom is our greatest pursuit
 6. We make the most of today and worry about tomorrow when it comes

Conclusion

- Instead of being filled with worry you should ask yourself am I doing what God has called me to do?

JFM

“A Christian’s contentment is found in God, and only in God – in His ownership, control, and provision of everything we possess and will ever need. First, God owns everything, including the entire universe. David proclaimed, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it” (PS 24:1). . . .

Everything we now have belongs to the Lord, and everything we will ever have belongs to Him. Why, then, do we worry about His taking from us what really belongs to Him?

One day when he was away from home someone came running up to John Wesley saying, “Your house has burned down! Your house has burned down!” To which Wesley replied, “No it hasn’t, because I don’t own a house. The one I have been living in belongs to the Lord, and if it has burned down, that is one less responsibility for me.”

[A] Christian should be content because God controls everything. Again David gives the right perspective:

“Both riches and honor *come* from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.” (1 Chronicles 29:12 NAU)

Daniel declared:

“Daniel said, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him.²¹ “It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.” (Daniel 2:20-21 NAU)

Believers are to be content because the Lord provides everything. The supreme owner and controller is also the supreme provider – as indicated in one of His ancient names, Jehovah-Jireh, which means “the Lord who provides.” That is the name Abraham gave God when He supplied an offering to be sacrificed in place of Isaac (Gen 22:14).

Paul reminds us

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19 NAU)

- God supplies everything we need so there is no reason for the Christian to worry. Our heavenly Father knows what we need to live and He will care for us

When it comes to practicing this verse remember that this verse does not mean we do not do anything and just sit back and let God supply

- It means that while we work we labor for the right reasons
 - Col 3:22-25

“Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.²⁵ For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.” (Colossians 3:22-25 NAU)

- You may seek first His kingdom by doing your work as unto the Lord
- You may seek first His kingdom by being a faithful servant in whatever task you have been called
- You may seek first His kingdom by being a selfless and sacrificial Christian
- You may seek first His kingdom by loving others more than yourself because you are living for God’s glory over man

In whatever your calling seek the glory of God

6:33 The nature of true faith is seen in these verses

- Man seeks
- God supplies

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China and founder of what is today known as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, gave this excellent advice:

"Let us give up our work, our plans, ourselves, our lives, our loved ones, our influence, our all, right into [God's] hand; and then, when we have given all over to Him, there will be nothing left for us to be troubled about."

One Author wrote: [Ian Maclaren]

What does your anxiety do? It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but it does empty today of its strength. It does not make you escape the evil; it makes you unfit to cope with it when it comes. God gives us the power to bear all the sorrow of His making, but He does not guarantee to give us strength to bear the burdens of our own making such as worry induces.

Six faith increasing truths to remember which cure us from worry

1. Remember that God is our Gracious Supplier vs 26
2. Remind yourself of the uselessness of anxiety vs 27
3. Remember that Anxiety is the fruit of Unbelief vs 28-30
4. Remember we are called to be different than the World vs 31-32
5. Remember to set your focus on Eternal Life and let God to supply your needs vs 33
6. Remember to Live one day at a time vs 34

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