

Faith Pulpit

Don't Worry

We are living in an age of anxiety. Not only do older adults have a sense of uneasiness about life, but also young people are afflicted with this feeling. According to one national poll, when asked the question, "What is the basic feeling you have toward life?" sixty percent of the young people polled replied, "Fear."

Jesus commands believers not to be anxious about the future. We do not need to be anxious about what lies ahead because of who we are and because of Who God is. Worry is not a weakness. It is wickedness. Worry is, after all, distrust in God. Our goal should be to trust in God and to do the work He calls us to fulfill. Matthew 6 gives us four reasons why we can face the future without worry. The setting is the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus was teaching His disciples as the multitude listened.

First, we should not worry because our existence surpasses our needs.

Jesus says, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (v. 25) Jesus' point here is not that we should abandon wise foresight in the planning of our lives, but rather that we must abandon worry and anxiety as we live our lives. We should not worry about the future because God has already given us life and a body to live in. God would not have created life with its specific needs had He not seen to the provision for those needs in order that life might be maintained.

Second, we should not worry because we are valuable to God.

Jesus then says, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (v. 26). The skies above Palestine were full of birds. It has been called "the crossroads of bird migrations." Jesus was a

master teacher, and He often taught from things right at hand. On one occasion he told His disciples to look at the fields that were ripe unto harvest. Here He says, "Look at the birds of the air." Most likely a flock of birds was flying over at the moment.

God provides for the birds. He does not drop worms and seeds from heaven to feed them, but He does provide for them. He provides for them through nature. They must go and harvest the seeds or catch the insects. Birds work to survive. They do not worry. This year we had nine pairs of robins build their nests in our trees. It seemed as if they were in perpetual motion. They were constantly on the go. They built nests. They cared for their young. They gathered worms. God provided for their needs and none of them died of hunger. They are of value to Him. But we are of more value to God than the birds. We do not have to worry about where our food will come from. We must do our work and God will provide.

He will also provide for our clothing. Jesus goes on to say, "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (vv. 28, 29). Solomon was the richest king of Israel. He lived in absolute luxury. He had the finest clothes money could buy. And yet they could not begin to compare with the beauty of the flowers.

Some Bible teachers think the word translated lily refers to wild scarlet poppies. Again, remember Jesus was sitting on a mountainside teaching His followers at this moment. When He said, "Consider the lilies of the field," the people could turn and look at the wild flowers around them at that very moment. The scarlet poppy blooms but for one day, and then the blossom fades. But even Solomon in his finest royal purple robe could not match the beauty God gave to this little wildflower when it is in bloom. If God put that much value on a little wildflower that blooms but for a day, surely He will see to it that we, who are destined for eternity, will have clothing to wear.

God has promised to take care of us, and Jesus affirmed this promise with these words, "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (v. 30). In this verse we have Jesus' Word that God will take care of us. God not only dressed the flowers in beauty; He also took care of the grass. In Jesus' day tightly wound bundles of grass were used to heat baking ovens. God, Who gave grass its own beauty even though the grass would soon perish in an oven, certainly will see to it that we will be clothed. It is ridiculous to think otherwise. To worry is to show a lack of faith. If you are worried about the future, Jesus would say to you as He did to the people on the hillside that day, "O ye of little faith!"

We see further in the following verses that God knows our needs, for Jesus says, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (vv. 31, 32). When we worry we are acting like the unsaved. It is understandable that

unbelievers should worry because they do not know God, nor are they His children. However, those of us who are saved do not have cause to worry. God knows far better than we do what our needs are. Picture a worrying child and his millionaire father: the father gives the child everything he needs, but the child still worries where his next meal will come from. How much more foolish would it be for us to worry when God our Father owns the whole universe?

Third, we should not worry because worrying does no good.

Jesus asks this pointed question: “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?” (v. 27). A cubit is about eighteen inches. Worrying about your height will not make you grow taller. It will not add one inch, much less a foot and a half. Some take this to mean a measure of time. They say that Jesus was talking about adding time to one’s life instead of inches to one’s height. The word stature may mean either age or height. The problem is that the word “cubit” is a measurement of size, not a measurement of time. Just as it is foolish for someone to think that he could grow taller by worrying about his height, so it is foolish to think that a person can solve life’s problems by worrying about them. Worrying does no good. Trusting God does. The Bible says, “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps. 84:11).

Finally, we should not worry because our energy should go into serving God. Jesus challenged His listeners on the Mount with these words: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (v. 33). We should not worry about the future. We should not import tomorrow’s problems into today’s living. The vast majority of things people worry about never do come to pass, and, when we reach tomorrow, God will be there with us to provide for us. We should instead channel our time and energy into the work of God and seek His righteousness.

Rather than worry, we ought to take our problems to the Lord in prayer and leave them there. This is precisely what Paul urged the Philippians to do: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6, 7).

We can face the future with confidence knowing that we are entering it with an all knowing, all caring, all loving God.

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