

Why Worry?

Luke 12:22-34 (01-12-2020)
Ernie Godshall
Faith Bible Church
Evansville, IN

Last week we looked at greed, that heart that wants more stuff, more possessions, more security, more of this world with little or no thought for others or giving or especially eternity. Jesus calls the greedy man a fool. Luke 12:21 says, "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.

Fight worry

This morning we're looking at the worrier.

Luke 12:22, *And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on."*

Jesus is speaking to his disciples and begins with, "For this reason," which connects it to the previous text about the greedy man. The worrier is not a lot different than the greedy man. They are cousins. The greedy man wants more or selfishly clings to what he has; the worrier is full of anxiety and fear about what he might lose or what he might not get. Greed and worry come out of a self-focused heart that is not desiring and trusting God. This morning let's learn as God's people how to fight worry.

First, what is meant by the word worry in verses 22, 25, 26? The Greek word means to be all divided up and torn apart. The English word worry comes from an old German word that means to choke or strangle. Jesus described the worry effect in Luke 8:14, "The seed (God's Word) which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are **choked with worries** and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity."

There's another word for worry in verse 29. From it we get our word meteor and it has the idea of being up in the air about something. Like a ship being tossed up and down by the deep valleys and the high crests of the sea, worry causes our minds to go up and down, unsettled with no rest or peace. God's will for His people is not to be tossed about, but to know peace in their hearts. Isaiah 26:3, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." But the worrier is not experiencing that peace.

Before we go further, there is one thing that should cause every person to deeply worry. That one thing is whether you truly belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ. If you have never humbled yourself before God and confessed to Him you are a sinner, you are not a genuine believer. But there is hope. Know this. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He came into the world as a human being and lived a perfect life for 30 some years. He was sinless, but became sin for you as He hung on that Roman cross. It was there that Jesus took on Himself the wrath of God that you deserve. They buried Him, but three days later He rose from the grave proving He is God's Son who has power to save you from God's wrath. If you go to Him with a repentant attitude and faith in Him alone, you will be forgiven and given the gift of eternal life. You will no longer need to worry about tomorrow or eternity. You will be accepted and adopted by the Father forever as His son or daughter.

Once you are secure in Christ, you really have nothing to worry about. And yet, we do...a lot. Our problem is that while we are trusting God for eternity, we don't trust Him for our days here on earth. We worry about that doctor's appointment tomorrow. Will I pass that all-important test coming up on Friday? Will we be able to pay all the bills this month after that \$1000 car bill we hadn't planned on? What if I get cancer? Will I lose my job? Will we go bankrupt? Jesus has answers. Here in Luke 12, Jesus gives us truths we need in order to fight our worries, fears, and anxieties.

Fight worry with a biblical view of your life's purpose.

Luke 12:23, *"For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing."*

You are more than a belly and a body. But you won't think this way if you listen to the world's pitch. It

constantly tells you to be concerned about what you eat, what shoes you wear and the clothes you need in your wardrobe. Our culture says your identity is in your appearance, what you wear and how you do your hair. That's who you are! John MacArthur says we're consumed with the body and describes us like this. "We decorate it, fix it up, clothe it, exercise it, put it in a nice car, send it off to a nice house, stuff it full of food, sit it in a comfortable chair, hang a bunch of jewelry all over it, take it out on a boat, let it swim, teach it to ski, take it on a cruise...." (Anxious for Nothing)

God has a far higher purpose for your life than feeding your belly and clothing your body. That's not to say you shouldn't be clean and presentable when you go out. And that's not to say you don't need to work to provide for your food and clothing. "If anyone doesn't provide for his own, he's worse than an infidel," says God. Our focus in life should be more than our bellies and bodies.

You might be thinking, "I don't worry about that. Our fridge is loaded with food and my closet is jammed with clothing." Well, you can thank your God every day that you do have plenty of food and clothing, unlike many people in the world. And these disciples following Christ may well have wondered about their next meal. After all, they had left their jobs as fishermen behind to follow Him. When you worry about whether you'll get that job this week or whether you'll lose the job you have, your real concern is whether you can put food on the table and pay the light bills and keep the water company happy. So take the words "food and clothing" as symbolic of the physical sustaining systems of this world.

It is easy to fall into the worry trap of providing for yourself or your family. After resigning as a pastor in 1990, I applied for work at many places but got nothing. I remember sitting out in our garage trying to read Jonathan Edwards and my mind went to my wife and three children inside the house. I thought, "Hey, I've got to provide for these people. What am I going to do?" I could have sat there and worried, like furiously rocking in a rocking chair and going nowhere, just spending mental and emotional energy worrying. I'm sure I did some of that. But I also prayed my worries. Philippians 4:6 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but with prayer and supplication let your needs be made known to God." Matthew 6:34 tells us to not worry about tomorrow, but do what you can today. God wants us consider the future and plan wisely, but to live one day at a time. I decided I had to do something today to make some money. My dad liked clean cars and taught me the skill of washing and detailing cars. So I took that skill and went into town business by business and asked if anyone wanted their car washed. One by one people would give me the keys to their cars and sure enough, I made enough money to put food on the table. Then through that car washing business I met a contractor who offered me a job. One way to fight worry about tomorrow is to get busy doing what you can today.

Fight worry with a biblical view of who you are in God's plan.

Luke 12:24-28, "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!"

Jesus says take a serious view of those ravens. They are unclean birds. One author said Jesus reached to the bottom of the creature barrel to illustrate his point. Watch them. You'll never see ravens driving tractors and running harvesters. You'll never see ravens building storerooms and barns to store food. Now, you will see them flying around diligently looking for seeds, or worms, or bugs, or grubs, or snakes, or road kill. They don't sit in their nests and wait for God to parachute bundles of worms down for them to eat. But that's not the point, is it? What's the point? GOD feeds them! God created ravens and He planned for them to eat, so He provides food for them. Put yourself beside a raven. Who is more important to God, you or an unclean raven? Nuff said! If God feeds them, He'll take care of you. Quit worrying, do what you can, and start trusting.

Before we go to botany class, think about this.

Luke 12:25-26, "And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? 26 If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?"

Your life is in God's hands and many things beyond your control. Consider your height and the length of your life. The word "single hour" can mean time or length. King James says "one cubit." If you're going to be 5'10" that's what you're going to be, and no amount of worrying will change that. In 1994 Koji Harada

was too short to meet the 5'8" requirements to join the Sumo boys. So he had a six inch layer of silicone embedded under his scalp. Photos showed a box-shaped head topped by a hairy lump. That's when the Sumo Association banned silicone head implants. You have to admit Harada did the unusual and bizarre, but it didn't change his actual height. No one can. And it is foolish to spend a moment worrying about things you just can't change.

Have you ever been driving along on a trip and suddenly you realize the gauge is on empty? It's been a long night of driving and you forgot to gas up. You know the feeling. Now it's six o'clock in the morning and there's no gas station in sight. The Godshall family has been there. Now what good will it do to get all beside yourself and worry and fret. You're either going to make it or you're not. You'll just have to trust God and take it one mile at a time. Then we saw a gas station. Yea! We pulled in, and found it was closed. Well, maybe they will open at 7:00, so we snuggled in for the wait. After waiting over an hour with no one coming we said, "We're going to go for it." Thankfully, we made it the rest of the way. Our situation could not be helped by worry. We had to make choices, but no amount of fretting would put gas in the tank. Worry is so often futile and useless, and yet we do it. Now we come to these lilies.

Luke 12:27-28, *"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith!"*

You may have seen videos of flowers blooming. It is truly fascinating to watch each petal unfold into a beautiful display. Jesus says, "Study them." There they are, all beautiful in the fields, swaying in the breeze. How did they get that way? Well, didn't you see them taking out their sewing machines and needles and thread and toiling late into the night putting together their lovely petals that are more beautiful than Solomon's royal garb? No? So how do they grow in beauty? GOD clothes them. And consider how long do they last. Some flowers last less than 24 hours. In contrast, think of yourself. You will live forever! Trust God to clothe you!

"Be not dismayed, whate'er befall, God will take care of you!" Jesus is counseling you and me to have a childlike faith in our heavenly Father. He'll provide what we really need. Children rarely worry about paying the water and electric bills. They know dad's got that covered. That's why they take 15-minute showers! They aren't in there worrying if there is have enough money to pay for all this water!

Fight worry with a biblical view of who your God really is.

Luke 12:28, *"You men of little faith - oligopistoi."*

Those five words are one word in the Greek – *oligopistoi*. Little faith ones. Here you have the key to the whole issue of worrying. We worry because we really don't believe what God says about Himself and His care. Is your God sovereign? Wise? Loving? Does He really care for you? We read the promises of God, but often don't personally embrace them. We need to take them to heart. When God says "Cast all your cares, your worries, those issues that have you all strung out, on Him, for He cares for you," we need to say, "That is my God caring for me! He doesn't want me carrying these sinful, useless, faithless worries around anymore." Throw them on Him. Accept that what He brings into your life will bring glory to Him. He knows your needs. He cares for you. He is faithful to His children. "But what about this sermon I've got to prepare for Sunday. I'm worried about it. People need truth explained to so they can understand. Can I do it?" Then I need to remember He knows my need. My prayer is always, "Lord, I need your help, big time!" Maybe you've got a test coming up or a big work project. Do your homework. Study and plan for it as best you can today, then trust Him for tomorrow. Sometimes He works it out for us, even at the very last minute. And sometimes our best efforts fall flat and we fail. God has lessons for us to learn and maybe a different place for us. But He will not let His people in the lurch. He is always there with us, working out His plans for our lives.

Fight worry by seeking the right things in your life.

Luke 12:29-31, *"And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need*

these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you"

Life is about seeking and we're all seeking something. The world eagerly seeks stuff for their bellies and their bodies. Feed the belly, clothe the body, and then die. The world is all into it. But God says, "Don't you get all up in the air about your physical needs." Here's that word meteor in a verb form. Don't let the issues you face drive you up and down like a ship in a storm. Jesus tells us, "Your Father knows you need these things." Seek the right things.

A key to fighting worry, fear, and anxiety is seeking or focusing your heart on the things that God says are important, namely His kingdom. Colossians 3:1-2 says we are to focus our affections not on this world, but on things above, where Christ is. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Your goal every day is to please God. Get up in the morning and give your day to Him, willing to be used for His glory. If you are focusing your heart on pleasing God, there isn't room for worrying. When you go to work, go with the goal of pleasing God. When you clean the house, care for the lawn, wash your car, buy new clothes, go grocery shopping – seek God's kingdom. Go with your heart set on pleasing God, rejoicing in the Lord as you tool down the highway, or show up for that class, or get ready for that date, or stand in front of those students, or go into that patient's room. Why? Seek first God's kingdom and trust His promise to provide all you need.

Fight worry by replacing worldly concerns with a rich understanding of God's delight in you.

Luke 12:32, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom."

J. C. Ryle writes about verse 32, "Jesus answers all our fears with this one single golden sentence." Stop fearing, little flock. God knows we aren't the great ones of this world. He knows there are scary things in this world. We're outnumbered, but rest assured, God is with us. You're facing surgery and can't know the outcome. Will it be successful or will this be your last few minutes in this world? You are scared silly about giving that speech in front of all those people. I've seen grown men get up front and their knees literally begin to shake. Let Jesus' words melt those self-concerned fears away and give you courage. Don't be afraid, little flock. God delights in showering you with His grace and power.

This doesn't mean there won't be pain. It doesn't mean you'll ace every test. However, it does mean your Heavenly Father is right there with you through the scary times, through the darkness, through the pain, and maybe through loneliness and human rejection. It does mean your Heavenly Father delights in giving you a place in His family. He has gladly chosen you to be in His family and part of His kingdom. He is well-pleased with Jesus, and since you are in Jesus, He is well-pleased with you.

Fight worry by putting off selfish concerns and laying up treasure in heaven.

33 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus gives us a brilliant remedy to all worries and fear. Stop being concerned about you. Don't worry about what might or might not happen to you. Don't fear losing something you really cherish. The remedy is to give it all away. Then you won't have to worry about it. Put off being a self-centered self-worshipper at the shrine of ME, MYSELF, AND MINE. Sell everything. Give it away. Invest your money in eternal "money belts" where the benefits will last forever. Nothing can destroy your money if it's in heaven! Nothing can rob you of it.

Now Jesus clearly doesn't mean we must literally sell everything, but he does figuratively mean that. Everything you own belongs to God. He has given it all to you to use for His glory and invest in eternity. And as you do, worries go away. Fear of losing stuff or not having enough evaporates. You will find that the more you invest in eternity by blessing others and giving funds for the gospel, the more you will have a godly, heavenly focus and you'll hold this world very loosely.

Your treasure is whatever you value, whatever you think is most important, whatever you invest your time and money in. Your treasure is what you think about and live for. Your heart always follows your values. If

England was heaven and America was this world, and you kept sending your money over to England, your heart would be concerned about England. If your treasure is heavenly, your heart will be focused on heaven and spiritual matters. And worries and anxieties and fears about yourself and what's going to happen to you in this world will melt away. God promised, "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is fixed or focused on You." (Isaiah 24:3).