

PUTTING WORRY IN ITS PLACE Sunday School- November 27, 2011

Unifying Topic: FACING LIFE WITHOUT WORRY

Lesson Text

I. The Cause Of Worry (Matthew 6:25)

II. The Condemnation Of Worry (Matthew 6:26-32)

III. The Cure For Worry (Matthew 6:33-34)

The Main Thought: 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. (Matthew 6:33-34, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People often find that worry neither prevents nor solves life's problems. So, why do we worry? Jesus taught that depending on God to meet our needs can relieve our worries.

Lesson Aim: To help students realize that it is of no use to worry.

Life aim: To challenge students to develop their faith to trust God more for their needs, and to understand that God is able to provide in every area of their lives.

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- 6:25 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?
- 6:26 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?
- 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?
- 6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:
- 6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
- 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
- 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
- 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
- 6:34 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.

HISTORY:

Jesus knew prayer was the key in having a successful relationship with the Father. He knew the hearts of the disciples and His desire was to get the message over to them. No matter how they prayed, they would also have to forgive those that came against them and even if they even thought someone had ought against them. If they didn't, neither would the Father forgive them their trespasses. As they learned about prayer Jesus teaches them there is an extension, another phase; and that would be fasting. Fasting and prayer would go together sometimes in their ministry.

Chapter 6:16-18 FASTING

6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. First, notice Jesus doesn't say if you fast but "*when you fast.*" He just doesn't want you to fast the way the hypocrites did. The hypocrites would make fasting a big show. They would do it on certain days and they would dress differently and look different. They would smear ash on their faces and make themselves look destitute. The phrase "*disfigure their faces*" (Gr aphanizō) literally denotes covering their faces and is a figurative expression for mournful gestures and neglected appearance of those wanting to call attention to the fact they are enduring; often done with dust and ashes. Their sad facial disfigurement and the wearing of mourning clothes gave them an opportunity to exhibit their superior abstinent holiness before the people. It was obvious they were fasting and they wanted you to know that is what they were up to. That was their reward. Their purpose was to win the praise of men. As a result, the Pharisees lost God's blessing.

6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face— We are still discovering the contrast between outward acts of worship and inward attitudes of devotion. Jesus says it a second time and adds, "*but you*": "*when you fast.*" He didn't condemn the practice of fasting. But they were not to fast to impress others. The ancient custom of anointing one's head was when they went to a feast. The anointing and washing were symbols of joy; this

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was the opposite of the sad countenance the Pharisees did. They were to follow fasting in this way: just "*anoint your head and wash your face*", period!

6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Jesus was saying that when we fast we are to do so secretly unto the Lord not for the sake of man while we outwardly maintain the appearance of joy and triumph which is the end result of true fasting. Times when a believer should fast:

1. There are times when the believer feels a special pull, an urge, a call within his heart to get alone with God. This is God's Spirit moving within his heart.
2. There are times when special needs arise. The needs may concern the believer's own life or the life of friends, society, the world, or some ministry or mission.
3. There are times when the believer needs to humble his soul before God. At such times he learns not only humility, but dependence upon God.
4. There are times when the believer needs a very special power from God.

¹Fasting involves more than giving up food for a day or two. A fast is a solemn time of separation from worldly things of all kinds. For a fast to be effective, it must be a fast that God encouraged you to do for some specific prayer request to be answered. The time that would ordinarily be for watching TV or fixing lunch, or 1,000 other little things, should be spent studying your Bible and praying. During a fast, God is your source. Some deliverances and illnesses require fasting. When the disciples came to Jesus and asked why they could not heal someone, Jesus said, this type only comes out by prayer and fasting. When you fast, it is a serious time with God and Him alone. We fast to show sincerity. God will honor a fast, if we are sincerely seeking Him. You may fast one meal, one day, two days, three days, or as long as you have agreed with God to fast. It is better to promise less. You must follow through, until God releases you. God does not like to play games. Some people drink juice during a fast, but a true fast is a total abstinence. Pray before you begin. Sometimes a preacher will call a fast for a church, but usually it is an individual thing. Don't brag to others about a fast. Just separate yourself for a season, pray and fast. It gets wonderful results.

What's the reward?

1. Fasting keeps the believer in the presence of God and humbles the believer's soul before God.
2. Fasting teaches the believer his dependency upon God.
3. Fasting demonstrates to God (by action) a real seriousness.
4. Fasting teaches the believer to control and discipline his life. He does without in order to gain a greater substance.
5. Fasting keeps the believer from being enslaved or chained by habit.
6. Fasting helps the believer to stay physically fit. Some gain the control and discipline of their bodies through fasting.
7. Fasting brings the answer to the need prayed for.

The point is all is done to the glory of God and He in turn rewards openly.

TREASURES—POSSESSIONS/WEALTH

6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: The concern of Christ in this passage is money, possessions, and material things. The Pharisees were covetous and used religion to make money. The idea behind "*laying up*" is to store up; it puts emphasis on hoarding for oneself. The key lies in the little phrase "*for yourselves.*" Jesus is forbidding the selfish, self-centered accumulation of goods as the major end of life. A "*treasure*" is that which has value and is worth something to someone. Jesus does not forbid ownership of earthly possessions, but the collecting purposely of earthly treasures; where that's your only focus. There's a show on cable TV called "*Lottery Changed My Life.*" The majority that won were really scraping to make ends meet. Their treasure laid up was displayed in houses and cars. If their mindset is only on earthly things, then they will find out that earthly riches are corruptible and insecure. There are two problems with earthly wealth: (1) It is destroyed over time. (2) It is stolen by thieves. These earthly possessions are at the mercy of "*moth, rust, and thieves.*" In other words, they do not last. ²To "*break in*" is literally to dig through. Walls in Palestine were

¹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/matthew/13.html>

² <http://versebyversecommentary.com/matthew/matthew-619f/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

often made of dried mud. A burglar (*thief*) could dig through a wall to steal one's possessions. That's what thieves do. There is a seed of corruption within the world—a principle or nature of corruption within everything on earth. It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us.

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: We've come to the conclusion of what happens when laying up treasures on earth and now our attention is directed toward laying up treasures in heaven. The two kinds of treasures are conditioned by their place (either upon earth or in heaven). You can't take it with you, therefore, with earthly treasures, they are temporary and they disappear. However, with heavenly treasures, they are eternal, lasting forever. Things of eternal consequence will not be eaten away, corrode, or stolen. Nothing that is material lasts forever. Its part of the way God created the world. The world is passing away. So when Jesus teaches to store up treasures in heaven, He is telling us to use our actions to invest in eternity—to act generously toward others; things that further the kingdom. ³Since only the Word of God and people will last forever, that's where we ought to be putting our money and time. And the ultimate investment you can make is to invest your life in getting the Word of God to people! That's an investment that will last forever. That's what you're doing when you give to a missionary or to a Christian college or to an evangelistic ministry. Its producing treasures in heaven that are really unseen by you but has a dynamic return in heaven.

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Man's heart will always follow the treasure either on earth or in heaven. This leads to several useful insights: (1) Your heart is a moveable object. (2) Your heart will be wherever you want it to be. In other words, what is of most value to the disciples and to us is where we put our energy, our love, our thinking, and time on. If earthly treasures are of most value to us, then it will enslave our hearts in trying to pursue them. However, something good happens when your choice is made on spiritual and heavenly things.

6:22 The light of the body is the eye: The concept here is based on the ancient idea that the eyes were the windows through which light entered the body. If it was unclean or distorted, it would hinder light getting through. If the eyes were in good condition the body could receive such light—spiritual understanding and attention. The eye brings images—ideas—into the heart (the center of volition, thinking, conscience, self-consciousness, emotion). The eyes tell so much about a person. If a person cannot look you in the eye when he is talking to you, he is, probably, not perfectly honest. When a person has heavily blood-shot eyes, he is sick, or has lost a great deal of sleep. If Jesus lives within us, His Light should be evident in our eyes. **6:22b If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light** indicates devotion to one purpose; a single fixed vision or goal leaving the body to have the same perspective. And that perspective would be heavenly things. We have spiritual understanding on the same perspective. We would see as God sees. The body can function properly because when there is a singleness of the eye and heart, that person sets his attention upon the Lord for the very purpose of doing His Will, giving Him glory.

6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! If the eye is blinded and evil, then so is the heart and the body following. The condition or health of the eye is determined by the amount of light which entered the body. If you have a cloudy view, then the purpose is unclear and distorted; it's not on heavenly or spiritual things. An unhealthy eye has clouded or dimmed the entering of light, subjecting the body to darkness. Achan's sin and its consequences contaminated the whole camp of Israel. Therefore, if what should be light is really darkness, then we are being controlled by darkness, and outlook determines outcome. If our whole desire is to get rich, we will pay a great price for those riches.

6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. This kind of spiritual double vision causes one to believe that he can serve two masters. A master (*Gr kyrios*) is a lord or an owner. James 1:5 says, "*A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*" There is an earthly master (Satan) and a heavenly master (God). You can't straddle the fence and try to serve God and the enslavement of possessions or wealth; one you will hate or love; or you will hold on to one and thereby despising the other. The choice is yours. A man will either serve God or material things; earthly or heavenly treasures. An analogy of the wrong choice: ⁴Materialism is very similar to dependence upon

³ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1991-11-17-The-First-National-Bank-of-Heaven/>

⁴ <http://bible.org/seriespage/fatal-failures-religion-4-materialism-matthew-619-34>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

drugs. At first, a man begins to use drugs, but eventually they use him. His body builds up a tolerance for a certain quantity of a drug and he finds he must have more and more. Finally the drug is his master and he is its slave. The more money one gets, the more one desires. The more one is dominated by a desire for money, the more one is mastered by it, and is a slave to it. God promises several great things to the man who serves Him:

1. All the necessities of life—*"but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" Matt.6:33.*
2. Freedom from anxiety—*"be careful for nothing...and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" Phil4:6-7.*
3. Joy and contentment—*"these things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full" Jh.15:11.*
4. Abundant and eternal life—*"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" Jh10:10.*

The choice is clear—God! But not everyone makes that choice and they try to live life giving halfhearted allegiance.

LESSON: WORRY

Matthew 6:25 The Cause Of Worry

6:25 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. The disciples were a little anxious about what was laying ahead. Therefore, if the goal is not to serve or make our whole desire about riches, possessions or wealth (which is mammon), then how are we going to live? *"Take no thought"* (*Gr merimnaō*) means do not be anxious. The implication of the text is that all anxiety is provoked by worrying about material and temporal things. We cannot be anxious or worry about the things that concern our life: what we'll eat, drink, or wear. All three are necessities in life and Jesus says take no thought! Jesus puts a question to them which is the same as answering the question: **6:25b Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?** This indicates that a person's life and body are more valuable, much more than food and clothes. Why? Because God gave life and He will sustain it; God gave life and He will provide for it. Worry would be a distraction because you have taken your eyes off of your true source. Worry is a distortion of values and a reversal of priorities. God is saying, 'I got you, now pay attention to me.' The very cause of worry is that you have taken your eyes off God—your source; and placed them on necessities of life in which God's promises supply everyday.

Matthew 6:26-32 The Condemnation Of Worry

6:26 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? God not only takes care of mankind with life, food, and clothing, but He says take a look at the birds in the air and learn a lesson. ⁵Birds fly here and there seeking food but they do not grow their food or put food into storage, yet your heavenly Father (the one that takes care of you) takes care and feeds these birds. God still takes care of both of us. There is a contrast between worry and trust in God. Anxiety fails to understand God's providence and care of the individual. Worry cannot make any change and it cannot help in coping with problems. Jesus lets us know while asking a question that the believer is better than the birds:

1. Man is a higher being, on a much higher level of creation than animals. We did not evolve from animals as some may think.
2. The believer is a child of God. He is the Father of believers. God created birds; they are creatures, not children; they don't have to believe.
3. The believer is an heir of God, creatures are not.

We are to learn that God will likewise take care of the believer and the birds that fly around who have no care in the world. God knows when a sparrow will fall to the ground and He knows the number of hairs on our head.

Worry is a failure to see things as they really are and that is we all have to eat.

6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? The word "*cubit*" (*pechus*) literally means measure of space or distance (approximately 18 inches); but it can also mean a measure of time or age. The word

⁵ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/matthew/matthew-625f/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

"stature" (*helikian*) means height, quality or status gained by growth, and sometimes it means age. Therefore, the verse can read either, 'who can add one cubit to his stature or one minute to his life span.' "Take thought" means worry. Worry is senseless, just as senseless as trying to add to one's height or lengthen a minute to one's life span (when it's time for one to die). Worry is a waste of energy; it's unproductive and you can't change a thing.

6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: Again don't even worry about clothing, look at nature.

1. Lilies grow from a deep root. The roots are where they belong in the soil to receive nourishment. The roots of believers are not to be in the material things of this earth. In order for believers to receive their nourishment and fulfill their purpose on earth, believers are to put their roots where they belong, in God and in His righteousness.
2. Lilies do not toil or spin at spinning wheels to adorn themselves with beauty. Their beauty comes naturally as they go about their purpose in the world. Believers are not to be consumed with toiling after material things in order to adorn themselves with the artificial and superficial coverings of appearance. They are to be laboring after God and His righteousness, letting their natural beauty shine forth, trusting God to provide all these things.
3. Lilies die from the weather. They drop to the ground, decay, pass out of existence, and are gone forever. Clothing fades, wears out, goes out of fashion, and is laid down. Clothing just ceases to exist, but not the spirit of man. Therefore, he is to center his life on God and His righteousness, not on material clothing and physical beauty. God will provide necessary clothing to the person who diligently goes about life putting his priorities in order: seeking God and His righteousness first.

The man grows the flax (he toils) and the woman weaves it (spins). The statement is meant to proclaim the fact that the beauty of the lily has nothing to do with its effort, but is given completely by the Creator! Worry is an act of unbelief. You doubt the goodness and the integrity of God to provide.

6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ⁶Neighboring nations viewed Solomon's royal vestments as the standard of excellence, but even these garments were not as glorious as the lilies of the field. Solomon clothed himself, but the lilies did not clothe themselves. When the covering of God is upon the lilies, the brilliance cannot be compared to common or royal things. The lilies of Israel were said to have a brilliant coloring, especially the purple and white Huleh Lily found in Nazareth.

6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, — Grass does nothing but grow and quickly dies. God created the grass and provides for its life cycle. If man doesn't take care of it, He, the Creator sends the sun and the rain. Grass has a temporal cycle and man is an eternal being, living forever! **6:30b ...O ye of little faith?** God sees their lack of faith and lets them know that this is displeasing and a disregard of His Word. They are about to learn a lesson. By speaking in this way to the disciples, Jesus gives them both a conviction and also an encouragement to grow in faith. Quit being so distrustful because God is always Faithful!

6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? Jesus repeats a portion from verse 25. He is reiterating also from the above verse, to have faith for all these things that are necessities for life. All of these are symbolic representations that bring attention away from worrying about the everyday stress of life and put the focus on how God's care can be seen in the natural world. Worry is a symptom of reversed priorities, and our Lord calls this to our attention.

6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. All the necessities of life are what the Gentiles run after. God already knows about them for the care of His people. The unbelieving Gentiles live in the world and were the lost; therefore, if the disciples admit this care to their lives, it indicates that they have backslidden to the level of the heathen. So for Jesus to compare to these worldly minded worriers of the Gentiles would be a serious blow in the face. People who don't know God as heavenly Father are prone to run after all these things. "*Seek*" indicates aggressive pursuit. Believers do not function like the lost. It is

⁶ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/matthew/matthew-627f/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

unreasonable for a believer to establish the goal of anticipating every need. God is more aware of our needs than we are. Jesus used analysis of the birds in the air; the lilies in the field; the inability to add a cubit to one's stature or one's life's span; or the grass in the field to convict and encourage the disciples not to worry.

Matthew 6:33-34 The Cure For Worry

6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; —Jesus comes to the climax. The kingdom is the ultimate focus for every believer. God made man a spiritual being, therefore, instead of seeking material things, Jesus lets us know that the only way man can ever be satisfied is to seek God and His righteousness first. This world and the things of this world will not satisfy us. Man is allowed the necessities of life; but he has to: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*" Again, "Seek" indicates aggressive pursuit, but it's after God and His righteousness. The King has a kingdom and in His kingdom, He has a right way of doing things, so make it a priority, the center of your life to seek God's way of doing. As we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, we are subject to His rule; we live life in agreement with His Will, at the heart of which lies obedience and trust. The point to take away in pursuit of avoiding anxiety is that it can only be done by making the kingdom of God one's first priority. We must see our spiritual lives as of primary importance and our material well-being as secondary. Once we have our priorities in order, **6:33b ...and all these things shall be added unto you.** When you pursue God's kingdom and God's righteousness with a passion, it will result in God's provisions ("all these things.") All these things refer in context to food, drink, and clothing. If He takes care of His creation, He will surely take care of those who participate in His kingdom.

In conclusion, **6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.** Don't worry; live one day at a time. The believer is not to be preoccupied with tomorrow and its affairs. He is to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness today and leave tomorrow and its needs in God's hands. Let us not seek an advance on adversity that's out of our control. You will have situations that come up but they can wait for tomorrow as you pray and wait for God's care. Don't reach into tomorrow and bring its troubles into today.

6:34b Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Each day has its own appointed troubles, and there are new mercies appointed for us every day so we can bear those troubles.

SUMMARY:

⁷Jesus gives a command not to worry (v. 25). For Christians, worry and anxiety are forbidden, foolish and sinful. Worry is the sin of distrusting the promise of God. We may try to make it sound better by calling it concern, or burden, but the results are still the same—worry! The implication of the test is that all anxiety is provoked by worrying about material and temporal things.

Jesus gives three illustrations of how foolish it is to worry about food, longevity, and clothing. First He explains how birds do not sow, reap or stockpile food but God feeds them (v. 26). If He carefully takes care of the birds He certainly will take care of His children who are made in His image. The second illustration has to do with life expectancy (v. 27). Our culture seems to be obsessed with trying to lengthen life, yet worry is that which puts many into an early grave. Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands and the whole nervous system.

The third illustration uses lilies as a model (v. 28). It is an indictment of our day that so many waste so much on expensive clothes they will wear only a few times. If He clothes the flowers He will certainly supply us with the clothes we need. To make reasonable provisions for tomorrow is sensible but to be anxious for tomorrow is foolish.

To worry about material things is to live like the heathen, however, putting God and His righteousness first, He shows us that all those things will be added to us and thereby not having to worry about tomorrow and its troubles.

APPLICATION:

Ask yourself, how do I solve this problem? The conclusion is only found in Christ. Seek God and His righteousness!

⁷ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/do-not-worry/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>