

Godly Carelessness **Matthew 6:25-34**

Introduction

We are an anxious people. But apparently, we are not novel in this. Reading through the Scriptures, we see many instructions and exhortations about worry. To have cares and concerns in this world in one sense is simply to be human, for we live in a world afflicted by sin and its effects. The question is, what do we do with these cares? We can either cling to them, or we can cast them upon the Lord (1 Pet. 5:7).

Therefore

This passage (Matt. 6:25-34) is well-known as a passage on worry, and there is much to learn from it. Jesus begins this section by saying, “Therefore,” which means we ought to look previously to what He has been talking about. Jesus has just juxtaposed laying up treasures in heaven instead of on earth, having a good eye instead of a bad eye (or covetous or greedy, cf. Matt. 20:15), and serving God instead of earthly riches (vs. 19-24). Therefore, Jesus says, since you cannot serve both, do not fret about your earthly needs. Jesus immediately identifies worry as connected to covetousness (cf. the parallel passage in Luke 12) and idolatry. If you are serving mammon, if this life and its lusts are your idol, then worry is natural, because there is no guarantee of any of those benefits. But worry is unnatural to the Christian because God has more in store for us than our present circumstances. “Therefore,...do not worry about your life” (v. 25). This is reinforced when Jesus closes His argument by giving the alternative to anxiety: seek first the kingdom of God (v. 33).

Pointing Away, Pointing Toward

Jesus exhorts His hearers to not worry about what they will eat or drink or wear because life is more than these things (v. 25). Our lives point beyond our immediate circumstances. Our lives are not merely material. Our lives are not less than our basic needs, but they are more than those things. So Jesus exhorts us not to worry about those needs.

Notice how Jesus counsels those who are anxious. He gets them to look away from themselves and look to nature. Nature itself is not the object, though. He wants them to see God at work there. Look at the birds. See how God feeds them even though they don't sow and reap (for that's not their task). He cares for them. Aren't you—made in the image of God, worshipping Him, saved by His grace—more valuable to God than those birds (v. 26)? And then, Jesus asks what the profit is from worrying (v. 27). Luke records an additional question in his parallel passage: “If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?” (Luke 12:26). Why do we get so anxious about all sorts of situations in life when we know that our anxiety cannot change even the most basic things? Often, this is because we refuse to acknowledge that we are not in control. You can't add to your height by worrying, you can't add to your life by worrying. It's all in God's hands, and not a hair can fall from your head apart from His will.

Jesus again turns the eyes of the worrier away from himself, and this time to the lilies of the field. Why should you worry about even your clothing? God gloriously clothes the flowers, and they quickly pass away. How much more will He provide for you—again, you who are

made in His image, whom He is bringing to be with Him forever—will he not much more clothe you with what you need (vs. 28-31)? He knows what your needs are, even before you ask Him (v. 32; cf. v. 8). Jesus calls us to ask our heavenly Father for our needs, not so that God will finally clue in to what's going on, but for our own good. We must learn to ask the Father, because we must learn to look to Him. When we worry, we are consumed with ourselves and our circumstances, forgetting that He made us and made our circumstances and is working to draw us to Himself. When we worry, Jesus says we are of little faith, like Peter sinking in the waves (Matt. 14:30-31).

Seek the Kingdom

So, instead of turning inward to ourselves, or turning outward to other worldly and godless solutions, where should we turn? When you find yourself sinking into worry and anxiety, like Peter sinking in the midst of the storm, where do you turn? Jesus says seek *first* the kingdom of God. Jesus teaches us to pray to our heavenly Father, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (v. 10). Jesus calls on us to seek that kingdom. Seek the rule of Christ over all the earth, including your heart. And when we submit ourselves to Him, He will supply all our needs (cf. Ps. 37:3-6). He is a good King, a good Father, and loves to give good gifts to His children (Matt. 7:11).

Therefore, Jesus concludes, do not worry about tomorrow (v. 34). Tomorrow's troubles and tomorrow's trials are not for today. There is a godly and wise way to plan ahead and to provide for the future. But if it is coated in worry, it is no longer really wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and worry comes from the fear of something other than the Lord who loves and cares for you. God daily gives daily grace. Practice and develop the kind of godly carelessness that Jesus exhorts you to here. If you do, you will find growing freedom and joy and peace in your salvation, freedom and joy and peace that you didn't know you had in Christ.

Conclusion

How do you do this? First, do you acknowledge that your worry and anxiety is sinful? It is prideful, idolatrous, selfish, perhaps covetous or self-righteous. Do you acknowledge that? Then confess it to God, and trust His promise to forgive you (1 John 1:9). Then, seek after the kingdom of God. Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? Then walk in obedience, “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

I want to close by reading a handful of verses to you. Give your attention to them, listen to them, let the Word wash over you. Come back to them later this week and pick them up and wield them in your battle against your worries: Matt. 6:27; Luke 12:26; Matt. 6:34; Prov. 3:5-6; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:6-7; Ps. 55:22; 1 Thess. 5:16-18.

Are you worried? Then come to Jesus. This is true for the believer who, though saved and redeemed by the blood of Christ, at times falters like Peter. This is also true for the unbeliever. If you are anxious and worried, you will find the answers to those concerns in Christ and nowhere else. So to all of you, if you are worried, come to Jesus (Matt. 11:28-30).