

Reading: Matthew 6:25-34

Theme: Our Worry v God's Care!

I have stressed and will keep stressing that the Sermon on the Mount is said mainly to those who know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and in v19-34 Jesus taught about living correctly in this world. In v19-24 He warns against setting our heart on things of this world for our primary happiness, joy and satisfaction. We may or may not have great amounts of this world's good yet may still be obsessed, oppressed by cares and concerns about getting, keeping, using such things, about life, health and the like. Our hearts may not be set on them, but we may be constantly worrying over such things.

As we continue this morning, I am asking all here who profess to love the Lord Jesus as their Saviour a question - "*Are we spiritual worldlings?*" I am not asking if we are Christians, for if I did we would be able to tell of how we came to faith in the Lord Jesus and its genuineness could be verified in our life. What I'm asking is if we apply and work out that faith in our everyday life, or are we still thinking and behaving in many ways as we did before we came to faith in Jesus and are a spiritual worldling?

The Lord Jesus knows all about us, our cares, worries, ups and downs. We are to realise all we need is known to Him. Christians easily doubt His love, care, concern and provision for them. We get worried, upset, sleepless, down and troubled. Our thoughts can go around and round, we may wonder if or when it will end; doubts and fears are accelerated by "*What if's*" = "*if this should this happen*". We hang onto our fears, doubts, worries (*or they cling on to us*) and the burden of them saps our strength, joy, vitality and life. We may not realise it or not, but we may be on the verge of calling God untrue, saying that we know better and we persist in carrying our own heavy burdens!

The Lord rebukes us and says “*O you of little faith?*” (v30). In fact, the word of God rebukes us also 1 Peter 5:7 “*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*” Psalm 55:22 “*Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you*”. Often we may fail to apply our faith to our everyday lives. Jesus in this section builds on what He has said in the earlier section and it concerns our over anxious, all-consuming, life sapping worry and care. We are not desiring or laying up for ourselves treasures on earth and we are not taken up with worldly things, but the devil hinders our spiritual life by bringing worries and cares over legitimate necessities, over things that could happen. Such worries, all absorbing anxieties and cares, spring from little faith. I want to look briefly at v25-34 from the viewpoint of little faith and to note 2 things:

1. Little Faith and Its Outworking.

We may worry about necessary or unnecessary things. In these verses Jesus challenges us about such and links it to little faith. Here is a real problem of our over anxious care; of being overly worried. The AV translates the word “*worry*” (v25) as “*Take no thought*”, but it means not just “*thought*” but refers to anxious thought, worried thought, distracting thoughts. It is that type of thought that disturbs all other thoughts, that starts off as a little trickle, cuts a channel and all other thoughts get sucked in and carried along in and with it. It does not refer to making right provisions for future events, our job, home, pensions or insurances - unless these become whirlpools of anxiety and worry in our lives. Little faith is often the source of such anxious worry and as such it is wrong, some writers even call it sinful, because it doubts and denies God, His care and provision for our lives.

We are to note that little faith is saving faith but it can be confined almost exclusively to one realm - that of our salvation and it is not applied or even seen as relevant to our everyday lives and all that we go through. We can believe in the God who saves us and yet our faith

stops there. God is known as Father, but we then fail to see, recognise and apply this to our lives - to the areas of food, drink, clothes, health, safety, family, friends, future and we may become captives to a strong sticky web of worry. Our faith is to be applied to every area of our lives. If we do not, then we may find ourselves affected by debilitating worrying about many things. The examples Jesus uses here include food, drink, clothes, what will happen in the future (*especially tomorrow as it looms on our horizon*).

We can find ourselves being turned about, inside out by the circumstances we are in. We do not see our heavenly Father's care and control but focus on and see only the troubles, the problems, the concerns, the "what ifs" and we allow them to fill our minds and hearts. When this happens, we lose sight of and cannot think of our God, what He has promised or taught. We get battered, concussed, punch-drunk by circumstances and we cannot think straight. This can cause us to panic more and more. Our thoughts go around and round in ever decreasing but faster circles and we panic even more!

If we have ever had a night of undisturbed sleep because of such thoughts, we will know exactly what I mean. Little faith prevents clear, right and Biblical thinking on issues, problems and people. Little faith hinders us taking Scripture at what it says, even reasoning "*the Bible says... But...!*" Here in God's word is help, encouragement and directions for our lives. Sadly, with little faith we bypass it as irrelevant and have no answers to our fears and what ifs. We fail to apply and work out our salvation correctly.

Realise that if the Lord is the almighty, all knowing, loving God and Father the Bible presents to us, if He has saved us, forgiven us our sins, prepared a home in heaven and has said He'll work all things together for good for those who love Him, then why do we worry as if there is no one there, as if we are a heathen, a worldling with no experience or knowledge of the Lord in this way? We are so often

theoretical believers and yet practical atheists! Basically, we fail to apply what we know. We claim to believe such things and yet in practice we show that we do not!

Before we move on, let's ask ourselves 2 questions: **Firstly**, have we really trusted the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour? We cannot really consider anything else on the topic if we do not have a saving faith, we need saving faith, even if it is a little faith. We are to make sure we have a saving faith, that we have trusted the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour. **Secondly**, we are to ask if this faith affects our lives, attitudes, desires, worries or are we living and behaving as if we are not saved and do not know the love of God. We may be in the state of having little faith, a static faith, of failing to trust the Lord in all areas of our lives. We all, especially those who are honest enough to own that they have little faith, need to see and note that:

2. Little Faith Needs to Grow. *(as does all faith)*

The Lord Jesus, as well as our heavenly Father, doesn't want spiritual jockeys - small, lightweight Christians with a shallow and little faith. He wants us to grow, to have a strong, living and giant faith. Jesus encourages us to have a growing faith in these verses. He does not want us consumed, oppressed and obsessed by cares, worries and anxieties over this, that or the other. He commands that we are not to be so. He questions us why it should be so; He also gives us reasons why we are not to be so and then He goes on to say what we are to concern ourselves about (v33).

Our saving faith is to be worked out in our lives as our faith and trust grows. Worry, fear, anxiety are opposites to faith and trust in our heavenly Father. If God is who He says He is, has done for us, will do great and amazing things for us as He has said and promised, then why can we be so prone to fear, worry and doubt? Our Father in heaven wants us to trust Him and our faith in Him to grow. We are not to be over worried about what we eat, drink, wear, will do or

what will happen if... Our heavenly Father knows what we have need of. Yes, there are medical conditions that do affect us and cause our minds and hearts to be prone to worry, I am not dismissing, minimizing these for they need medical treatment, but I am speaking of anxious and absorbing cares and worry that spring from little faith and low views of God's care.

Here we begin to think aright and correctly. We are to remember our heavenly Father knows us - we are His beloved children. He knows what is right and best for us in His plans and purposes. Whatever we go through, whatever happens to us or to our loved ones, whatever we have or do not have, all these are lovingly under His control. This is not fatalism but it is the teaching of Christian certainty - we are certain our almighty, all loving, all wise Father will not make a mistake with the circumstances of our little lives - so what ifs, worries, burdens of care and anxiety can be cast on Him and left there in His control, as can all our tomorrows with all that they will bring.

We are to think much on our Father, on His love for us, His concern for us in all we go through and are in. We are to realise our Father is ahead of us, with us and comes behind us. We are safe in His sovereign, loving hands, He is the almighty God, having all power and ability; He is the One who is in control and we are to apply these things consciously to our lives and situations. We are not to be as the heathen who do not know God. When we are faced with a fear, a situation of crisis, things are going on in our lives, we are to **consciously** remember and own our God, His care and control.

We are to learn from that which is around us. The Lord Jesus here uses such examples - birds, flowers, grass of the field. He says "Look" (v26) or AV "Behold" - force of the word means to gaze; then in v28 Jesus says "Consider" (AV) or "See" (NIV) which means to learn thoroughly, examine carefully, to consider well. The

disciples and we are encouraged to think about God's care of nature, of little birds, of wildflowers but as we think on all of God's care, concern and provision for such everyday things, we are to remember we are more valuable than birds, more precious than flowers - for we have eternal souls. If God cares for these lesser things, then He will care for us who are His more valuable precious children. So why then have such anxious fears and worries for our life and for the future? We are to realise He will provide all we need most often by our working, but also in other ways.

When we are confronted by fears and the like, question ourselves as to how we are to approach such. Do we let the situation dominate and master us? Not at all. We are to see these things as allowed by God, as tests of our faith, as our faith being relevant to this situation and to see how God's word is to be relevantly applied to this, note what promises are ours at that time. We are to place all that happens to us in the context of our Christian faith - God has saved us and our faith is to be exercised in all the changing circumstances of life. We are to pause and try to put it into the context of our Father's love, of our trust in Him; to even see if it is for our good when it seems to hurt and chasten us. We are to try to look and see what we are to learn through it.

In trying, testing and worrying circumstances, realise we are not alone or abandoned even if they seem fiery trials and deep waters, for we are promised in Isaiah 43:2-3a *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour"*. It means we are not to be distractingly absorbed by worries, fears, cares etc.

What does Jesus say we are to do? We are to seek 1st God's kingdom and His righteousness. Here is the antidote - setting our heart on

treasures in heaven and living holy and right lives here on earth. Here we learn how we are to live in this world with all its different sorts of pressures on us. We are to keep on seeking the things of God and do this 1st and foremost, to seek to be holy and show the reality of God and His work in us in our everyday lives. We are to put God 1st and then begin to see all else fitting into place. As we grow in faith, we will not worry unduly about food, clothes etc. nor will we be absorbed by tomorrow and all it will bring as we know our God is always caring and watching over us, for our families and friends - wherever they are.

I feel I must give the word of warning at this point for Jesus' words are not to be taken in a simplistic and literalistic way. He is not saying "*Do not work, do not buy clothes, do not plan for the future.*" We have the full teaching of Scripture to approve these things and they are to be used correctly. What Jesus says is that we are not to make them our all-consuming anxiety, the sole focus of our concerns and worries as if all depended on us, our worrying. Worry does not add an hour to our lives, let alone help us grow a cubit (v27)!

We are to have no all absorbing anxious or worrying thought for the future, especially for tomorrow. Worry is a powerful force that will dominate and enslave us, especially as we consider an unknown future, even that which we think we know! Such worry is a waste of time. We do not know the future, but we do know the God who holds the future, who is with us today, who will care and love us today and is the same One who will be there and sufficient for all that He sends our way for all our tomorrows! Corrie ten Boom said "*Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.*"

We are not to worry about tomorrow for He gives us grace, strength and help for each day and does not want us to focus on tomorrow's problems and fears for this day. Tomorrow will be time enough to bring the trials that arise. That is why it is not good to know the

future. Which one of us would want to know the future and all the joys and sorrows it will bring? It could drive us out of our minds with impatience, fear and anxiety. For each day our God will give us fresh strength and grace. Value each day as it comes, seek God's fresh help for each day. Do not try and imagine the future, where future steps may take us. We are to use our gifts, talents and abilities now and not wait for a future time when we hope we will be useful, but we are to be serving God now, to the best of our ability and not imagine we need such things.

Worry is a debilitating disease and if a symptom of unbelief, it is sin. The antidote is prescribed here in this passage. We need to think and pray it through, work it out as individuals and not be over anxious, be fearfully absorbed, possessed by fears and worries but we must do as the Lord Jesus says in v33-34 *“seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*