

## *What Are You Worried About?*

*Matthew 6:25-34*

I know that this is Memorial Day weekend and we normally focus on those men and women who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom with their lives. There will be a Memorial Day tint to this message. While Jesus has given us examples of issues of life with their problems and solutions, He would be remiss if He didn't warn us about a 'silent killer' of both life and spirit, worry. Anxiety has been one of the most prevalent symptoms brought about by the unknowns of this COVID crisis that has gripped our nation. Even before COVID-19 ever existed, studies showed that anxiety and stress increased the chances of heart disease and stroke by 29%. 32% of adolescents suffer from anxiety. The reason that many of our people are not here this morning after we have reopened our Sanctuary, frankly, has less to do with COVID as much as it has to do with anxiety. God's people need to understand that worry can become a sin just as much as money can. Worry becomes sin once it becomes about distrust of the Lord and His great provision for us as His people. That is where we can easily link Memorial Day to this message. In the military, trust is vital for the success of the mission of any ship or ground unit or aircraft. In the military, the soldier entrusts his life to his fellow soldier and the soldier next to you entrusts his life to you. We trust in our training and believe that it is the best on planet earth. We trust our leadership, our equipment and weapons, our planning and we believe that it is 2<sup>nd</sup> to none. That extreme level of trust is what that soldier/Marine/airman or sailor takes into battle and what we believe will bring us out alive and victorious in the end. The Christian believer must believe the same thing about the weapons of our spiritual warfare in Jesus Christ. Worry, for the American soldier and Christian soldier, is contrary to those keys to victory. For the soldier, he/she must conquer their fear. The same goes for the Christian soldier. This morning I want you to ask yourself this question, "Am I determined to conquer my fears, or do I allow my fears to conquer me?"

### **I. ANXIETY ABOUT CARES OF LIFE**

Vss. 25-27

(a) **Instruction:** When Jesus tells the crowds to '*take no thought for your life*', He is not telling us that we should live carelessly. Jesus was/is not the Friend that looks at everyone and utters the famous last words of the redneck, "Hey y'all, watch this!" But His instruction to us IS to live CAREFREE. In a nutshell, "What are you worried about?"

1. If there has been anything that I have witnessed during the last two months in our nation that has disappointed me the most, it has been the fear and worry that has overtaken some (some is being kind) of God's people. I understand fear of death in lost people, I understand that. Isaiah 38:18 says, "...they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." But God's people being gripped by fear of a virus OR an earthly government is inexcusable.

a. Anxiety, by definition, is "a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome." Jesus said in verse 25, "Don't worry..."

- About what you will eat today
- About what you will drink today
- About what you're going to wear today

b. Then He asks a very pointed question, "Isn't your life much more than that?" Christians, let me ask you a question. "What are you so worried about? Seriously, what are you afraid of?" IF Jesus is the Lord of life, then why are you so worried about sickness or death? IF you believe that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, why are you afraid of that which He has already conquered?

Philippians 1:20-21 *I honestly expect and hope that I will never do anything to be ashamed of. Whether I live or die, I always want to be as brave as I am now and bring honor to Christ. <sup>21</sup> If I live, it will be for Christ, and if I die, I will gain even more.* (Contemporary English Version).

2. Jesus is NOT telling us to live carelessly. But He is calling us into a life in Him that is free of worldly cares and anxiety; carefree.

a. If I live, I will live FOR Christ. If I die, I will die IN Christ. What have I got to worry about? I refuse to allow my fear to have victory over me! That's my choice! What's yours?

(b) **Discernment:** "*Behold*" means to discern, understand what you are looking at. Anxiety is reduced with understanding and Jesus takes one of the most familiar sights in Israel and uses it as an example, the birds of the air. They fly about like they haven't a care in the world. Then, He asks another pointed question, "Ain't you better than them?" Vs. 26

(c) **Length:** When Jesus asks the question about making the body ‘taller’, His question is rhetorical at best and sarcastic at worse. His question deals with length of life. David wrote in Psalms 39:5, “*Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth...*”. Jesus says in Luke 12:26, “*If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?*” Vs. 27

## II. ANXIETY ABOUT THEIR CLOTHING OF LEISURE

Vss. 28-29

We talked about money last week. In Israel, your clothing was the external indicator of your personal wealth. If you wore fine clothing, you were a person of financial means.

(a) **Out of Style:** One of my favorite movies is “The Sandlot” and one of the star characters, Benny, is out in the outfield ‘coaching up’ the worst player on the field, Scott Smalls. When Benny is finished talking to Smalls, he trots back into the infield toward home plate and one of the other players says, “Hurry up Benny, my clothes are going out of style!” Another player chimes in, “They already are.”

1. When we get dressed up and go out into town, we want to look like we are at least dressing like someone in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But I’ve seen some pretty crazy things in clothing that will one day go out of style.

- \$85 for jeans that look like they have mud on them
- \$300 for a cowboy hat with a sweat stain around the brim straight from the factory
- Rings on every finger, earrings in places other than their ears, men having their hair up in buns and wearing capri pants, etc.

(b) **Never Out of Style:** Look at the lilies. Look at how they grow. Look at the ease from which the bulb pushes the new shoots through the hard ground every spring when the ground warms up. Look at the beauty and intricate weavings within the blossom itself. King Solomon never looked so good!

1. “*Consider*” means ‘to note carefully’ or ‘learn thoroughly’. You can learn from a flower how I want you to live. The lily doesn’t come up carelessly in the winter but carefully in the spring. It bursts up out of the ground with a beautiful confidence that I want you to carefully study and learn from. Faith, courage, trust in the Lord is NEVER out of style!

Psalm 4:5 *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.*

### III. ANXIETY ABOUT THE CONSUMPTION OF LENTILS      Vss. 30-34

(a) **Cooking**: Jesus speaks of grass being used as fuel in the ovens of Israel...ovens of the poor in Israel. I used 'lentils' because I want to use the greatest example in the Bible of the dangers of worry about consumables (food, clothes) and temporary things of life. I want to use Esau.

1. In verses 30-31 Jesus talks about cooking and eating and then you skip down to verse 32 and Jesus introduces the Gentile into the conversation. I now want you to think about Isaac's son and Jacob's brother Esau. Listen to what Paul says about Esau in Hebrews 12. He has just given us an all-star lineup of faith in chapter 11 and Paul moves into chapter 12 and writes,

*<sup>16</sup> Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. <sup>17</sup> For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

2. Now look at verse 32. This is how the Gentiles (unbelievers) act. You are Israel, the Chosen People of Jehovah Himself! In humanity itself, you are not 'cut from a better cloth'. In faith, you are supposed to be cut from a different cloth!

a. I say that about the military all the time. We are not trained to run FROM danger, but TO it! My brother died on July 25, 1967 because he was trained to give his life for the lives of others. He caught the grenade that was thrown into his helicopter, held it to his chest, dove out and onto the ground while covering the live grenade and was killed in action at the age of 20. He was cut from a different cloth.

b. As a believer, you are cut from a different cloth. Jesus sent us into a world filled with danger and not a 'safe space'. The Holy Spirit lives in you, the same Holy Spirit that encouraged Stephen while he was stoned, encouraged Paul as he awaited his execution in Nero's prison and encouraged the Apostles as they carried the Gospel of Jesus Christ into a hostile world. If you are one of God's Chosen people in

Christ Jesus, you are cut from a different cloth, so what are you afraid of?

Conclusion: Henry Ward Beecher says, “Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.” Now, you choose. Peter reminds us that we are a peculiar people, chosen (called out) from darkness into marvelous light for the privilege to praise the One who called us, Jesus Christ. Not much praise goes on in the house of fear or worry.

If you have never opened up your heart to Jesus Christ, it’s time to let go of your fears, and the first fear is fearing what people will say about you when/if you become a believer.