

Winning over Worry (#27)

1 Corinthians 12:9

In our last study of spiritual gifts, we continued to look at this matter of "faith," as we saw how our faith relates directly to our understanding of God. Tonight, we are going to look once more at the subject of "faith" as we come to grips with this matter of worry. You see, the opposite of faith is worry.

To see the attitude of Jesus in this matter, look with me once again at a passage of Scripture that each of us should be very familiar with, Matthew 6:25-34, "Therefore, I say unto you, Be not anxious 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 food and the body than raiment? 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? Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore, be not anxious saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be, therefore, not anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil."

It helps us to remember that the Lord Jesus Christ lived among common, everyday, down-to-earth kind of people. When Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph carried Him to the temple and offered for His dedication two pigeons. This was a gift specified in the Old Testament that people could give when they were not able to give a lamb. Although Joseph was a successful cabinet maker, Jesus was brought up among the working class of people. Therefore, He knew what it was to work hard to make a living.

With that background in mind, it means a great deal to us when we learn that Jesus deals with this matter of worry. Three times in these verses, the Lord says, "Take no thought." The best translation for that is, "Do not worry." That is really what Jesus is saying.

The word "worry" is a rather interesting word. It actually means "to pull in opposite directions." It means the opposite of the word "peace." The word "peace" means "to put or to bring together." **When I have "peace" in my heart it means that my heart and my mind are pulled together.** But when I have "worry" it means that my heart and my mind are pulled apart. **That is why the Lord Jesus tells us not to worry.**

Recently, I read something about worry that I have thought a great deal about. It said this: "Worry is a thin stream of fear that trickles through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a wide channel that drains away all other thoughts." **If you allow worry to linger, and encourage it in your heart, then all other constructive thoughts are taken out of your mind.**

I heard about a fellow who worried so much that all the hair fell out of his wig. I heard about another fellow who said to his friend, "I want to hire you to do my worrying for me, and I will pay you \$100,000 a year. Your job is to do all my worrying for me." His friend said, "Well, where in the world are you going to get \$100,000 to pay my salary?" He said, "That's your first worry." **Most of us do a great deal of worrying.** Yet, Jesus tells us not to worry. **That means if we do worry it is a sin.**

This is one of those "respectable" sins. In fact, we don't normally look at worry as a sin at all. We have almost elevated worry to the status of a virtue. In fact, we Christian talk about worry as if it is something we can be proud of.

But worry causes all kinds of problems in our lives. It causes problems physically. Doctors tell us that ulcers are a direct result of worry. **When you get an ulcer, normally it is not what you are eating; it is what is eating you.**

I read an article by Charles Mayo, the man who founded the famous Mayo Clinic. And this is what he said concerning worry: "Worry effects circulation, the heart, glands, and the whole nervous system. I have never met a man or know a man to die of overwork, but I have known a lot to die of worry."

Therefore, we need to learn from Jesus how to win the war over worry.

The first thing we learn about worry, according to Jesus, is that when you worry you have an incorrect view to life. Verse 25 says, "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." **Jesus is correctly describing a normal life. It is the way we normally live. We think about what we are going to have to eat. We think about**

food and being able to pay the grocery bill. **We think about being able to buy clothes for the kids and those boys who are knocking the tops off those expensive athletic shoes. Jesus is talking about the pressures of life which cause most of us to spend a great deal of time worrying.** What He does here is argue from the lesser to the greater. In verse 25 He says not to worry about the necessities of our lives because, “is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” **His point is that when you look at life merely from the viewpoint of the material things in life, then you have an incorrect view of life.** Remember what Jesus said in the wilderness temptation, as recorded in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” **Jesus is not saying that we do not have to have the necessities of life. He is simply saying that the material things are not the totality of life. God is the one who created life.** God is the one who gave us the very existence that you and I presently enjoy. **If God can do the great - create life; then He can do the lesser – sustain the life that He has created.** It is no big job for God to give us the necessities in life. To meet our physical needs is peanuts to God. **If you and I can trust God for the great matters, for the salvation of our soul and our eternal destiny, then surely we ought to be able to trust God to provide the daily necessities of our life.**

Second, Jesus points out that when we worry we are giving an incorrect value of life. One of the things I like about the preaching and teaching of Jesus is that He so often reaches out into the world of nature and uses illustrations right around us to help us understand what He is trying to say. In the following illustration, it may be that some birds flew over about that time; maybe there were some swallows darting by or some sparrows chirping nearby. And as Jesus points to the birds He says, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." Notice He says, “your heavenly Father” and not “their heavenly Father.” **He is making a distinction between the birds of the air, which are God’s creation and you and I who are God’s children.**

Now Jesus is not saying that the birds of the air do not work. In fact, birds are usually very busy getting their food everyday. Therefore, Jesus is not saying that we ought to just sit down somewhere and expect God to bring it all in. **You don't find birds just perched up in the trees somewhere expecting God to just haul it all in to them. Birds are very industrious.**

But what Jesus is saying is that you will never see a bird with an ulcer. You will never see a bird going to a doctor or dealing with problems of hypertension. In other words, the Creator cares for the birds and they know He is

going to care for them. **Although they are busily engaged in all their activities of gathering food, they don't get filled with anxiety and burdened down with care like we do. A bird is a *creation* of God.** You are a *child* of God. So if God takes care of the lesser, the little birds, don't you think God is going to take care of His own children and His own creation?

Jesus is simply reminding us that we have a Father in heaven who is watching over us and taking care of us. There is not a sparrow that falls to the ground that the heavenly Father does not see. I like what the writer wrote when he said, "If His eye is on the sparrow then I know He is watching over me!"

Jesus then describes worry. **The first thing He says is that worry is *useless*.** In verse 27 Jesus said it does not do any good to worry, "Which of you by taking thought (worrying, being anxious, uneasy) can add one cubit unto his stature?" **There are some young men that are terrified that they are never going to be tall. They exercise, they stretch, they take their vitamins, they pray, and they are consumed with the fear that they are going to go through life being short.** All of that stuff is good, but Jesus says that all of that worry does not add one cubit to your height.

The second statement Jesus makes in these verses is that worry is *faithless*. When you worry you show a lack of faith. To make His point, Jesus once more uses another beautiful illustration from nature as He reached down and picked up a common wild flower, as seen in verses 28-29, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The "lilies of the field" to which Jesus referred were just common wild flowers that grew all over that particular land. **Solomon was one of the great kings of Israel, but he was also a multi-millionaire who dressed in the finest royal robes that money could buy.** Yet, in the face of the best seamstress, and in spite of all the jewels and colors found in Solomon's robes, they paled in the presence of one of these simple little wild flowers. **And Jesus is simply saying if God gives such careful attention to the adorning of flowers, don't you think He is going to take care of you and me?**

But Jesus does not stop there; He also says that worry is *needless*. He continues in verse 31, "Therefore take no thought (do not worry, do not be anxious, do not fret), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed?" Verse 32 says, "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." **The word "Gentiles" usually refers to the heathen, or we would refer to**

them as those who are lost. So Jesus is saying that it really does not matter if you are saved or lost, these are things that everybody needs.

But then He uses the word “seek.” This word in the Greek is a very intense and continuous word and has to do with worrying and seeking fulfillment. Therefore, Jesus is saying that it is the characteristic of a lost world to constantly pursue things – to be bothered, heated up and anxious about things. **The indication here is that the lost person is always seeking fulfillment by the pursuit of "things."** And they seek to find their “joy” through materialism.

But look at what Jesus says in verse 32, “Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.” **Folks, you cannot inform God about some need in your life! We are dealing with a God who is omniscient. He knows! Not only does He know - He cares.**

But, how do we defeat worry? Jesus gives us the answer in verse 33 when He says, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...” Jesus is saying, “If you are ever going to defeat worry, you are going to have to put first things first in your life.” **And then He reminds us that God is that first thing. Ladies and gentlemen, as long as you have something or someone other than God first in your life you will always have to deal with worry. Why? Because there is no real security outside of God.**

The second way to defeat worry is to give God your future, as seen in verse 34, “Take therefore no thought for tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” **Most of us crucify ourselves between two thieves - the regrets of yesterday and the worries about tomorrow.**

The truth of the matter is that most of us worry about things that never happen. Child of God, we really can trust God! So why worry?

If you are not saved, why not tonight?