

Sermon Notes for January 7, 2007

**Dealing With Difficult Emotions  
As A Christian Sermon Series  
“Worry”  
Matthew 6:25-34**

For several years a woman had been having trouble getting to sleep at night because **she feared burglars**. One night her husband heard a noise in the house, so he went downstairs to investigate. When he got there, **he did find a burglar**. “**Good evening,**” said the man of the house. “**I am pleased to see you. Come upstairs and meet my wife. She has been waiting 10 years to meet you.**”

**Introduction**

**A. We Begin A Sermon Series Today On “DEALING WITH DIFFICULT EMOTIONS AS A CHRISTIAN.”**

1. As a Pastor with almost 30 years experience, I believe that I can **CONFIDENTLY** make this statement – **CHRISTIANS DON’T DEAL WITH THEIR EMOTIONS VERY WELL.**
  - a. either Christians don’t believe that they should “**have any emotions**”
    1. as if Christians are to be stoic, neutral, unaffected by life
    2. we are to be the “rock of Gibraltar;” steady, unwavering
  - b. or we simply “**deny our emotions**”
    1. “**I’m not mad.**”
    2. “**I’m not angry.**”
    3. “**I’m not depressed.**”
2. Let me tell you what I have learned about our emotions as Christians.
  - a. **WE HAVE THEM!**
    1. yes, you may think that you should act a certain way
    2. yes, you may think that Christians should never be angry, depressed or mad
  - b. **BUT EMOTIONS WILL DO WHAT THEY WANT TO DO, . . . WON’T THEY?**
    1. **DESPITE** the belief that “you think” you are not angry, **YOU ARE STILL ANGRY.**
    2. **DESPITE** the belief that “you think” you are not depressed, **YOU ARE STILL DEPRESSED.**
  - c. **WE MUST BE HONEST ABOUT OUR EMOTIONS:**
    1. or we are simply hypocrits, faking it before the world
    2. let us **ESPECIALLY**, as Christians, **QUIT FAKING IT!** Let us be honest, perhaps for the first time, about our emotions as Christians

**B. We Will Begin Our Sermon Series With The EMOTION OF WORRY.**

1. Certainly a “Top 10” emotion that all of us deal with at some time or another.
2. Today, we are going to see what Jesus has to say about worry and how we can deal with it.

### C. I Can Talk About MY STRUGGLE WITH WORRY.

1. Story about Jane in college
  - a. she was worried about a test
  - b. I was a new Christian but I had found a wonderful passage on worry – I told her to read Matthew 5:27-29
  - c. she read the passage and called me back, confused

**Matthew 5:27-29** "You have heard that it was said, '**Do not commit adultery.**' But I tell you that **anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.. (as Jane worried about a test in college; me a new-found faith.)

2. My own struggle with worry.
  - a. especially as a non-believer
  - b. but even as a believer
    1. David as a rising senior in High School
    2. the threat of Jane not getting a job

3. Stages of worry:

An average person's anxiety is focused on:

**40%**--things that will never happen

**30%**--things about the past that can't be changed

**12%**--things about criticism by others, mostly untrue

**10%**--about health, which gets worse with stress

**8%**--about real problems that will be faced

4. A view toward worry:

#### **The Soldier's Philosophy**

- **One of two things is certain:** Either you're mobilized, or you're not mobilized.
- **If you're not mobilized,** there is no need to worry; if you are mobilized, one of two things is certain: Either you're behind the lines, or you're at the front.
- **If you're behind the lines,** there is no need to worry; if you're at the front, one of two things is certain: Either you're resting in a safe place, or you're exposed to danger.
- **If you're resting in a safe place,** there is no need to worry; if you're exposed to danger, one of two things is certain: Either you're wounded, or you're not wounded.
- **If you're not wounded,** there is no need to worry; if you are wounded, one of two things is certain: Either you're wounded seriously or you're wounded slightly.
- **If you're wounded slightly,** there is no need to worry; if you're wounded seriously, one of two things is certain: Either you recover or you die.
- **If you recover,** there is no need to worry; if you die, you can't worry.—  
Source Unknown

### D. THE STRUGGLE OF THE CHURCH WITH WORRY.

#### 1. NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO WORRY.

- a. no matter how spiritual you are, you find yourself falling into this "crack" at times.

b. especially when you are tired or stressed out.

## 2. WE MUST REALIZE THAT JESUS IS TALKING IN THIS TEXT TO CHRISTIANS!

- a. notice that He rebukes us by saying in verse 30, **“O you of little faith”**
  1. it is not that we have no faith –
  2. it is that we have “so little of it”
- b. so, Jesus is speaking to those of us who know Christ as personal Savior but who still struggle with worry

### I. The AREAS of Worry.

#### A. The DEFINITION OF Worry and Concern.

Vs. 25 – “Therefore, I tell you, **do not worry.**”

##### 1. The definition of WORRY:

- a. **the Greek - merimaino**; two Greek words
  1. to divide and the mind
  2. to have a distracted and bothered mind
  3. the story of **Mary and Martha** in **Luke 10:40**: “But Martha was **distracted (merimaino)** by all the preparation that had to be made.” She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”
- b. **the German - worgen**
  1. the English word for worry comes from an old German word meaning **to strangle or choke**
  2. when things get tough, you may have a hard time getting your breath as if you were choking (as in David going to college)
  3. **Mark 4**. The Parable of the Soils - **Vs. 19** - “but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and **choke** the Word, making it unfruitful.”
- c. **the English**
  1. practically speaking, worry is trouble or fear that enters the mind concerning a certain matter
    - a. usually things that “may or may not happen” in the future
    - b. someone once said that we spend **80%** of our time thinking about the future or what “may” happen one day
  2. quotes:
    - a. **“Worry is worthless activity that does no constructive good for anything or anybody.”**
    - b. **“Worry is wasting today’s time to clutter up tomorrow’s opportunities with yesterday’s troubles.”**
  3. the biggest problem with worry is that it “produces nothing”
    - a. as one has said, **“Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but doesn’t get you anywhere.”**

- b. it is somewhat like the heat that goes up your chimney during a fire and especially after that fire has gone down overnight – you wake up and it’s cold

## 2. The definition of CONCERN:

- a. before you respond too negatively:
  - 1. you may be saying – “Then how am I to act, as if I didn’t care? How do you live without worry?”
  - 2. am I **never** to show worry or concern over my children, or our nation or other struggling Christians?
- b. I believe that there is a real difference between **worry and concern**.
  - 1. **worry** is generally **focused on self** and produces **nothing**
    - a. I have a problem, so I pace and pace and pace; bite my fingernails, wringing my hands
    - b. it is self directed and produces nothing but more negative feelings
  - 2. **concern** is usually **focused on others** and causes you to **produce something**
    - a. Paul, in **II Corinthians 11:28** (After listing all of his struggles in the ministry added) **Vs. 28** - “Besides everything else, I face daily the pressures of **my concern** for all our churches.” (This word concern is the same Greek word – for worry in our text.)
    - b. My experience with concern
      - 1. David as a child after chicken pox
      - 2. youth ski trip
    - c. A certain amount of concern causes you to perform better.
      - 1. my sermon – nerves encourage me to do well
      - 2. NOT “let go and let God”

## B. The AREAS of Worry.

- 1. Don’t worry about your **LIFE**.
  - Vs. 25** – “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about **your life**.”
    - a. Jesus tells us not to worry about **everything that makes up our life**.
      - 1. the physical
      - 2. mental
      - 3. emotions
      - 4. physical
    - b. but now Jesus will say what “particulars in life” we are not to worry about
- 2. Don’t worry about the **SPECIFIC NEEDS IN YOUR LIFE**.
  - a. **“What you will EAT OR DRINK.”**
    - Vs. 25** – “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, **what you will eat or drink**.”
      - 1. **man’s physical needs—eating and drinking**
        - a. man cannot live for long without food and drink
        - b. he can live a little longer with drink than food, but in the end, man has to eat and drink to live

## 2. God's living example – LOOK AT THE BIRDS

**Vs. 26-27** - "Look at the **birds of the air**; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?"

### a. birds work

1. Jesus is saying to us that we need to be bird-watchers-**ornithologists**
  - a. the word is to **gaze, to set the eyes**
  - b. **to study the life of birds**
2. one of the first things that you notice about birds is **THAT THEY ARE BUSY WORKING!**
  - a. **PLEASE DON'T THINK THAT A LACK OF WORRY SPEAKS OF A LACK OF WORK!**
  - b. the LAST THING JESUS WANTS TO SAY HERE IS THAT CHRISTIANS AREN'T TO BE BUSY!
3. depression immobilizes people
  - a. people get depressed and they stop living and working
  - b. not living and working brings on more depression
  - c. God calls us to work!
  - d. consider:
    1. Paul's words - "If a man will not work, he will not eat."
    2. What was Jesus' life like here on this earth?
    3. What is Jesus DOING right now?

### b. birds sing

1. anyone who studies birds will quickly recognize that birds sing
  - a. to communicate
  - b. but also to sing
2. the "whistle while you work" concept is true -- however, "you can't whistle while you worry"
  - a. don't you naturally whistle when you work when you aren't worried
  - b. Andy H. - I am encouraged when he whistles

### c. birds trust

1. **the REASON that birds don't worry is that they are trusting in God to take care of them**
  - a. notice in the text says that "your Heavenly Father feeds them"
    1. How does our Heavenly Father feed them? Does He "pour the

grain or insects into their mouths?"

2. No, He provided the "food chain" that is ample to feed them; some are seed eaters; others fish eaters; others are insectivores, predators or scavengers
  3. **But they have to do the harvesting!**
- b. We are never to think that we are not to worry because God is going to bring the bread to our front porch. **Martin Luther - "God wants nothing to do with lazy, gluttonous bellies who are neither concerned nor busy; they act as if they just had to sit and wait for Him to drop a roasted goose into their mouth."**
1. WITHOUT A DOUBT, God has provided for my family
    - a. with jobs that I had to perform
      1. painting houses in seminary
      2. working for my father-in-law in construction
    - b. BUT I HAD TO WORK!
  2. we can whistle while we work, because:
    - a. WE HAVE A JOB THAT WE CAN DO THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED
    - b. and we shouldn't worry!
2. **the REASON that Jesus says that we, as Christians, should not worry is NOT that He takes care of the birds—**
- a. NO, Jesus says: IF OUR Heavenly Father takes care of the birds like He does . . .
    1. God is not only the bird's Heavenly Father, He is OUR Heavenly Father
    2. So that, if OUR Heavenly Father takes care of "insignificant" birds like He does --

3. **How can we doubt that He will take care of us -- His VERY OWN CHILDREN!**

- b. God's care of the birds is merely an "example" of His gracious and abundant provision for the animal kingdom – what does that say about HIS OWN CHILDREN!
- c. **Martin Luther called birds, "God's live saints; (God) is making the birds our school masters and teachers."**
- d. Learn about worry from God's animal kingdom!
  - "**No bird** ever tried to build more nests or more extravagant places to live than its neighbor."
  - "**No fox** ever got ticked off because she had only one hole in which to hide and rear her young."
  - "**No squirrel** ever had a coronary because he failed to store enough nuts for two winters instead of one."
  - "**No bear** was ever envious of another bear with a larger cave in which to hibernate."
  - "**No dog** ever lost a good night's sleep over the fact that he had not laid aside enough bones for his declining years."

b. **"What you WILL WEAR."**

**Vs. 25** - "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; **or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"**

1. **man's physical needs - clothes**

- a. without a doubt, God knows that we need clothes to cover our bodies
  - 1. since the shame brought on by the Fall of Adam and Eve, the body must be covered
  - 2. in addition to the various elements that we face in this world

b. God says that He will take care of our clothes

2. **God's living example – LOOK AT THE GRASS**

**Vs. 29-30** - "Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how **God clothes the grass of the field**, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, you of little faith?"

a. **the beautiful clothes of the field**

1. Jesus is describing a lily or anemone that grows up, blooms and lasts perhaps one day as a flower.
  - a. I saw these fields when I was in Israel
  - b. they were beautiful fields, full of wild flowers that stretched for miles
2. but these wild, beautiful flowers would live only a short while and then were used in the fireplace
  - a. a furnace that was used in Jesus' day would be fed dead wild flowers to make it hotter while wood burned underneath the furnace
  - b. Jesus is saying that if God clothes the inanimate field with these beautiful wild flowers, and then throws them away, won't He take care of His own children's needs for clothes
  - c. G.K. children's shoes

b. **the beautiful clothes of Solomon**

1. these useless and eventually dead flowers exceeded even King Solomon's clothes that he paid for and had elaborately made!
2. **I Kings 10:14-25 (read)**
3. And again, if God clothes the grass with these beautiful flowers, which are inanimate, will He take care of you?

**II. The ATTITUDES of Worry.**

**A. WORRYING Like a Pagan.**

**Vs. 31-32** - "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **For the pagans run after all these things**, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them."

1. How does a **pagan think!**

a. **he does not know that God is even there!**

1. so why shouldn't he worry?

2. **Bobby McFerrin "Don't Worry, Be Happy"**

In every life we have some trouble

But when you worry you make it double

Don't worry – be happy

Don't worry – be happy now

Don't worry – be happy

Don't worry – be happy

When he wrote this song, things weren't going well in his life.

He was experiencing a period of stress and tension. **BUT,**

**WITHOUT GOD, WHAT A DUMB STATEMENT THIS IS!**

3. worry beads

a. used in Greece

b. show slide



4. as **Steve Brown** said: “**For the Christian, God says that He will take care of you. Pagans don’t have that promise, so they SHOULD worry.**”

b. **he does not know what God’s Word says**

1. he does not know about a sovereign, gracious God who looks after even our most basic needs
2. he doesn’t know the God who knows the past, present and future
3. he doesn’t know **Romans 8:28** that says that **all things work together** for those that love God, who are the called according to His good purpose

c. **he doesn’t have the testimony of the Holy Spirit in his heart**

1. shedding peace during time of confusion
2. encouraging you when you need help

d. **he doesn’t have a Savior to whom he can go in time of stress**

## **B. NOT WORRYING Like a Pagan.**

**Vs. 33** – “**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**”

1. We need to get our **PRIORITIES** straight.

a. **seek first His KINGDOM**

1. the Greek word is *basileia*;
  - a. speaking of the dominion and ruler of God’s Kingdom
  - b. but what is a Kingdom?
    1. king/monarchy
    2. people
    3. rule
2. instead of worrying, God’s people are to put **FIRST** the advancement of God’s Kingdom and His ministry on this earth
  - a. the sharing of the Gospel
  - b. the discipleship of God’s people
  - c. the saving of marriages
  - d. the building up of the lives of children, youth and adults
  - e. the ministry of prayer
3. we are to consume ourselves with the ministry of the Kingdom of God
4. we are to see as our first responsibility to serve our King –
  - a. to live to spread the gospel
  - b. as if we were His greatest “salesmen”

b. **seek first His RIGHTEOUSNESS**

1. but we aren’t simply satisfied to be good salesmen who are committed to sell a product
2. we want to be Godly, honorable, wise and spiritual “salesmen” who correctly represent our King
3. in other words, besides being actively involved in the ministry of the Kingdom, we are to be **AS** involved in taking care of our spiritual life and personal holiness

c. see then His **DELIVERANCE**

1. notice what Jesus says: “And all these things will be given to you as well.”
    - a. not only will God provide for you
    - b. but you will not have to deal with the worry “as well”
  2. Jesus says this to those who are “seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness”
    - a. He does not promise this to those who are NOT seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness
    - b. after all, why wouldn’t He take care of those who are representing Him well?
      1. Henry Ford with Model T
        - a. what would he expect his salesmen to know, to do?
        - b. how would he “reward” his salesmen; good and bad?
      2. for those who are on the spiritual front lines, God says that He will take care of His footsoldiers!
2. **We need to get our FAITH full.**
- Vs. 30** - “O you of **little faith.**”
- a. but . . . you need to have faith that God can ACTUALLY take care of us, His children
  - b. Jesus here is saying that all the admonishment in the world can’t keep you from worrying—**ONLY FAITH CAN.**
  - c. He says that those who worry have “little faith.”
    1. He is not saying that they have no faith.
    2. yes, they have “saving faith” but not living, breathing faith – we believe ON Him, but we don’t BELIEVE Him!
  - d. so . . . WHERE do you get this kind of faith?
    1. **FIRST of all, I must admit that I don’t have a living, breathing, dynamic faith.**
      - a. although you have a “saving faith”
      - b. you are a worrier and thus don’t have a daily, vibrant faith that trusts God
    2. **SECONDLY, I must admit that I can’t “create and sustain” my own faith.**
    3. **THIRDLY, I must go to God to get that faith.**
    4. **And FOURTH, it is ABUNDANTLY CLEAR WHERE I must find that faith.**
      - a. **our faith is built on the Word of God**  
**Romans 10:17** – “So then faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”
        1. it does not take a brain surgeon to realize that those of you who are weak in your faith and thus worry a great deal are not spending much time in the Word of God
        2. because THIS is **the tool** that God has given us to build up our faith

**William Barclay** - “The man who feeds his heart on the record of what God has done in the past will never worry about the future.”

**b. our faith is exercised by prayer**

1. **Hebrews 4:15-16** - “For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. **Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**”
2. **I Peter 5:6-7** - “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**”

**Conclusion:**

Years ago, in the pioneer days of aviation, a pilot was making a flight around the world. After he had been gone for some **two hours** from his last landing field, **he heard a noise in his plane**, which he recognized as the **gnawing of a rat**. He realized that while his plane had been on the ground a rat had gotten in. For all he knew the rat could be **gnawing through a vital cable or control of the plane. It was a very serious situation.** He was both **concerned and anxious**. At first he did not know what to do. It was **two hours back to the landing field** from which he had taken off and more than **two hours to the next field ahead**. Then he remembered that the **rat is a rodent**. It is **not made for the heights**; it is **made to live on the ground and under the ground**. Therefore the **pilot began to climb**. He went up a **thousand feet**, then **another thousand** and another until he was more than **twenty thousand feet up**. The **gnawing ceased. The rat was dead**. He could not survive in the atmosphere of those heights. More than two hours later the pilot brought the plan safely to the next landing field and found the dead rat.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, worry is a rodent. It cannot live in the secret place of the Most High. It cannot breathe in the atmosphere made vital by prayer and familiarity with the Scripture. Worry dies when we ascend to the Lord through prayer and His Word.