

Series: Treasure in Heaven

April 6-7, 2019

Title: Why Worry?

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Text: Matthew 6:25-34

Worry!

Worry!

Worry. It's something we all do from time to time. Worry is what we do when we think about something bad that might happen in the future. Worry is not the same thing as *fear*. We experience fear when our car starts sliding on an icy road. We experience worry when we feel anxious about getting in the car on a snowy day. Worry is not about what is happening; it's all about what *might* happen.

So what kinds of things do you worry about? What keeps you up at night? What worrisome thoughts nag at you throughout the day?

And do we have to live that way?

"Do not worry!"

Jesus says we definitely *don't* need to live that way:

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Matthew 6:25a NIV

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear."

Imagine living without worry. Imagine facing the future without a host of nagging fears racing around in your head. Think about the things that you worry about the most. Could you truly be able to let them go?

The short answer is "No!" Your brain won't let you. You're hardwired to detect even the slightest threat to your well-being – even if it's just a possibility.

But Jesus offers a different answer to the challenge of worry.

“Therefore”

The answer to that challenge begins with a single word: “Therefore.” Jesus says: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry....”

“Therefore” points us back to what Jesus has just said about our Treasure Hunt. If we get the Treasure Hunt right and have the right *priorities*, then we can be free from worry. Our true Treasure – everything we value most – is safe in God’s storeroom. But if we are treasuring up things for ourselves, then we’ll always have plenty to worry about. After all, the moths, vermin, and thieves never go away!

In other words, if we are solely invested in this unpredictable world and its treasures, we will always have plenty to worry about! But if we invest ourselves in God’s Kingdom and what God is doing in His world, we can rest in His power and provision.

Tackling the worry gene

#1 Label your worry:

So how do we go about fulfilling this life-giving command to not worry? For starters, we need to *label our worry*. We need to give a name to the things that we are worrying about.

Jesus puts a name on some of the classic things that keep us up at night:

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Matthew 6:25b-27 NIV

“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Food, clothes, health. People have been worrying over things like this from time immemorial:

- **Food:** Just try going to the supermarket the day before a big snowstorm! Two thirds of St. Albans will be there buying out everything in the store, just in case! Just in case, what? There won’t be any food for the next month? No. It’s just a worry response.

- **Possessions:** Ever do the math for back to school shopping? Yikes, I never knew anybody paid that much for a pair of jeans. And yes, they have to be *those* jeans! The same applies to whatever we feel we need to acquire in order to live and live well.
- **Health:** All it takes is a single word from your doctor to start the worry wheels spinning. Or try having a biopsy for something. Then, go on the internet and find out all the wretched things that can happen if you have a certain condition. Good bye, Sleep. Welcome, Worry!

Jesus goes right to the heart of putting brakes on the Worry Wheel by putting a name on the things we worry about. You can do the same. If you're worried about something, **label it**. Don't let your worry be a vague uneasiness; give it a name.

#2 Re-frame your perspective:

The next thing Jesus does is **reframe the issue**. He does this by asking a series of probing questions. Each question is designed to make us look at a worrisome thing in a new way.

- "Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?"
- "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?"
- "Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"
- "And why worry about your clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these."

Worry thrives when we lose sight of the big picture. Jesus challenges us to put things into perspective – God's perspective.

Take a moment to think about the things that worry you most. Label them for what they are. Now ask yourself: Are they as big as the God who created you?

#3 Dare to trust:

When we have labeled our worry and reframed it from God's perspective, then we can take the third and most important step: **Dare to Trust**.

Trusting God to take care of us and the things that worry us means seeing Him in a whole new way. Jesus says:

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Matthew 6:30 NIV

"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?"

God cares about you right down to the smallest detail of your life. If God takes such great pains to paint hillsides with wildflowers, how much more will He care for you.

That means that we can have a radically different attitude toward the unpredictable and sometimes harsh world in which we live. We don't have to worry about what is to come:

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Matthew 6:31-32 NIV

"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."

We can dare to trust God to care for our future; He already knows our needs. And He promises to meet them every step of the way.

Why Worry?

Kingdom First!

Putting a name on what worries us gets it out in the open. Reframing puts our worry in perspective. Daring to trust God in this specific situation makes us focus on His will, His rule, His plan, His power. Jesus calls this "seeking" His kingdom:

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Matthew 6:33 NIV

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

When we find ourselves worrying, it's time to ask ourselves which kingdom we're seeking. One kingdom runs on worry. The other runs on trust. Trust is the supreme antidote to worry.

Why worry?

The last thing Jesus says on the subject focuses on the future-focus of our worry. We worry about things that haven't happened. We worry about things that might happen. We run worst-case scenarios through our heads and get more and more anxious.

But when we seek God's rule in our lives and trust in His provision, then we can do what Jesus commands:

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Matthew 6:34 NIV

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Once again, that little word "Therefore." If we label, reframe, and trust God to care for us, then...we can stop living in an imagined and terrifying future! We can let today be today and know that God will be right there with us when we wake up tomorrow.

And isn't that one of the greatest treasures of all? Being able to live today in its fullness, knowing that God holds tomorrow in His hands?

The treasure is yours – if you make it your quest.