

UNEDITED DRAFT

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today we conclude a series of sermons in which we were contemplating the question, "What would Jesus preach?" Jesus lived 2000 years ago. So what if he were physically present among us to preach before us today? We don't need to wonder. What Jesus preached to his disciples long ago, Jesus would preach to us today as well.

Some people think that the Bible is an outdated book that is not relevant to life in 21st century America. It's easy to understand why people would say that, isn't it? I mean really, how could these words of Jesus possible apply to us today? They were written to people who lived 2,000 years ago in ancient Palestine. They had very limited perspective on the world. They didn't travel much. They couldn't see the world through mass media. Their scientific knowledge was very primitive. Most of them would have had a level of education far below the average in this church today. They lived in poverty. It was a time when famine meant people starved to death. So what does this ancient book really have to teach us today?

As we look at what Jesus will preach to us today, you will reach the conclusion that the Bible is just as relevant to us today as it was the day it was first preached by Jesus. So let me tell you today's topic and you tell me whether it has any bearing on your life today. Jesus says, "**Do not worry.**" [Repeat.] Yeah, worry maybe was a problem for people 2,000 years ago, but today our technology and riches have eliminated the worry from people's lives. True or false? False. And you know it. Just like people who lived 2,000 years ago, we worry.

First of all, what is worry? It could defined in a number of ways, but for our purposes, we'll say that worry is **having a vision without optimism.** [Repeat.]

- I have a vision of how my big **sales presentation** is going to go, and I see myself crashing and burning. That's worry, right? A vision without optimism.
- I have a vision of how my **test** is going to, and I see myself failing. A vision without optimism.
- I have a vision of my **marriage**, and I see it ending in divorce.
- I have a vision of my **health**, and I see me incapacitated, or dead.
- I have a vision of our **vacation** travel, and I see our car broken down... or our kids crying and complaining... the debt we'll be in.
- I have a vision of **job**, and I see me getting fired or laid off.
- I have a vision of **my kids** growing and marrying a good-for-nothing deadbeat... or, unemployed and living in my basement, or having some sort of serious problem. (We worry about our kids the most, don't we? We can imagine all sorts of possible negative outcomes when it comes to them!)

What causes you worry and anxiety? All you can see is how things were and how things are. What you can't see is how things will end up. Worry is when you imagine that the final outcome or the consequences of the outcome will be ultimately negative.

All of this worrying starts in the mind, but it doesn't stay there. Being worried effect our body as well. Worrying does more damage than perhaps we realize. **Psychological and**

Physiological Effects of Worrying

- Anxiety, even panic

- Adrenaline and cortisol
- Body on high alert
- “Fight of flight” response
- Fast heartbeat
- Insomnia / Fatigue
- Headaches
- Inability to concentrate
- Facial ticks
- Suppression of the immune system
- Digestive disorders
- Heart attack
- Depression

The damage of worrying

- 1) Overall health
- 2) Job performance
- 3) Financial
- 4) Addictions
- 5) Relationships
- 6) Quality of life

Bottom line reason for and most devastating damage from worrying... that is, both the cause of worrying, and what it impacts the most is: SPIRITUAL. We worry because of a lack of trust in God. AND worrying causes us to fear and stress which causes a further erosion in our relationship with God.

So what does Jesus say about worrying? He gives us 8 reasons to stop worrying. Let’s listen:

Matthew 6:24-34

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Worry is a 1st Commandment issue. *“You shall have no other gods.”* Worry says, “God, you *can’t*. Instead we put our faith in self... or, as Jesus says here, we put our faith in money (or other things.) Much of our worrying stems from not loving, fearing and trusting God above all things.

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?”

REASON 1: God gave you life and body, so he will provide what is needed to sustain them as well. A person doesn’t build a house unless they also have the means to pay for the utilities and maintain it. God gave you your life / body. Of course he will also provide what is needed to maintain it!

26 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?”

REASON 2: God provides for birds, so of course he will provide for you! You are much more valuable.

27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”

REASON 3: Worrying offers no benefit. You won't live longer. You won't cope with life better. In fact, just the opposite. Your life will be shorter and sadder. There is no benefit whatsoever to worrying.

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how [consider] the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 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, O you of little faith?”

REASON 4: God is attentive to flowers. Surely, he will attend to your needs! If he gives such attention to something as insignificant as a flower, how much more will he attend to your needs since you are much more valuable?

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

REASON 5: Worry is pagan behavior. You are God's family. You are his child. Why would you do what they do? Why would you seek after what they seek after? You are different. So don't focus on what the world does. You're not like everyone else. You are a blood-bought child of the most-high God.

REASON 6: Your Heavenly Father knows your needs. Doesn't it help to know that he knows? You haven't escaped God's notice. He hasn't forgotten you. He hasn't lost sight of you through the billions of others on the planet. God knows your needs. He will provide as he knows is best.

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

REASON 7: The Kingdom of God is what truly matters... and it is guaranteed! Why worry about things that are temporary and passing? Engage yourself and center your life on things that are eternal: God's kingdom and the righteousness that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

REASON 8: The future rests with God. Live in the now... for HIM. So much of our energy is drained by the guilt of our past, and the worrying about our future. God says that in Christ our guilt is gone... completely forgiven. And our future is in his hands, and he will provide what we need when we need it. So live for today! Use the time, resources, circumstances, and situations of today to give honor, glory and praise to your heavenly Father who loves you, saved you, and has a place for you in heaven!

Jesus wants us to understand this: worry is a sin. It's a sin of doubting God... either his power or his love... or both. For our sin of worrying, God wants us to repent because it is a sin that separates from him. There are no circumstances that warrant worrying. And if you are now worried about worrying, that's a sin too. How can we escape this impossible situation? We can't.

But God has provided the escape. We repent and plead for his mercy, and he shows us the way. It is Jesus. He is God's own Son who used his power for us. He gave up his power and authority, became a human being and lived among. He was tempted like us, but did not sin. What would make us worry, did not make Jesus worry. Jesus often did not know where he would be sleeping at night. No worries. He didn't always know where his next meal would come from. Now worries. Jesus was in a storm that looked like it would capsize the boat he was in. No worries. Jesus didn't have money for the temple tax. No worries. Jesus was betrayed, abused,

punished, mocked, whipped and nailed to a cross to die slowly and painfully. No worries. Just a perfect trust in his Father. Jesus is our perfect substitute. On that cross he was punished... for our worries, our lack of faith, our false gods like money that we trust more than God. Jesus took our sin debt and paid it in full. He rose on the third day. And so you are forgiven.

His kingdom belongs to you. So continue to seek it first. Christ righteousness has been made yours. So continue to seek it first. And here's what God promises. All these other things... food, clothes, health, money... what you need in the physical realm... will be given to you as well. Not that it's really that important... but all will be given because God is good. It will be given in the way and according to the measure that *he* knows is best for your eternal good.

He took care of your biggest need – SIN. He did it at the greatest cost to him imaginable: The death of his Son. So he will take care your every lesser need as well. He has proven his power. He has proven his love for you. So stop worrying!

Take one day at a time. God will provide what you need for today. That's all you need to know. He will give you strength for today. And that is enough. What about tomorrow? It's in God's hands, not your hands. So don't worry about it. Leave it to God. Live for the now to give praise and honor and attention to God in all that you say, in all that you do... even in your attitude. Live for him... not tomorrow... not someday... but today.

Do not worry! Amen.