

A Very Practical Question—WHY WORRY?

Matthew 6:25-34 (text v. 27)

What does the word “practical” bring to your mind? I think of something that effectively works in my daily life. I don’t need another “theory.” I need a workable solution to a problem or situation I am facing.

There is no better practical book than the Bible. It is more than a book of doctrine. It is a book of instruction (2 Tim. 3:16).

Our text deals with a very practical problem. It is taken from Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount.” Although it applies doctrinally to His coming kingdom on earth, how different our world would be if people actually lived by the principles in the “Sermon on the Mount.”

The question Jesus asks in our text deals with a very practical problem—WORRY and ANXIETY (v. 27).

The words “worry” or “anxiety” are **not found in a King James Bible**, but the words “*fret*,” “*care/careful*” and “*taking thought*,” mean the same thing.

In 1 Corinthians 7:32 the Apostle Paul wrote, “*I would have you without CAREFULNESS*.” Philippians 4:6—“*Be CAREFUL for nothing...*” In other words—Don’t worry about anything!

➡Did you know most of what we worry about never happens!

A woman looked out the window of her kitchen and saw her German Shepherd shaking the neighbor's rabbit by it's neck. She grabbed a broom and ran outside, pummeling the dog until he dropped a rabbit, now covered with dog spit and dirt. It was obvious the rabbit was very dead. She was worried the neighbors would want their dog to be euthanized.

The woman thought about it and came up with a plan. She lifted the rabbit with the end of the broom and brought it into her back yard. There she hosed off dead rabbit until the rabbit was clean.

She got a hair dryer and blew the rabbit's fur until it was dry and fluffy. Then snuck across the neighbor's backyard, and put the dead rabbit back in its cage.

About an hour later, she heard her neighbor scream from their backyard. She ran outside, pretending she didn't know what was going on. "What's happened?" she asked innocently.

With a horrified look on her face, the neighbor said, "Our rabbit! He died yesterday, we buried him—and now he's back in his cage!"

How often, like the woman who worried her dog killed the neighbor's rabbit, most of our worries are about things that do not happen.

Someone said, "**Don't tell me worry doesn't work. I know it works because the things I worry about don't happen.**"

➡ Let's be honest—How many of you ever worry?

We live in a world filled with anxiety and worry. I don't think there has ever been a time when worry and anxiety has been more widespread than it is today. People take pills for anxiety attacks!

- Ignorant people worry—They don't know any better.
- Educated people worry—Because the more they know the more they have to worry about.
- Old people worry about retirement and their health.
- Young people worry about their friends, dating, and school.
- Single people worry about who they are going to marry and married people worry about who they did marry.
- Non-Christians worry—Because have no steadfast hope.
- Christians worry—When they are the only ones who have no reason to worry. I can understand why the world worries, but for a Christian to worry doesn't make sense.

I. The ABSURDITY of worry. The CRAZINESS.

A. Worry is **DUMB**. We know we shouldn't worry... we know it's wrong... we know it doesn't help; yet we worry anyway... **DUMB!**

1. Why open an umbrella before it starts to rain? It would be dumb to walk around all day with an open umbrella above your head when it ain't raining. It doesn't make sense to worry about the weather when you can't change it.

2. This is at the heart of Jesus' question. The question is particularly troubling to me since I am a "little guy" (like Zacchaeus or "Bildad, the Shuhite"). I must confess I have often thought it would be nice to be a little taller—"I'm going to worry myself six inches taller!" You say, "Preacher, you're wasting your time!" EXACTLY! **Worrying is a waste of time.** We are commanded to REDEEM THE TIME! When we are worrying, we are wasting our time.
 - Why worry when worry will never change your situation one way or the other? To worry about something you cannot change is DUMB... To worry about something you can change is DUMBER!
- B. Worry is **DEBILITATING**. Psalm 127:2—"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows..."
1. Worry will wear you out emotionally and physically!
 - "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its troubles. It only empties today of its strength." (cf. Mt. 6:34).
 - Some people are just as tired in the morning when they get out of bed as they were when they went to bed. Why? Because they take their anxieties to bed with them! **The best medicine** for that is to count your blessings and thank God for His goodness as you drift off into sleep.
 2. It is **not work that wears many people out**—It is worry that makes them exhausted.

C.H. Spurgeon once confessed he worried for weeks before a speaking engagement, even to the extent of hoping he would break a leg and miss the event. When he finally entered the pulpit to speak, he was exhausted! Spurgeon asked himself, "What is the worst thing that could happen to me during my sermon?" Whatever it was, he decided, the heavens would not collapse. Once he recognized his worrying did not help anything, he relaxed and preached his message.¹

¹ *Great Quotes & Illustrations*, compiled by George Sweeting. Copyright © 1985 by Word, Incorporated, Dallas, Texas, p. 269.

C. Worry is **DAMAGING**.

- Dr. S.I. McMillen, M.D. in his book *None Of These Diseases*, shows from case studies that worry and anxiety cause high blood pressure... hives... fatigue... heart problems... and several other physical ailments.

During the Gulf War in 1991, Iraq launched a series of Scud missile attacks against Israel. Many Israeli citizens died as a result of these attacks. But, after the war was over, Israeli scientists analyzed the official mortality statistics and found the vast majority of them did not die from the physical effects of the missiles. They died from heart failure brought on by fear and anxiety associated with the bombardment.²

D. Worry is **DISCREDITABLE** for a Christian (read Mt. 6:26).

➡ As in last Sunday's text (Mt. 5:46), Jesus holds His followers to a higher standard than the world. While the world frets and worries about the stock-market... conflicts in the Middle East... Global warming... etc. Christians often worry right along with them!

- Shame on us! God expects us to be different.

1. Worry is **beneath your dignity**—You are a child of God. You are more valuable than the birds.

- Look at the birds. What do you see? I see a reminder that God takes care of insignificant creatures as birds. How much more will He take care of me as His child?

2. Jesus said He came to give us life more abundantly (John 10:10), not a life eaten up with worry.

F. Worry is **DISHONORING** to God. Who do you confess God to be? Your **HEAVENLY FATHER** (vs. 26, 32).

1. When you worry you are saying what you think of your Father! Your worry questions your Heavenly Father's goodness to you.

² Paul Martin, *The Sickening Mind* (HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 3-4.

2. By worrying you are saying, “I cannot trust my Heavenly Father to take care of me!”
3. By worrying we are saying, “God has no control over my situation.” Worry makes our circumstance our “lord” instead of God being the “Lord” over our circumstances.

II. **The ANTIDOTE for worry.** The CURE!

- Worry is an ACQUIREMENT! No one was ever born worrying. You did not come forth from your mother’s womb worrying. Where did you acquire the capacity to worry?
 - A concert pianist was not born playing the piano. They learned to play the piano and practiced playing the piano.
 - Likewise, if you are “good” at worrying, it is because you practice worrying. And, anything learned, can be unlearned.
 - “Well, preacher, if I were in the ideal situation I wouldn’t worry.”

That ain’t gonna happen for three reasons:

 1. There is no ideal situation on earth.
 2. If there were an ideal situation, chances are you’d never get in it.
 3. If you were fortunate enough to get into an ideal situation, it wouldn’t be long and you’d mess it up.
- A. First, ACCEPT the uncontrollables of life (Mt. 6:27).
1. There are somethings we worry about that are out of our control, and we must simply accept. We may object and dislike it, but there is nothing we can do about it (height... Going bald... Getting old... Dying). Worry will not make me taller. worry will not grow my hair... worry will not make me younger... worry will not extend my life!
 2. Why worry about what you cannot change, and if you can change it, then change it. If you cannot change it—PRAY (Phil. 4:6-7). PRAYER CHANGES THINGS—WORRY CHANGES NOTHING.

- Once you've prayed about it, it is really dumb to continue to worry about it.
 - Instead of worrying about what you cannot do, focus on what God can do.
- B. Second, **ADJUST** your thoughts (Mt. 6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34). Worry is a product of misdirected thinking.
1. We live in worrisome days. But we cannot blame our worry on our circumstances. Whether you worry or not **depends NOT upon your situation, but upon you and your thinking.** Whenever worry robs you of your peace of mind, it is always an *"inside job."*
 2. Some try to fight worry by "willing" themselves not to worry. They make up their mind and clench their fists and repeat, "I am not going to worry *about that*... I am not going to worry **about that**... I'm not going to worry ABOUT THAT!" All the while their focus is on "about THAT." And before you know it, they are worrying "about that" again.
- C. Third, **APPLY** faith in God (Mt. 6:30-32).
1. Why do we worry? Simply put—We are not trusting God! Worry is a manifestation of unbelief. Worry says I can't trust God.
 2. **Face worry for what it is—SIN.** What is sin? *"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* (Rom. 14:23). **Sin is not doing what God commands.** And what does God command us not to do? He commands us NOT TO WORRY. So, when you worry, what are you doing?

SUMMATION: There is no room for neutrality on this issue. If you shift a car into neutral, it can move in either direction. Likewise, if you are neutral about this sin, you will soon drift back into worry. You must take action against worry.

How? Worry (unbelief) must be replaced with FAITH and trust in the Lord in whatever situation you may find yourself in.

Pray... Have faith in God... trust Him, and DON'T WORRY!