

DO NOT WORRY?

So, as of this morning we have almost 2 million people sick in our country – and there are now over 100,000 dead. That is definitely something to worry about. Unemployment has reached levels never seen before – lot of people having trouble just putting food on the table. And that is definitely something to worry about. The medical experts keep disagreeing – and the politicians just keep arguing – and that’s something to worry about. The whole country is divided over when to go back to work – and when to go back to church – and when to go back to school - and there’s a lot of angry people on both sides – and that is something to worry about. Doctors are starting to talk about a second wave of the virus – and that is something to worry about. And every day the number of people getting sick – losing their jobs – and dying – it just keeps going up and up and up. I’d say we’ve got a lot to worry about today, wouldn’t you? Well, maybe that’s what I’d say – maybe that’s what you’d say – but it’s not what Jesus says.

Matthew 6: 25-34.

“Therefore I

tell you, do not worry about your life.” That’s what Jesus says. Those are His words – “Do not worry about your life.” I believe in Jesus. I do. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I believe Jesus came to this world to rescue us from ourselves. I believe that all the honor and all the power and all the glory in this world belong to Jesus. And I believe that every word Jesus ever spoke is perfect and true. I believe every word He spoke is perfect and true - but these particular words are really tough. “Do not worry about your life.” What would possibly compel Jesus to say something like that? I mean, look around us – our world is in chaos. How can we not worry at a time like this? And even before all this coronavirus stuff – things were still pretty chaotic in our world - terrorism, poverty, war, racial inequality, school shootings –

how can we not worry when we live in a world like that? We've got people right here in our community – right here in our church who don't know if they can pay the rent next month – or put food on the table – or clothing on their kids. It seems to me like there are plenty of good reasons to worry.

But it's always been this way, hasn't it? We look at the chaos all around us - and it's scary – but it has always been this way. Well, almost always. It wasn't this way in Genesis 1. It wasn't this way in Genesis 2. But something happened in Genesis 3. What happened in Genesis 3? Sin happened. Disobedience happened. Rebellion against God happened. And ever since then we have lived in a world that offers us plenty of reasons to worry.

Sin may have entered the world in Genesis 3 – but God didn't leave the world. Sin came – but God stayed. He didn't leave us. And that means that – even though the world seems like it's coming apart sometimes – God is still good – and God is still in control. And if God is in control – we don't need to worry. And that's exactly what Jesus is reminding us of today. God is in control – **“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life.”** How

do you do that? I mean I know Jesus said it – and if Jesus said it, then Jesus meant it – and if Jesus meant it, then we ought to do it. But how do you do it? How do you not worry about your life? The idea that I'm not supposed to worry - that worries me a little bit. As far as I know, only two people are capable of not worrying about their life - the mentally insane guy over at Central State Hospital - and the dead guy over at Resthaven cemetery. The rest of us have to face the problems of this world. The rest of us have to go through this pandemic – and we have to figure out how to keep our families safe – put food on our tables – and pay our bills. How can we NOT worry about these things? Well, Jesus speaks right to these worries -

“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?”

That’s an incredible thing to say. It’s a powerful idea. And it’s pretty simple, really – “Don’t forget who’s in control. Don’t forget who gave you life. There are many things in this world that are uncertain – but these things are certain – **God created you – God loves you – and God will provide for you.** Now, the question is, do you believe that? Is that your truth? Because if it is - if that is your truth – if God created you and loves you and provides for you – then worry has no place in that truth.

Worry has no place in the Christian life. Worry is unworthy of the Christian life. Here’s why: Because when I say I’m a Christian – I am saying that I am a beloved child of God. But when I worry, I am behaving as though I were not a child of God. Worry portrays a false view of who I am. When I worry, I’m acting as though I’m nothing more than a physical body that needs to be fed and clothed and housed. When I worry I’m acting as though I am nothing more than what happens to me in this life. **1 Cor. 15: 19 ---“If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.”**

Our hope is not for our life in this world. The Bible teaches that we are foreigners in this world - and that we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. We pass through this world – we’re here for a very short time. And yes, there are virus’ here – there is violence here – hunger here – pain here – loneliness here. But those things do not exist in the Kingdom of Heaven – and that’s where we’re going. That’s the place that we were made for. That’s the place that we were always meant to be. And we will be here for a very short time – but we will be there forever. Our time

is very short here – our time will never end there. So, why worry so much about what happens to us in this world?

Now, the world sends a very different message than that. Look around at the advertisements in newspapers and on TV - everything is directed toward the gratification of the body. How to feed it, clothe it, warm it, cool it, relax it, refresh it, entertain it. If you took your truth from the world, then human life is about nothing more than physical satisfaction. And if life is about nothing more than physical satisfaction – of course you would worry about what you’re going to wear – what you’re going to eat – where you’re going to live. But we don’t take our truth from the world - we take our truth from the Word of God – and the Word of God says – **“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?”**

And then Jesus says, **“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 more valuable than they are?”** Are you not much more valuable than they? Now that question demands an answer.

Aren’t you worth more? Of course you are!! And if God takes care of the birds – then He will certainly take care of you – because you are much more valuable to Him than they are. Jesus didn’t come here to die on the cross for the birds - He came here to die on the cross for you.

And the reason He did that is because your greatest need is not what you will wear – or what you will eat – or where you will live. Your greatest need is to be forgiven of your sins and reconciled to God – your greatest need is to leave this world and get to heaven. And God has already taken care of your greatest need by sending you His Son. And if He has taken care of your greatest

need – then of course He will take care of your other needs.

V 28-30 – “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies 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. 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?”

So first Jesus compares us to the birds of the air – and now He compares us to the flowers of the field. Now, the difference between the birds and the flowers - and you and me – is they didn't rebel against God. The birds and the flowers – they didn't get separated from God through their sin. We did. And if you are separated from God – you've got a whole lot of things to worry about. But when we come to the cross – and we confess our sins – when we turn away from our sins and get baptized – when we do those things, we are no longer separated from God. And then - just like the birds and the flowers – we don't have to worry about our lives – because we've put our lives in His hands.

V 34 – “Do

not worry about tomorrow....” And, really, all worry is about tomorrow - but all worry is experienced today. See, that's what worry is - its being upset today about something that may or may not happen tomorrow. And if you're worried about things that may or may not happen tomorrow – you're probably not going to live well today.

This is the

same lesson that God taught the Israelites during their 40 years in the wilderness. The entire nation of Israel was out there in the wilderness – and there was very little to eat – the people need food – so God provides them manna to eat. But manna is about a lot more than just physical food – it's about spiritual food. Manna doesn't just feed their bodies – it feeds their souls.

Because with that manna God is teaching them a spiritual lesson of enormous value. He's

teaching them, “I will take care of you today. Don’t worry about tomorrow.” The Israelites worried about what they were going to eat. **Exodus 16:4 –“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.’”** See God only wanted the people to gather enough food for that one day because God is teaching them to trust Him today. He is teaching them that tomorrow is in His hands. He is in control. And He will take care of them. So, here’s your food for today – and don’t worry about tomorrow. And

that’s the same thing Jesus is teaching in this passage - **34 –“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.”** Once again God is saying, “I will take care of you today. Don’t worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow is in My hands – not yours. Trust me today – and let me worry about tomorrow.”

V 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.” In other words, when we run around worried about these things, we’re acting like people who don’t belong to God. We’re acting like pagans. We’re acting like people who don’t trust that God is going to provide everything we really need. Jesus points to the birds and the flowers - look how God meets their needs. Do you think the birds and the flowers worry about their needs being met – or do they just instinctively know that God is going to meet their needs? I wasn’t able to interview the birds and flowers for this sermon – but I’m pretty sure they just know that God is going to meet their needs.

Jesus says, “Your heavenly Father knows what you need. He knows what your needs are.” So, these things are not our problem. Our problem is to get right with Him. Our problem

is just to get ourselves back into His Kingdom. V 33 – **“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”** Let me tell you something - if your whole life was dedicated to that one sentence – it would be a noble life, indeed.

Unfortunately, most people lives are not dedicated to seeking His kingdom and His righteousness. Most people’s lives are dedicated to building up their own kingdom – seeking their own glory – making themselves feel good. But if you are one of the few whose life is dedicated to seeking His Kingdom and His righteousness – you are not going to worry about this pandemic – you’re not going to worry about your needs being met – and you’re not even going to worry about leaving this world. But if you are dedicated to building up your kingdom – and seeking your glory – you’re going to be very worried about those things.

If you go through this life seeking anything other than His Kingdom and His righteousness – you will have missed your purpose in this world. You are here in this world today for one reason. You are alive today for one reason: To prepare you for eternity. Your life in this world is given to you so you can prepare for eternity. You were created by God to live forever. Your life was not given to you just to prepare you for a six-foot hole in the ground – where people stand around and cry over you and throw a little dirt over your coffin.

I want you to imagine something with me: Imagine you go to the doctor – doctor does some lab work – comes back and says - “I have bad news – you have cancer – and it’s terminal.” You say, “Doctor, do something! An operation – medicine – something. I want to live!!” And imagine the doctor says, “Live for what?” What do you want to live for?” What would you say? What is your life for? Why are you here?

There are 8 billion people on the planet today. And most of them are very worried today. Most

of them are fearful today. And there's just one reason for that: It's because they don't who they are - and they don't know why they are here. They have not learned what Jesus is teaching you this morning. They have not learned what this life is all about. And when you get that part wrong - then life is empty - life is scary - and you're going to worry all the time. But when you get this right - when you finally know who you really are - and why you're really here - then life is full - and there is joy and purpose and peace - and there is no longer any reason to worry - even in the middle of a global pandemic. And the difference between getting this wrong and getting it right is so simple that any child could understand it - **"Seek first His kingdom and**

His righteousness...."

Why are we here?!? Jesus

says we are here to find the Kingdom of God - and live our lives like children of God. That's why you are here. And that means that we take our will - and our wants - and our worries - and we give them all to Him. It means that we are foreigners in this world - and we claim our citizenship in His Kingdom. And there is only one way into His Kingdom. There's only one way - **John 14:6 --"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the**

Father except through me."

Every person here this morning should be here for the same reason --- and I am going to ask every one of you to get real quiet on the inside - block out every other thought in your mind - block out your anxiety and your fear and your worry - and speak these words with me - you don't have to speak them out loud - just speak them in your heart...

"God - I know you're there. I know you hear me. I know you care about me. And I want to spend my life seeking your Kingdom and your righteousness. I want to repent of my sins and receive your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus is your Son. I believe that He died on the cross in

my place. I believe that He rose on the third day. And I believe that He is the only door that I can pass through to get to your Kingdom.”

Now, if you spoke those words --- and you believe them in your heart --- then you have just discovered the prescription for all of your worries. You are a beloved child of God - every step you take through this troubled, broken world leads you toward an eternal kingdom where a place has been prepared especially for you --- a place where there is no more pain or loneliness or fear or hunger --- a place where worry is not even in our vocabulary.