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Sermon Notes

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Trusting Your Heavenly Father: Jesus Protects Us from Anxiety Matthew 6:25-34

I. Needless Worry: A Story from My Childhood

II. Review: Context

A. “Therefore I tell you...”

1. Because transient earthly treasures do not last, but only heavenly treasures do (6:19-21)
2. Because moral and spiritual vision is so easily distorted & darkened (6:22-23)
3. Because we must make an ultimate choice between serving God and money (6:24)
4. Because the kingdom of God demands unswerving allegiance to its values (6:19-24)

THEREFORE... do not worry about mere physical things!!!

B. A word to the rich, a word to the poor

1. Matthew 6:19-24 Do not pursue physical luxuries... MATERIALISM
2. Matthew 6:25-34 Do not worry about physical necessities... ANXIETY
3. Either way, physical things can become an idol

C. Unifying theme in Matthew 6: Living for the Kingdom of God

1. In your religious life (almsgiving, prayer, fasting) ... live for the Kingdom not for earthly praise
2. In your prayer life, put the Kingdom of God above your own daily needs
3. In what you are storing up, store up for the Kingdom
4. USE YOUR RESOURCES FOR GOD’S KINGDOM

III. Introduction

A. Is a Worry-free Life Possible??

World problems: ecological problems, threat of nuclear holocaust, rampant economic troubles if the bubble economy ever pops, riots in the streets because of Y2K, ethnic cleansing, refugees streaming out of Kosovo, totalitarian and oppressive governments, etc. etc. etc.

Personal problems: divorce, possibility of losing my job, financial pressures, taxes to pay, trouble with my rebellious kids, car trouble, repairs needed on the house, etc. etc. etc.

B. What is Worry? Jesus' word... "Do not worry..."

1. Mental matter: KJV: "**Take no thought** for your life, what you will eat or drink..."
2. Implies to modern hearers "Make no plans..."
 - a. BUT God rebukes lazy people who make no plans for the future

Proverbs 6:6-8 "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest."

- b. some ask questions about whether Christians should have life insurance
- c. misunderstanding comes from KJV 6:34 "**Take no thought for the morrow...**"
- d. Christ is not rebuking planning but worrying
3. Greek word literally means "To divide the mind" or to have a divided mind
 - a. for the believer, it means part of you trusts God and part of you doesn't
 - b. OR you trust God for some things, but not for others!!

Amazing!! You'll trust God for your eternal soul, but not for your daily food!

C. Sermon Outline

- ◆ The General Command... given three times
- ◆ Christ supports the command:

Overall: Because you have a Heavenly Father & because you are in His Kingdom:

1. Worry is contrary to **obedience**
2. Worry is contrary to **reason**
3. Worry is contrary to **faith**
4. Worry is contrary to **fruitfulness**

IV. The General Command: Stated Three Times

vs. 25 *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat and drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”*

vs. 31 *“So do not worry, saying ‘What shall we eat...?’”*

vs. 34 *“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow...”*

A. Christ commands us not to worry

BUT the first issue is simple obedience... we must get rid of anxiety because Christ has commanded it of us

B. Simple concept: worry CAN be defeated!!

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry...”

1. Cannot say... “I can’t help it!”
2. Christ says we have total control over worry... it all comes down to what you think about, and what you believe
3. Look at the reasons Christ gives... there is a consistent appeal to the rational process

V. Christ Supports His Command: **Central Argument Against Worry: The Heavenly Father**

A. Overall support: Worry is useless and out of place simply because you have a Father in heaven and because you are in His Kingdom

1. Your Father knows what you need before you ask
2. Your Father provides for all your needs
3. Your Father has never failed you

B. Members of His Kingdom

1. All things under the King's control
2. Your very life is His: His to command, also His to provide for
3. You are on Kingdom business & can't get involved in lesser things

VI. Worry is Contrary to **Obedience**

- A. Three commands from Christ
- B. Essence of the Kingdom: God's Sovereign Reign... Glad Obedience

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?"

- C. Simple glad obedience: a commitment to fight anxiety & to defeat worry
 1. Command implies it CAN be mastered
 2. Command itself a gateway to joy

VII. Worry is Contrary to **Reason**

- A. Christ COULD simply command... but He lowers Himself to explain His reasons

Illus. "Because I'm the Daddy, that's why!" Authority is to be obeyed whether we understand the reasons or not... but Christ is willing to explain His reasoning to us

- B. An exercise in LOGIC
 1. Much of Matthew 6:25-34 is a rational argument
 2. Underlying assumption: worry can be defeated by REASON... by PROPER THINKING
 3. Therefore, this is really a BATTLE FOR THE MIND!!

1 Corinthians 2:16 "We have the mind of Christ."

2 Corinthians 10:5 "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ..."

- C. How Christ argues... Christ Uses Logic... He is making an argument

1. It's called an *a fortiori* argument... from the greater to the lesser
2. "If this is true, how much more is that true..."

If my dad can pick up 100 lb. Bag of concrete, how much more can he pick me up?

3. Jesus used it frequently

Matthew 6:26 [If God feeds the birds, how much more will He feed His children] *"Are you not much more valuable than they?"*

Matthew 6:30 [If God clothes the grass, how much more will He clothe His children] *"Are you not much more valuable than the grass?"*

Matthew 7:11 *"If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him?"*

Matthew 10:25 *"If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!"*

4. Paul used it frequently too

Romans 8:32 *"He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not along with Him graciously give us all things?"*

D. How does the argument work here? Three examples

1. Body greater than food and clothing

vs. 25 *"Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothing?"*

- ◆ God gave the greater gift... life—will He not give the lesser gifts of food and clothing necessary to sustain life?
- ◆ David said "I will praise you, O Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"... Who made the human body? And who made it NEEDY??? God didn't have to make us needy, but He did... to keep us humbly coming to HIM

Exodus 4:11 *The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"*

- ◆ It is foolish to think that God who gave the greater gift of our bodies would not feed us!!

2. Children of God greater than birds

If God feeds lesser orders of creation every day, will He not much more feed higher orders? How much more will He feed His own children??!!

vs. 26 “Look at the birds of the air. They don’t sow, or reap, or store away in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

a. Christ uses the “theater of God’s glory” to teach His lesson

- ◆ object lessons surround us from the Creator
- ◆ God’s power, love, and meticulous care are all around us
- ◆ At that moment, some birds perhaps were winging their way across the sky... Jesus may have looked up at them and said, “Let’s learn a lesson here”

b. “Look at” = gaze at them, study them, consider them carefully

- ◆ too often we walk around with our heads down, anxious about something, when the answer to our troubles is soaring above our heads
- ◆ look all around you... there is evidence of God’s care for his creation everywhere
- ◆ do you think they all eat by accident???

Illus. A blue whale needs to eat _____ tons of plankton every day to survive... yet they live for _____ years... God feeds them everyday

Psalm 145:15-16 “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”

Illus. Atheistic evolutionist believe its all an accident... deists believed God just put it here and it just runs on its own rules, with no guiding hand... the Bible teaches that God didn’t just CREATE the universe... He UPHOLDS IT moment by moment... that includes feeding every living creature every day

LOOK AT THE BIRDS OF THE AIR!!!

c. Again, a “how much more” argument...

- ◆ even though birds don’t have the technology to sow, reap, or store away in barns, yet somehow they manage to get enough to eat

- ◆ man plants a huge field of wheat, harvests it and has enough to eat for a whole season
- ◆ if the birds don't worry, why should you??

3. Children of God greater than wildflowers

vs. 28 *“And why do you worry about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't 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...?”*

- ◆ Exact same argument as before, but with some additions
 - ◆ Flowers are so insignificant that they are here today and tomorrow are burned in an oven
 - ◆ **“Consider”** them... gaze at them carefully... not with a quick or cursory glance, but in trying to understand God's purposes... NOTE AGAIN...using the mental process to defeat anxiety!! Be a scientist of the wildflower and you will lose your anxiety
 - ◆ God clothes them **MAGNIFICENTLY!!!** Solomon's splendor was famous among the Jews... Jesus says it didn't compare with how God clothes a simple lily of the field
 - ◆ Argument: Why would God be so careful about the clothing of grass, and care nothing about you?
- E. Last use of reason: See how useless worry is!!!

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

1. Simple argument... why worry when it gains you nothing but trouble? Worrying adds nothing positive
2. Greek a little complicated here... literally,

“Who of you worrying can add a single cubit to his span.”

- a. span = stature or length of life

Luke 2:52 *“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”*

Hebrews 11:11 *“By faith Abraham, even though he was past age... was enabled to become a father.”*

- b. best to understand it as length of life, and the “cubit” means milestones beyond the finish line

Illus. We sometimes think of our life span as a road to be traveled... Jesus is saying, when your time comes to die and you have reached the end of your life, who of you by worrying can add even one more step to your journey?

2. If anything, worrying would SHORTEN your life span

Illus.

- a. Worrying accomplishes NOTHING positive
- b. Actually its quite damaging
- c. It certainly gives no benefits... SO WHY DO IT??? (An appeal to common sense)

Conclusion: Case after case: Christ destroys worry with reason... worry is contrary to reason

VIII. Worry is Contrary to **Faith**

vs. 30 “O you of little faith...”

- A. What is Faith? Confident trust in character, plans, & power of God
- B. Faith & reason should be good friends!!! NO LEAP OF FAITH
 1. Faith accepts spiritual data... information about an invisible world
 2. Reason takes the data from faith & works out the implications
 3. Example: Hebrews 11... note the number of thinking/reasoning that goes on in the faith chapter

Hebrews 11:17, 19 “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.... Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead...”

- C. “Little faith”... a failure to accept the data or to reason it out
- D. Jesus & “little faith”... Jesus NEVER coddled His disciples’ lack of faith
 1. Consistent challenge from Jesus to his disciples... USE YOUR FAITH!!
 2. Jesus never coddles them out of unbelief, but always rebukes them for it!!
 3. Four times in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus uses this expression: “Little faith”
 - a. Here, when He challenges them to stop being anxious about physical needs

- b. In Matthew 8:26, when He was asleep in the boat and His disciples thought they were about to drown... **A TRIAL THAT THREATENS OUR LIVES IS UNDER GOD'S CONTROL**

Matthew 8:26 "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and the waves and it was completely calm.

- c. In Matthew 14:31, when Peter walked on the water and began to sink, when he looked at the wind and the waves... **A TRIAL THAT RESULTS FROM OUR TAKING STEPS OF FAITH IS UNDER GOD'S CONTROL**

Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

- d. In Matthew 16:8, when the disciples were arguing about having forgotten to bring bread, Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith... **A TRIAL THAT RESULTS FROM OUR MISTAKES OR NEGLIGENCE IS STILL UNDER GOD'S CONTROL**

Matthew 16:8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus said to them, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?"

E. Increasing Faith: faith comes from hearing the Word of God

Luke 17:5 "The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' He replied, 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea' and it would obey you.'

1. Not a matter of amount, but of using what you have... apply it to THIS situation

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes from hearing the word of God..."

- a. look at the character of God in Scripture
- b. look at the promises of God in Scripture

2. extend faith to cover this immediate situation... reason it out

Illus. Say that you're having financial troubles... Remember that God owns everything in this universe... He created it all out of nothing... He could easily turn all your rocks into nuggets of gold if He chose to... if He doesn't, it means He wants you

to trust Him and to go through the trial... pray and commit the matter to Him: say "God, I know you are sovereign over everything and that you could make this trial go away anytime you choose. Give me patience while you do your work in me... please, provide for our needs..."

Like Joshua & the promised land... take over territory in God's name: "This is God's, this is God's, this is His too!!"

F. Take your proper place in Creation: neither too low nor too high

"Look at the birds of the air..." "Consider the lilies of the field..."

1. recalling God's created order... Genesis

Genesis 1:20 And God said "Let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky..."

Genesis 1:11-12 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land.... And it was so; the land produced vegetation..."

2. everything has its proper place in God's creation: birds fly through the sky, and God cares for them; lilies grow in the fields and God clothes them
3. Godless evolutionist howl at the thought that humans think of themselves as more valuable than animals... but Jesus said so!!

Matthew 10:31 "So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Matthew 12:12 "How much more valuable is a man than a sheep."

4. Don't think too high either... worry comes from an inflated sense of your own power & control... take your place back in the created order & let God provide for you

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

5. Do you have sufficient power to care for both today's problems & tomorrow's as well? God measures out difficulties to us... no more or less than you can handle

Illus. Worry is like someone working three jobs, 22 hours per day... do you really think you can do that? Do you have the power to handle all those responsibilities?

V. Worry is contrary to **Kingdom Life... fruitfulness**

vs. 31-33 *“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.”*

A. Citizens of the Kingdom are to live at a higher level than the pagans

- ◆ Just like the end of Matthew 5.... Pagans just greet their brothers, but members of the Kingdom of Heaven should do better... we should live a supernatural life
- ◆ Just as we are to love our enemies, so we are to live for something higher than daily necessities

Philippians 3:19 *“Their destiny is destruction, their God is their stomach and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven!!!”*

- ◆ We should live at a higher level, now that we are members of the Kingdom of Heaven... there should be a supernatural faith which trusts God for everything you need here on earth

B. What are we to live for? The Kingdom of God and His righteousness

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

1. we have an all-consuming purpose... to build up the Kingdom & to grow in righteousness
2. Worry about food, clothing... consumes resources meant for the Kingdom
3. Just as you can't serve two masters, you can't BOTH be anxious about worldly things AND be seeking God's kingdom

Central Issue: The Growth of the Kingdom: External = Kingdom, Internal = Righteousness

- ◆ Anxiety ultimately robs you of power to advance the Kingdom of God
- ◆ God gave you a mind to reason and to plan, to hope and to dream... anxiety perverts those capabilities so that you use them as they were not intended
- ◆ We were made to yearn, to seek, to hunger, to crave... YES but for spiritual things

“Blessed are the spiritual beggars, for there is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

- ◆ All of Matthew 6 is concerned with our heavenly reward... anxiety robs you of your reward
- ◆ because it causes you to forget why you were created and why God brought you to faith in Christ

FINAL MOTIVATION: CHRIST'S PROMISE

“...and all these things shall be added to you as well.”

- ◆ A clear promise from Christ... He will meet your physical needs while you throw yourselves into the building of His Kingdom
- ◆ In light of such a clear promise, how can we be anxious... to be anxious is to call God a liar
- ◆ BUT NOT LUXURIES!!! “All these things” = Basic necessities

1 Timothy 6:8 “If we have food and clothing we will be content with that.”

Philippians 4:12 “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, living in plenty or in want.”

IX. Conclusion: How to defeat worry

Come to God in prayer... Begin with worship centered on God as your loving heavenly Father

- ◆ Focus on God's role as Father... provider & protector
- ◆ Worship Him for His LOVE and His POWER
- ◆ Recite to Him all the ways He's been faithful to you in the past
- ◆ Read back verses which strengthen your faith: Matthew 6:8, Romans 8:32
- ◆ Renew your commitment to God's priorities: His kingdom, His righteousness
- ◆ Apply your faith to the specific problem at hand
- ◆ **1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”**

BUT NOT like a fisherman!!!

