

YOU

Sermon Series: When Emotions Rise
To be used with: Session 5: Overcoming Worry
Sermon Title Possibilities: What's Wrong with Worry?
Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study *"When Emotions Rise,"* these sermon outlines will follow the same theme as the small group study, so the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit.

Introduction: Worry is a natural human emotion. Our knowledge is limited. When things go awry, our imaginations tend to work overtime, and that makes us worry. If a loved one is running late, you might wonder if he's had an accident or if someone has robbed him. These days, just about anything can happen. Or maybe at the end of the day your boss tells you, "I want to see you in my office first thing in the morning!" Now that can cause you to have a sleepless night! You think, "Uh-oh. What have I done? What am I going to do if he fires me?"

Nevertheless, in the text we've just read, our Lord clearly forbade us to worry. The King James Version is a little misleading. It says, "Take no thought for your life." Remember, the King James Version was translated in 1611, and the word "thought" had a somewhat different meaning in those days than it does now. Jesus wasn't saying that we shouldn't plan for the future. The Bible tells us to prepare for the unexpected. That's part of good stewardship. Sure, we should plan for the future, but Jesus told us not to worry about the future. Why? Because it's all in God's hands.

1) The rebuke of worry.

- a) The word translated "thought" carries the idea of anxiety.
 - i) Jesus was not saying we should not plan for the future.
 - (1) The book of Proverbs commends ants as an example of preparation (Proverbs 6:6-8).
 - (2) Jesus commended the unjust steward for his foresight, even though his methods were shady (Luke 16:1-13).
 - ii) What is wrong with worry?
 - (1) It betrays a lack of trust in God.
 - (2) It indicates too much concern for material goods.
- b) Worry can cause you to get our priorities mixed up.
 - i) Food and clothing are important, but they are not everything.
 - (1) God gave you your life and your body.
 - (2) He knows your needs better than you do.
 - ii) You do not have to be rich to lose sight of the important things.
 - (1) Sadly, most Americans are more concerned about their children's material needs than their spiritual needs.
 - (2) Many depend on the government to take care of them, but what will they do if the government runs out of money?

(a) Welfare abuse transcends racial or cultural boundaries.

2) The wrong of worry.

- a) Worry is not simply unhealthy. It is a sin.
 - i) When Jesus said, “Take no thought”, He was giving a command.
 - (1) You either obey a command or you do not.
 - (2) The command in the original language is in the present tense, which suggests continuous action. We all have occasional bouts of worry, but Jesus was talking about a constant state of worry.
 - ii) Worry does not change anything.
 - (1) The King James says worry cannot “add one cubit” to one’s height. Other translations say it cannot “add a single hour” to your life.
 - (2) Either way, the point is the same: worry does not solve the problem.
- b) Jesus noted how our heavenly Father cares for the birds and flowers.
 - i) Both depend on God to provide for them.
 - (1) Birds neither plow nor gather in barns, but God feeds them.
 - (2) Flowers do not spin cloth, but even Solomon’s fine raiment could not compare with their beauty.
 - (a) I live in central Virginia. As I write this, it is early autumn, and the leaves are starting to turn. Few things can compare to the beauty of trees and mountains in the fall, and it’s all a work of God.
 - ii) If God takes care of them, can we not trust Him to take care of us?
 - (1) That’s not to deny the importance of work (2 Thess. 3:10).
 - (2) We can trust Him to take care of us even when the economy is bad.

1) The remedy for worry.

- a) We need to remember that God still reigns.
 - i) “All these things do the Gentiles seek” – When Jesus spoke of “the Gentiles,” He was referring to pagans.
 - (1) Unlike the Jews, they knew nothing about the true and living God.
 - (2) They had good reason to worry, because they didn’t believe their gods cared about mere mortals.
 - ii) Unlike pagans, we know the true and living God.
 - (1) He is omniscient, so nothing catches Him by surprise.
 - (2) He is sovereign, so nothing is out of His control.
- b) We need to seek His kingdom first.
 - i) That means we must put Him ahead of everything else.
 - (1) When we seek Him first, He will take care of our other needs.
 - (2) He doesn’t promise we’ll be wealthy, but He does promise to provide for our needs.
 - (a) When I was growing up, we had an elderly woman in our church named Mrs. Clark, who had been a member of our church for over fifty years. She had lived through the Great Depression and two world wars. Whenever our pastor asked people to recite their favorite Scriptures, Mrs. Clark invariably quoted Psalm 37:25: “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”
 - ii) Let God take care of the future.
 - (1) We should plan for the future, but we should not “borrow trouble”.

- (2) None of us know what the future holds, so we should simply take each day as it comes.

Conclusion: I remember seeing a “Peanuts” comic strip where Charlie Brown and Linus were standing around looking rather disturbed. Violet came along and asked them what was wrong. Charlie Brown said, “We’re worried about the future.” Violet asked them if they were worried about anything in particular. Charlie Brown said, “No, we’re worried about everything.” Linus said, “Yes, our worrying is very broad-minded.”

Unfortunately, many people are very broad-minded when it comes to worry. They worry about past things that have already happened. They worry about things that have not even happened, and they worry about everything in between. Friends, our God not only knows everything, but He is also in control of everything. If He takes care of the birds and the flowers, we can certainly trust Him to take care of us. Thus, we have no need to worry.

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