



HELP! – My Worry, His Peace
Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:6-7

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You got problems. I got problems. We all got problems. All of us are worried about something.

Some worry is a good. Wisdom says it's a good idea to buy car insurance, have a colonoscopy, and lock your doors at night. It's wise to take precaution. If you're about to have surgery, it's normal to be worried. But if you bubble-wrap your kids to go to the playground, you might be a bit obsessive.

All of us worry about our children; their safety, their education, their choices, their faith. All of us worry about money, about job security, about having enough for retirement. We worry about our health and about the health of our aging parents. We worry about relationships and how to respond to conflict. We worry about that test in school. We worry about a doctor's exam. We worry about our teenager getting their driver's license. These are valid concerns.

But worry goes beyond that. Worry is being overly preoccupied with "what if." Worry is living in a fretful state of anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity. And according to Jesus, worry is a lack of faith and leaves God out of the equation. That's why we are in this series, to affirm our faith that God promises to show up when we need Him most.

Psalms 46:1 is one of those promises. ***"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*** He promises His comfort when we're hurting, His strength when we're weak, His guidance when we're confused, His help when we're in trouble, and He always promises His love. Each week, we're looking at a promise from Scripture, learning how to pray that verse, and learning how to trust Him to help. So, whatever you're going through, and whenever you cry out to God for help, you can know that ***He promises to be there when you need Him most.***

MATTHEW 6

Matthew 6 records Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. On a hillside crowded with people, Jesus talked about worry and encouraged them, and He encourages us, to trust His Father.

²⁵Do not worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁸And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, ²⁹yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? ³¹So don't worry about these things, saying, "What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?" ³²These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you

need. ³⁴So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:25-34, NLT).

Three times, Jesus said, "Do not worry." To people who really were worried about their next meal, due to Roman oppression, Jesus said don't worry about what you will eat. Was He being insensitive? No. He was speaking directly to their greatest need, to what they were worried about most. He was addressing real life. And He is addressing real life for us as well.

So let's walk through Matthew 6 and pick out Jesus' lessons on how to handle our worries.

When you're worried, keep things in perspective. Jesus said, "Do not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25, NLT). The word Jesus used for "worry" means to rip apart. Worry tears us up inside. And according to Jesus, that's no way to live. He tells us not to worry about everyday life. He tells us not to worry about what we'll eat or what we'll wear.

And here's His argument. God's greater gifts include His lesser gifts.¹ "Isn't life more than food?" If God gave us life, then surely we can trust Him to give us food to eat. If God gave us bodies, then surely we can trust Him to give us clothes to wear. And the cross punctuates this principle, that His greater gifts include His lesser gifts. Paul said, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32, NAS). If the Father gave His Son, then there is nothing He won't give us.

When we moved from Atlanta to Austin, I learned a big lesson about perspective. When we moved, our house in Atlanta would not sell. So, for 19 months, I was worried and frustrated and angry about our house not selling in Atlanta. But, on October 8, 2010, selling our house was not a priority. Within the span of one hour, three things happened. That Friday, Adam and I were sitting in the waiting room at M. D. Anderson after hearing his cancer diagnosis. Selling the house was not on my mind. While we were sitting in the hospital, my son Andy called and told us that our first granddaughter Brooke had been born, and selling the house was not one my mind. Again, within the span of hour, I also got an email from my real estate agent in Atlanta, saying that after 19 months, our house had finally sold. I was so filled with concern over Adam's cancer and filled with joy over the birth of a granddaughter, that I forgot to tell Kathy that our sold until three days later. Adam's cancer and Brooke's birth put not selling the house in perspective. It put it way down my worry list.

We believe God has the power to create the universe. We believe He has the power to raise Jesus from the dead. We believe He has promised heaven and eternal life. But worry reveals that we don't trust Him with what we're going through this week. If you're worried about something, keep things in perspective.

When you're worried, remember how incredibly valuable you are to God. Jesus said, "Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?" (Matthew 6:26, NLT). Birds don't plant or harvest or store food, and they don't starve, because God feeds them. And Jesus reassures us that if God takes care of birds, then surely He will take care of us.

In Psalm 139, David pondered how much God cared about Him. “How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!” (Psalm 139:17-18, NLT). And John said, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is who we are!” (1 John 3:1, NIV).

When you’re worried, remember how incredibly valuable you are to God. If He takes care of the birds, then surely He will take care of you.

When you’re worried, realize that worry is wasted emotion. “Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?” (Matthew 6:27, NLT). No! Worry is a waste of time. It doesn’t change a thing. It’s been said that worry is like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere. Worry is wasted emotion. Worry does not do anything to solve the problem.

When you’re worried, trust God to take care of you. Again Jesus said, “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?” (Matthew 6:28-30, NLT).

All of us have good reasons to worry. I don’t want to belittle the problem that worries you, because I don’t think Jesus belittled the real life problems his audience was facing either. But ultimately, worry is a lack of faith. Jesus said it. “Why do you have so little faith?” Worry looks at circumstances and panics. Faith looks at God and trusts. Constant fear and worry reveals that we don’t have confidence in God.

Jesus tells us why we should not worry. “(My Father) will certainly care for you” (Matthew 6:30). So, what are you worried about? Bring it to the front of your mind. Do you trust God to take care of that problem? Do you believe God cares enough about you to walk with you, to strengthen you, and to help you with what you’re worried about? The only cure for worry is to let God take care of the worry. “He will certainly care for you.” Jesus promised. He is inviting us to trust His Father with every detail of our lives.

When you’re worried, remember that God already knows what you need. Jesus said, “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs” (Matthew 6:31-32, NLT).

The “thoughts of unbelievers” are dominated by worry and fear. People without God are not sure who will provide their next meal or meet their needs. But we are. We have the presence of God with us. We have the Word of God to guide us. We have the Spirit of God to empower us. We have the resurrection of Jesus to prove that God is victorious even over death. We have a heavenly Father who “already knows what we need.” Fear and worry should not dominate us.

When you’re worried, seek God above all else. Jesus said, “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need” (Matthew 6:33,

NLT). “Seek first the kingdom of God” (NIV). “First.” “Above all else.” Put God first. Go to God first. Set your heart and fix your eyes on Him. Seek, crave, pursue, and delight in your Creator, your Father, your Savior.

The Apostle John declared his love and commitment to Jesus when he said, “He must increase, and I must decrease” (John 3:30). He was saying, “May my life be more and more about Jesus and less and less about me.” Paul said something similar. “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). For Paul, life was about faithfully serving Jesus, and death was about finally seeing Jesus. So, whether he lived or died, it was all about Jesus.

When you’re worried, take one day at a time. Jesus was so practical and gave such common sense. “Don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today” (Matthew 6:34, NLT). Worry fears what might happen tomorrow. Jesus said, “Don’t worry about tomorrow.” Take one day at a time. “Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

Reality is that 90% of what we worry about never happens. On Wednesday, we worry about what might happen on Thursday. But on Thursday, it doesn’t happen. But then on Friday, we worry about what might happen on Saturday. But on Saturday, it doesn’t happen. The reality is that 90% of what we worry about never happens. Again, three times, Jesus said, “Do not worry.” And why? Because Jesus said, “Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs ... and He will certainly care for you.”

PHILIPPIANS 4

Okay, Jesus tells us not to worry, and all the reasons why. But what do we do with our worry? Philippians 4 gives us the answer.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7, NAS). Another translation reads, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7, NLT).

“Be anxious for nothing.” But we are anxious. We’re anxious a lot. We worry a lot. We worry about money. We worry about our jobs. We worry about kids. We worry about our health. We worry about everything. What if you just lost your job and don’t know how you’re going to pay the bills? What if you’re sitting in the hospital receiving chemotherapy? That’s real, and all of us would be worried. So saying don’t worry sounds not only simplistic, but insensitive.

Unless ... there really is something powerful about prayer. Unless, God really does respond to our prayers. Philippians 4:6-7 is a huge promise. God promises peace to those who pray.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). “Don’t worry about anything; instead,

pray about everything.” Whatever you’re worried about, talk to God about it. Take it to the one who can do something about it. Take it to the one who cares enough to do something about it!

Prayer is not some psychological exercise where we process our emotions. Prayer is a means of transferring our anxiety over to God. First Peter 5:7 says, “(Cast) all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). To “cast” means to throw. Take the problem off your back and throw it onto His. Psalm 46:1 is the theme verse for this series. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear ... (Therefore, I will not worry)” (Psalm 46:1-2).

When we pray, when we cry out to Him for help, Philippians 4 promises, “the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NAS). Peace. Calm. Rest. Paul ended his letter to the Philippians with a prayer. “May the God of peace be with you” (Philippians 4:9). The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. It’s a rich word depicting a sense of well-being, because our lives are in the hands of God. And that’s the reason we have faith, that’s the reason we experience peace. All of our worry, our pain, our problems, and our trials are temporary. We believe our lives are in the hands of God and we believe our Father will see us through to ultimate joy with Him.

CONCLUSION

There’s so much to worry about, and we do. But Jesus said, “Do not worry.” And why? Because “your heavenly Father already knows all your needs ... and He will certainly care for you.” Whatever you’re going through, and whenever you cry out to God for help, you can know that ***He promises to be there when you need Him most.***

So let’s stand and declare our faith together. “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7, NLT).

NOTES

¹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the The Sermon on the Mount*, The Bible Speaks Today Series (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), page 163.