

## Don't Worry

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who teaches us to live as God's Children, Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord, amen.

Let's be honest... Who here is worried about tomorrow? If I'm being honest, I don't really worry about tomorrow. I do worry a lot about my vague idea about "The Future". None of us knows what the future holds for us, but we have a pretty good idea how things will turn out in the end. It's the getting to the end that bothers me... What will I have to endure as I age and approach the end of my life? How will I respond to losing my freedoms? Will I end up alone or will I go out surrounded by those who I love and who love me?

People worried about simpler things in Jesus' time. I mean, think about it... Just to eat they had to plow the field, plant the wheat. Harvest and glean the ripe grain and then grind it into flour. All this before they can bake a single loaf of bread. Even their clothing was equally arduous to make. They had to breed and nurture the sheep. Then they had to shear them of their wool. Someone had to spin the wool into yarn so they could weave it into cloth. The people back in the first century did have to worry about what they will eat and what they will wear. Drinking was a similar story back then. There were no water treatment facilities so the ground water was pretty contaminated, especially in the towns and villages where the people and animals lived. It was safer to drink wine than the water... In the scripture reading for today, Jesus advises them and us not to worry about these

## Don't Worry

things. Our Father in heaven knows we need them and just look how God provides for the sparrows and for the grass of the meadow. People back then could easily have become overly concerned with what to eat, drink, or wear. Today in America we have far more stuff than anyone at any time in the history of the world. Most of us don't worry about our clothing except what to choose to wear. We have too much clothing, well, I have too much clothing... Probably more than most people... I was going to count how many pairs of shoes I have, but I was afraid I would cause too many of you Ladies to be jealous... Most of us don't worry about having enough food to eat. We have too much food. Just think for a minute what's in your refrigerator, freezer, and cupboards. We have so much abundance, what we worry about isn't if or when we'll eat our next meal, but what appeals to our over stimulated taste buds... If we don't like our tap water we can pay for bottled water or even better yet Power Aid or some other flavored liquid delight... When it comes to our homes, most of us are blessed to have four walls and a roof over our heads. As I consider the basics of life, I realize God has indeed given us all we need and then a large extra measure.

Even though we have enough and more to spare, we still worry. If we don't have enough to worry about, we invent things to worry about. We worry so much we can develop worry lines and wrinkles on our face. I've noticed the older I get the more I worry about the situation of our country and the whole world. I seem to

## Don't Worry

always have something that I'm concerned about. I'm not alone in this. Worry is a plague on humankind. In the United States alone over 40 million people suffer from anxiety disorder.

How can we overcome our tendency to worry so much? In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asks his listeners to ponder creation. God is involved in creation. God not only created everything, but God also sustains and keeps everything running as God intended it to run... God isn't separated from creation. God did not create stuff and then step aside and watch it from a distance. God provides for His creation. God feeds and cares for the birds and clothes the flowers of the field in great splendor. If God is active in creation, then it stands to reason that God is also active and involved in the lives of God's people. It's important for us to ask ourselves how this affects our lives. What does this truth mean for our families and us? How does it apply to our relationships, our careers, our financial well-being, our health and our retirement? The same God who created you is also providing for you to have life in abundance. That's another way of saying eternal life. I'm not preaching abundance as in if you only had enough faith, then God would ensure you are blessed beyond your wants and desires. What I am saying is God already paid the price to cover your sin and opened the previously locked gate to the Kingdom of Heaven. What God did for you on the cross and then raising Jesus from the dead was to give you not just an abundant life, but an eternal life.

## Don't Worry

Now, because of the calling of the Holy Spirit, we've come to place our faith and trust in the promise of that eternal life. As we live into this Kingdom of God, we follow the teachings and the commands of the Lord who has made this relationship possible. Under the reign of God our goals and values are somewhat different from the values of the secular society we live in. We are called to give up our striving for ourselves and instead we are called to seek to serve God and to serve others. Most of the time when I find myself worrying, it's because I've been focusing inward and thinking too much about meeting certain goals or that I might not be getting the most out of my life. To the extent that we over-focus on our own wants and needs we run the danger of losing our focus on serving God and serving our neighbor.

Jesus challenges his listeners, now including all of us, to "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be yours as well." We are invited to seek to do God's will—and have faith or trust God to accomplish God's will even through difficult times and tremendous obstacles. God has demonstrated this over and over again in the Scriptures, throughout history, in experiences of our congregation, and in our lives.

God's will does not come about easily. God often moves in our lives so that all other props and supports are taken away and we are able only to depend on God and look to God for assistance and hope. Only when we're stripped bare of all the

## Don't Worry

false gods we've grown accustomed to, can we fully trust the one who can actually make a difference in our lives and in the life of this world. Though this is the place of ultimate security, we do not feel very secure or comfortable when trusting solely in God. In this position we feel vulnerable and at risk. This of course causes even more worry and anxiety. To replace our worry, God invites us to focus on the cross of Jesus Christ, and the reality of God's love. We live safe in God's hands; worry free... Not because of an absence of difficulties or due to our own ability, but because of God's love, forgiveness, power and involvement in our lives.

I still worry about what the future might hold, but in Christ I have a confident hope that God is still in control and what better place can any of us be than in the loving arms of the God who spared nothing to make you and me His own? May this God of love continue to provide and sustain us. Now that we're free from our bondage to sin, may we live our lives seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. Amen.