

How To Live A Worry Free Life (Matt. 6:24-34) Pleasant Plains 3-20-2016AM NICK ANGEL

- ***Read Philippians 4:6-9*** As the Apostle Paul begins to conclude his letter to the Philippians, he admonishes them to free themselves of anxieties that would distract them in their service to God. To be anxious is to stress or worry about things of this world to the extent that our minds are divided. It is to stress to the extent that we are paralyzed by the future or lack of certainty for our future. Instead of being anxious and having their minds pulled in every direction by the worries of this life, the Apostle implores these disciples to lean upon the Lord in prayer. Doing this would allow the peace of God to be within their hearts and guard them against one of Satan's greatest weapons, the anxious mind.
- Then beyond this, instead of being consumed by the issues of this life, which for them would have included some persecutions because of their faith, they were to focus on those things that were worthy of focusing on in **v.8**. Focusing on these things is profitable for the Christian, and they are able to persevere and be productive for the Lord in this life. Paul, himself, walked this talk and was able to be content in all situations because his mind was set on the correct things. **(vv.11-13)**
- Our Lord also had a lot to say about this idea of not allowing ourselves to become over anxious about the things of this life. In His famous sermon on the mount in **Matthew 5-7**, Jesus teaches the multitude concerning the state of mind of those citizens of the Kingdom of heaven. Specifically, in **Matthew 6**, Jesus speaks about the issues of materialism and having an anxious mindset. Beginning in **v.24** and through the end of the chapter, Jesus gives wise teachings concerning how to avoid this all consuming mindset where a person is eaten up with the things of this world. Now, let's clarify for a second that neither Paul nor Jesus is saying that we cannot have any concern or worry for things of this life. Paul himself stated that he had great and deep concern for the churches that he had worked with. **(II Cor. 11:28)**, and our Lord even said that He was "deeply grieved, to the point of death." **(Matt. 26:38)** Again, we are talking about anxiety and worry that is a result of over emphasis on things of this world, and worry that causes us to become paralyzed to do what we need to do. In our text this morning, our Lord is going to tell us 5 things we need to do in order to live a worry free life. This isn't to say that we will have a life that is free of problems, but that we will be able to deal with our problems without being overcome by anxiety and worry. Jesus teaches us how to handle our problems, instead of allowing our problems to handle us.

I. Declare Your Master (v.24)

- A. Many people try to lay down false dichotomies, which means that they try to set up a false situation where we must make a decision between only two choices. Normally they ignore a third just as viable option. However, here in our text...Jesus is doing no such thing. He sets up a dichotomy that is absolutely true.
- B. There are many self described religious people who live as if it is possible to serve both God and the things of this world. They want to focus nearly entirely on the things of this world, the pursuit and obtaining of goods, but then they also want to claim a love for God as a way to soothe their conscience. They think that living this way will allow them to have peace, but the truth is that a love for this world always leads to worry and stress because the things of this world are unreliable.
- C. Jesus makes it very clear when He says that we must choose who our one master will be. This isn't the first time that this type of declaration has been made. Joshua gave the Israelites this same type of ultimatum back in **Joshua 24:15**. "Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve" was his statement to the people. Joshua and Jesus both understood the necessity of declaring who it is that we will serve.
- D. Declaring God as our Master is the first step in living a worry free life because it is a declaration of our focus in this life. Jesus talked about something similar to this just a few verses earlier in **Matthew 6**. In **6:19-21**, Jesus instructs the people to make sure that they are focusing on the right things in this life because where we focus will show what we truly value and love. If we focus on God and those good things then we will avoid many of the things in this life that will cause anxiety.
- E. We must choose God as our Master because unlike the things of this world, God will never let us down.

II. Trust In God's Love And Power (vv.25-30)

- A. God will never let us down because He possesses the love and power to create all things and to sustain all the things that He has created, the greatest of which is us. **(Rev. 4:11)** Jesus makes that point when he talks about the birds of the air. Little birds are nothing compared to us when it comes to importance in the eyes of God. If God will take care of their needs, then surely, Jesus reasons, He will take care of our basic needs.
- B. He also uses the lilies and grass and how God even takes care of the needs of things such as these. Again, God loves all of His creation and nothing does He love more than us, for we were created in His image. The basic needs of this life He will help supply for us when we are in need of them. We simply need to trust in His ability to provide for us.
- C. Some are just not satisfied with simply trusting in God's provisions for His people, but the truth is that we don't have to know exactly how God accomplishes providing for His people. It might be that He provides through the means of others helping us. It might be that He provides opportunities for us to help ourselves. I can't tell you exactly how God provides for us, but I must trust that He does because He loves us and He has the power to provide for us. **(I Peter 5:7)**

III. Don't Do Something That Accomplishes Nothing (v.27)

- A. We must realize that anxieties and worries are compounding issues. Anxiety can become a vicious and inescapable cycle where we worry about our worries and we're anxious about our anxieties and at the end of the day, absolutely nothing is accomplished and none of the things we have worries about have been helped at all.
- B. Jesus speaks about this in **v.27**. "Who can gain anything simply by worrying?", our Lord asked. We'll ask that same question. What is helped when we become overtaken by our worries and anxieties to the point where we are paralyzed and do nothing? The answer is simple. Nothing is accomplished when we allow ourselves to get to this point in our lives.
- C. Instead, we ought to allow our first two points to take over and those two points lead us to action. The best things for disciples to do in this life when things get difficult is this...pray and act! Paul didn't say "pray without ceasing" for nothing! **(I Thess. 5:17)** If we want to do something that actually accomplishes something then we need to pray and show our trust in God and then act according to the situation. Prayer to our God never accomplishes nothing!

IV. Prioritize The Spiritual Over The Physical (v.33)

- A. Jesus must have really believed this to be something that was important because He mentions it twice within this context. First, He mentions it in **vv.19-21** and then He finishes off this section of teaching by mentioning it again. **(v.33)**. So why does Jesus emphasize this? Again, it has to do with focus and perspective.
- B. A few weeks back, we talked about living with an eternal perspective and why that is important to the Christian. The disciple of Jesus who recognizes that this life is so incredibly small compared to eternity will begin to prioritize his/her life so that the majority of their time and energy will be used in make preparations for the next life. A person cannot expect glory in eternity if he/she has not made preparation for it in this life.
- C. Again, let's clarify by saying that there is nothing wrong with having wealth in this life. Having it isn't the issue if we have obtained it rightly and use it rightly. Instead, it is the love of money that will get us in trouble. **(I Tim. 6:10)** Having a love of money will throw off the priorities of anyone to where it will be at the top of their list. They will do anything and everything they can to get money, and with that type of endeavor comes the worry, stress, and anxieties.
- D. The person who has their priorities in order will, instead of only focusing solely on gain gain gain of physical goods, learn contentment with what he/she has. Instead of wasting time and energy focusing on physical goods, the Christian will focus on spiritual endeavors that will lead to peace of mind and soul through our loving and powerful God. **(I Tim. 4:8-11)**

V. Live One Day At A Time (v.34)

- A. In reality this life is short, but sometimes to us it seems extremely long. This is especially true when we are going through difficult times. Not only do the difficulties make things difficult on us, but we allow ourselves to become overloaded with the worries and concerns of those times. Our Lord gives us some great advice for those times....take one day at a time.
- B. What is in the past is already done and gone. What comes tomorrow might come, but the truth is that it very well might not come. So we are left with focusing on the here and now. We can allow ourselves to become overloaded and we can get ourselves into trouble when we make all of these plans for the future, but we don't take into account what needs to get done in the here and now.
- C. James, the probably half brother of Jesus, speaks about this very thing, and implores the readers to, like we've already discussed, trust in the Lord and lay your concerns upon Him. **(James 4:13-15)**
- D. We must recognize and accept what Jesus says, "each day has enough trouble for itself." We can make plans and prepare for the future, but not to the extend where we become unable to function in the present day. Worries and anxieties won't help tomorrow's troubles, but we can address those problems with our Lord when that day gets here.

There are so many things in this life that can bring us down because of worry and anxiety, and sadly it doesn't look like things are going to change anytime soon. This is dangerous for the Christian because it can disable us and keep us from being productive and useful within God's Kingdom. May He help us to remember these 5 important points so that we can live a life free of the dangerous chains of anxiety and worry. Our problems might seem big, but our God will always be greater and able to sustain us through them. May we cast our cares, worries, and anxieties upon our mighty God, and may we be useful servants in His great Kingdom because we are free from the debilitating worries of this life.