

WORRYWARTS

Scripture Reading: Read Luke chapter 12

“Don’t be such a worrywart!” You’ve probably heard that statement before, haven’t you? Maybe you have even used the phrase yourself. According to the dictionary, a worrywart is a person who “tends to worry habitually and often needlessly; pessimist; fussbudget.”

In our chapter reading today, we discover that Jesus has a thing or two to say about worry. His bottom line: DON’T! Three times in chapter 12, Jesus commands his disciples not to worry: *“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say...”* (verse 11); *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.”* (verse 22); *“And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.”* (verse 29).

Jesus, however, doesn’t just command us not to worry. He also gives us some powerful reasons not to. In verse 12, he tells us that the Holy Spirit will teach us what to say when we face powerful adversaries because of our faith. We don’t have to worry about how to defend ourselves. In verse 23, he reminds us that life is more than about basic necessities. In verses 6 and 24, he challenges us to learn a lesson from the birds; God provides for them and we are much more valuable than they are. In verses 27-28, he goes on to imply that if God clothes perishable flowers with beauty, he will clothe us as well. In verse 30, Jesus reminds us that our Father knows what we need. As a result, we don’t have to act like pagans and frantically worry as if we have no Father in heaven. Since God has been pleased to provide us with the kingdom, according to Jesus in verse 32, then it’s a given he will supply all we need along the way.

In verses 25-26, Jesus reminds us how futile worry really is by asking two questions: *“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”* Jesus anticipates what modern research has confirmed. Worrying is a wasteful activity. 40% of what we worry about never happens. 30% has already happened and we can’t change the past. 12% are worries about what someone else thinks about us. 10% of are worries are pretty petty such as what are we having for dinner or what we are going to wear. That means 92% of what we worry about is a waste of time. Only 8% of what we worry about actually happens and half of this deals with events beyond our control. Is it worth worrying and wasting all that emotional energy and harming our bodies physically on just 4%? Besides, God has promised to work all things together for our good and that means even the 4%. No wonder Jesus tells his disciples to seek God’s kingdom and let God take care of the rest!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Take a “worry inventory” today to determine where your worries are concentrated. How many are in the 92% category? Ask the Lord to set you free from an attitude of worry and develop trust in him instead as your Heavenly Father.

Take-away: *Worry is not worth the effort. It’s better to trust the Faithful Father!*