

Jesus on the Fat Hill: “Don’t Worry” Matthew 6:25-33

Have you ever read about really silly people?

A Harris survey commissioned by United Airlines found that 38 percent of passengers never use the lavatory during a flight, 60 percent do, and another 2 percent aren't sure. **"Hello!?"**

I'm fascinated by that 2 percent. But I sure hope I never sit next to one of them on a flight! **"Hello!?!"**

Did you read about Julee Sharik, from Orem, Utah? She gave birth to a 7-pound, 5-ounce son, just 12 hours after learning she was pregnant. She explained: "Looking back, I remember times when he was moving around a lot, but I thought it was just gas." **"Hello!?!!"**

A prison inmate escaped on the 89th day of a 90-day sentence; he was captured and had to then serve 1-1/2 more years. **"Hello!?!!!"**

A robber allowed a store clerk to make one call during the robbery--and was flabbergasted when the police arrived on the scene. **"Hello!?!!!!"**

"Hello!?" has become a kind of response directed back at someone who is just silly! "Hello!?" is another way of saying "Is anyone there?" "Hello!?"

Today, I believe that Jesus is saying, "Hello!?" to us! Often we become extremely silly, because we allow worry and anxiety to take over our lives. Jesus says, "Hello!?"

Jesus' words of comfort in today's section of the Sermon on the Fat Hill (the Sermon on the Mount) should cause all of us to sit up and take notice. They call out a big "Hello!?" to every shrinking, shirking, shivering, sniveling one of us who lets doubt overcome conviction and fears overwhelm our faith.

You might even call Matthew 6:25-34 a big "Hello!?" of the Bible.

Jesus plainly tells us, "Do not worry." Jesus doesn't want you worrying your life away. What will interest rates do? How will we pay for the vacation? How will your grades be in school this year? What will happen with my health? Jesus wants us each to wake up and see that God is in control.

This is one of the hardest commands that Jesus has given us. I know that I shouldn't lust, shouldn't hate, and shouldn't be a hypocrite. But worry? That's difficult. Worry seems etched into the American lifestyle. When the doctor looks at you and says, "It is

malignant,” or your boss says, “Due to the economy we’re going to have downsize,”
Worry creeps in!

If we are going to take Jesus’ words seriously, we have wrap ourselves around this command. It takes more than just saying, “I’m going to eliminate worry because Jesus tells me to.” Worry is tougher to get rid of than we may think. Beating worry in your life is like beating an addiction. Some things can be defeated completely, but there will always be the temptation to fall. Worry certainly falls into that category.

You see, Jesus gives us:

I. A Requirement—“Don’t worry.” Matthew 6:25

Notice it says, “Don’t worry.” The way it is written is as a command, not a suggestion.

Jesus is not saying, “Do not be concerned.” He said, “Do not worry.”

We have to understand what worry is. Some of us think that worry and having concerns are the same things. They are not.

Worries are those things that stop us dead in our tracks. In fact, our word worry comes from an old German word that means “to choke or strangle.”

Concerns are those things that motivate us to work hard.

You see, there is a major difference between worry and concern:

Legitimate concerns motivate us to action – Concerns focus on probable events and then takes action. It’s foreseeing a feasible problem and then doing things to avoid the problem.

- ◇ It’s okay to be concerned about your cholesterol and then take some needed steps to reduce it - such as watching your diet, exercising, or taking medication if your cholesterol is high.
- ◇ It’s okay to be concerned about your child who’s misbehaving at school and then take prudent action by disciplining him.
- ◇ It’s okay to do things like buy insurance or have a college fund for your children or to make investments.

Concerns move us to take action, worry paralyzes us!

Worry is focusing on negative events and allowing it to freeze us.

When Jesus says, "do not worry," Jesus is talking about, "Anything that drains your tank of joy – something you cannot change, something you are not responsible for, something you are unable to control, something (or someone) that frightens and torments you, agitates you, keeps you awake when you should be asleep." These are things that Jesus wants you to avoid.

Jesus even listed out some things that we are not to worry about. A preacher named Stuart Briscoe pointed out that Jesus tells us exactly what to NOT worry about. He points out that there are five things that all begin with the letter "F" that Jesus says "don't worry about." Jesus says, "don't worry about..."

1. **Finances** - back in Matthew 6:19, Jesus says, "do not store up for yourselves treasures..."

- ◇ The third most common fear among Americans is financial failure
- ◇ What if I can't pay off my credit cards?
- ◇ What if the car breaks down?
- ◇ What if my investments collapse?
- ◇ What if I lose my job?
- ◇ Jesus says "don't worry about these things."

2. **Food** - in Matthew 6:25, Jesus says, "Do not worry about what you will eat or drink..."

- ◇ In the first century AD, not having enough to eat was an issue for the common people
- ◇ This is not common in America today. We worry about the opposite end of the spectrum. How can I stop eating so much food? We count calories, try diet after diet, count carbs, stay away from fast food until we hear the call of McDonalds. While we have plenty, we can worry about food.
- ◇ Jesus says "don't worry about these things."

3. **Fitness** - Also in Mt. 6:25, Jesus says, "Don't worry about your body..."

- ◇ Americans are obsessed with body image. We pay outrageous prices to buy exercise equipment we use for a month and then takes up space in our bedrooms, garages, or basements. After awhile, we sell them in a yard sale or wait for the huge town yard sale. I admit, I did it! Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that Jesus is telling us not to eat right or to exercise. In fact, some of us need to pay more attention to our diets and times for exercise (like myself)!
- ◇ What Jesus is telling us is this very important point: Don't let the flesh be more important than the spirit.
- ◇ Jesus says "don't worry about these things."

4. **Fashion** - Matthew. 6:25 – "Don't worry about what you will wear..."

- ◇ We have an abundance of clothes and we worry about what we going to wear:

- ◇ “Does this outfit make me look fat?” --Every man in this place knows the answer to that question, don’t you fellows?
- ◇ We ask, “Is this in style?”, “Does this match?”, “will I look good?” Jesus said not to worry about fashion.

5. Last thing Jesus says not to worry about: **the Future** - Matthew 6:27 – “Who of you can add a single hour to his life?”

- ◇ Many of us are worried about what will happen to us in the future
- ◇ We’re afraid of aging. We panic when we see more wrinkles and gray hairs. Our society tells us that looks are important so we have tummy tucks, hair coloring, Rogaine, and anti-aging medicines.
- ◇ Stressing out about getting older ages us even faster!
- ◇ Some of us are worried, however, about the future of our country, our political party, our society, our family or our businesses.

Jesus says, “Don’t worry about the future...” God is in control!

Do not worry is a command that Jesus has given us, but He doesn’t stop there.

Jesus gives us:

1. A Requirement, and...

II. The Reasons not to worry – READ Matthew 6:26-32

It is easy to forget that God is there. It is easy to forget that God knows your needs and your troubles, so we worry.

The problem is that worry actually adds to our problems. It doesn’t help at all. When you let things eat you alive, it literally eats you alive! Worry can bring: acid reflux, chest pain, mental melt downs, ulcers, sleep disorders, and high blood pressure. Not to mention the fact that the US Center for Disease Control reports that HALF of all deaths for people between the ages of 1 to 65 are due to worry-related diseases. In fact, Americans are so busy avoiding worry that we consume 800 million pounds of anti-anxiety pills annually.

Let’s think about it for a moment: why do we worry?

Well, we worry because first, life is hard. Bad things happen to all of us.

I live in a real world, and I want a religion that deals with reality. Don’t you? I don’t want a religion that plays, “let’s pretend.” I want a faith that can stand up to whatever the world has to give, and still come out on top.

You may be saying, "Of course, life is hard. I already know that." But isn't it amazing how often people try to avoid worry by pretending, by putting on blinders, by avoiding the issue, by refusing to acknowledge the possibility of anything going wrong.

How many of you, when you are dealing with some serious problem, have had someone say, "don't worry, I'm sure everything will work out." Instead of helping us, it annoys us and makes our worry worse.

If the worst does come to pass, humming the song "Don't worry be happy" is not going to help. What we need is something that will allow us to face reality, but will give us the power to fight anxiety and worry.

Second, we worry because the future is uncertain. Not only are there dangers we know about and can make some preparation for, but there are dangers which are completely unexpected. For example: the most common sign of heart disease is sudden death.

We can prepare as best we know how. We can watch our diets and exercise to prevent heart attack, but the bottom line is that the future is unknowable. Oh we try. But as your doctor will tell you, and in spite of what the Psychic hotlines tell you, no one can predict the future.

Third, we worry because we're not in control. If we were in control, then no one we love would ever suffer. Even experts aren't in control: Doctors get sick. Financial experts lose money in the stock market. Policemen get robbed. Lawyers get sued. Good, loving, responsible parents are rejected by their teenage and adult children.

Jesus goes farther, however in this passage, and gets to the heart of the matter. By making us look at birds, lilies, and even pagans, Jesus says that we need to be careful. By pointing to the birds, lilies, and pagans, Jesus says that we are making bold statements when we worry:

When we worry, we are saying...

1. God has forgotten us.

- a. Jesus says to look to the birds as your example. Did you know that bird eats three to four times its weight every day? God provides that much food for them. Jesus basically says, "if God has not forgotten the birds, then why would you think that He will forget you?"
- b. Psalm 139:1-3 (NLT) - *O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am.*

When we worry, we are also saying...

2. God does not care about us.

- a. Jesus then points to the lilies, or flowers, of the field and says, “Look. God dresses the fields with something more beautiful than even what Solomon could afford. Know this: God cares more for you than the fields who will be burnt away!”
- b. When we worry, we are saying that this is not true. We are saying that God does not care. Jesus reminds us to go outside and look: God still cares for the birds and the fields. He still cares for you.
- c. Some people will say, “But what about people who starve?” Or, “What about people who lack clothing?” God is still in charge, and from the eternal perspective, He will take care of what we eat, drink, and wear. The book of Revelation tells us what heaven is like. One description is that heaven is like a banquet table or feast—in other words, in heaven there is plenty of food and drink. The other picture of heaven is that you will put on white garments, the robes of righteousness. In other words, clothing. Even when people die, God still cares about them.

When we worry, however, we are also making a third bold statement. When worry has our heart, we are saying:

3. We are no different from pagans.

- a. You see, Jesus points to the pagans, those who don’t believe in Christ and says that we shouldn’t be like them. He reminds us that “the pagans run after all these things...” If we worry about these things too, then we are no different.
- b. Followers of Christ, however, should be different from the world. We aren’t chasing after the same things non-Christians chase, so worry should not be in our vocabulary. If we are chasing after Christ and His Kingdom, then we will look completely different from the non-Christian world. We have to realize that worrying destroys our witness.

After giving us:

- 1. A Requirement that says, “do not worry”, and**
- 2. The Reasons that we worry,**

Jesus doesn’t stop there. Jesus is not the kind of leader who points out problems and offers no solutions. Jesus then gives us:

III. The Remedy for Overcoming Worry – READ Matthew 6:33-34

Jesus comes to the crux of the matter, the antidote to worry is placing our trust in the Lord. Let me say it again, the remedy to worry is placing our trust in Jesus.

Worry is disintegrated when the driving force of our life is a passion for Christ and his kingdom.

A hymn says it best:

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”

When Christ becomes our focus, the things of earth will grow strangely dim.

Jesus doesn't say, "...each day will be wonderful and carefree." Jesus says that each day has its own troubles. We must, however, keep our eyes on God through these troubles.

Why do we turn to God. Let's look at some promises from Him:

- ◇ 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NLT) - *So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.*
- ◇ Philippians 4:19 - *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*
- ◇ Psalm 55:22 - *Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.*
- ◇ Romans 8:28 (The Message) - *That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.*
- ◇ 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT) - *Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.*

Worry has a grip on too many Christians! Wake up! God is control! **Hello!?**

The problem is that Christians have let their God become too small. They have allowed their salvation to be microchip miniaturized. We are eager to pray that the check we just wrote won't bounce - but we are hesitant to ask God to deliver us from the terrible situation we are in or to plead with God to stop the war we are in. **"Hello!?"**

This is the God who calls Christ the firstborn of all creation and then chooses to shape the rest of us into the image of this Christ.

It is the transformative power of God, embodied in Christ's resurrection, that refuses to let our lives fall prey to the clutches of evil and despair and worry. Jesus is not promising that nothing bad will ever happen to us. We will experience the full forces of evil--loss, hardship, heartache--over the course of our lives.

But the promise God has made to us, through Christ's revelation of God's heart on the cross, pledges to us that such events will not overpower God's presence beside us, within us, alongside us, everyday.

God is with us, wherever we are and whatever we face.

Does your faith falter when it contemplates the challenges that surround every human life? Are you:

- ◇ doubting in the face of death ...
- ◇ weak-kneed in the face of illness ...
- ◇ wimpy in the face of danger ...
- ◇ worthless in the face of adversity ...
- ◇ ravenous in the face of greed ...
- ◇ oblivious in the face of pollution ...
- ◇ heartless in the face of hunger ...
- ◇ self-absorbed in the face of homelessness ...
- ◇ whining in the face of hardship...
- ◇ frozen in the face of confrontation ...
- ◇ apathetic in the face of challenges ...
- ◇ despairing in the face of the Serpent ...? **"HELLO!?"**

These are exactly the circumstances that enable Christians to live Jesus' command to not worry with confidence.

What is "in-your-face" right now? **"Hello!?"**

In the face of greed ... there is the abundant life.
 In the face of pollution ... there is God's redemption of all creation.
 In the face of hunger ... there is a legacy of loaves and fishes.
 In the face of homelessness ... there is compassion.
 In the face of hardship ... there is the promise of goodness.
 In the face of death ... there is the Resurrection.
 In the face of illness ... there is eternal healing.
 In the face of danger ... there is the right arm of God.
 In the face of adversity ... there is "blessed assurance."
 In the face of confrontation ... there is confidence.
 In the face of the Serpent ... there is the gift of the Cross.

Matthew 11:28 - *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Victory in Jesus – Song Folder # 4