

BaptistWay Bible Series for January 15: Trust God, and stop worrying about things

January 3, 2012

Don't Worry, Be Happy. That was the title of a hit song performed by Bobby McFerrin. Simply put, that song's title is easier said than done.

In Matthew 6:19-34, Jesus taught about worry and anxiety. He knew our tendency to fixate on problems thinking through innumerable scenarios that could bring disaster to us or to our loved ones.

Worrying about possessions (Matthew 6:19-24)

Notice how Jesus introduced the topic. He did not start by addressing worry directly. Instead, he brought up the root of many of our worries, our possessions.

So much of our time is spent on storing up treasure on earth. Of course, we excel at disguising our "treasure" by calling it things we need or just a little something extra. What we really have is just too much stuff.

Another possession many believers worry about is family. Although Jesus did not mention worrying about people, our loved ones easily could fit into this category. We worry about them, as if they were a prized possession and not necessarily as if they were individuals with free will. Our worry brings our loved ones down to the level of our possessions.

Worrying about necessities (Matthew 6:25-34)

In verse 25, Jesus addressed anxiety about those possessions necessary to sustain life. He was addressing an audience familiar with living on the edge of poverty and starvation. To say not to worry about adequate food and

clothing is a real revelation.

Food and clothing are necessities, but worrying about how to obtain them will not help anyone to succeed in getting those items. Jesus taught his followers should trust God to provide the necessities of life. Again, easier said than done.

Worrying about a worldview

In verses 16-34, Jesus addressed how we look at life. So often, we think we can control more elements in our lives than we actually can. That's why we worry. We think about what else we can do to avoid the negative scenarios running in our minds. Worry, however, does not work, because worry does not help us control anything. It merely occupies our minds with negativity.

Worry robs us of life. While we embrace our anxieties, we eliminate any room for the joy and abundance in life God has for us. We're too busy living through potential disasters that might occur. We leave no room for planning the joys in life.

Worry signals a problem in faith—specifically, a lack of faith. Our worry means we do not trust God to take care of our needs and our possessions (including our loved ones). Thinking through negative scenarios is a lack of faith. It's one thing to be prepared for problematic situations or even a crisis. It's another thing to dwell on those negative situations and focus our minds chiefly upon them. That's worry. Dwelling on the bad things that could happen.

Instead, we need to think through positive scenarios. That's faith in action. Our thoughts can demonstrate our faith (see vv. 22-23). The Apostle Paul said we should "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" in Romans 12:2.

Worry reveals a selfish streak within us. It tells us that unless we do something, then we won't get the outcome we want. It tells us the problems

captivating our thoughts are so important nothing else in life is as significant.

Worry is a choice. People often tell me they are worriers, and that is just the way they are. It's like they believe they never can change. In reality, they choose to worry. It has become a bad habit. Bad habits are difficult to break but not impossible.

Choose not to worry by focusing on God's kingdom. Store treasure in heaven for an eternal reward. Show your love for others by sharing the message of salvation with them. Recognize God is in total control of your life and whatever you need. God will provide.

Investing in the future

Worry is about the future. It's negative thoughts about what might happen in life. Jesus ended this passage by telling us to focus on today not tomorrow. We have so little control over tomorrow; we need to focus today on those few things that we can control.

By focusing on today, by serving God obediently, by thinking through positive scenarios, and by trusting our lives fully to God, we will take possession of what little control we have over tomorrow. We will be storing treasure in heaven by focusing upon what is significant in life. Pray God will help to occupy our minds with "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lively, whatever is admirable" (Philippians 4:8).

The issue with worry comes down to a simple question. Will you live a life that shows trust in God?