

## Why Worry? by Pastor Bill Hekman

When we visit Switzerland, Netherlands or England we are reminded about the distinct difference in appearance between European faces and Asian faces. Europeans seem far more serious and it takes more effort to smile. Asians smile so easily. Even when eyes of complete strangers meet there is often a smile.

I have lived in Indonesia for over 45 years and I know for a fact that the average Indonesian is far less fortunate in life than the average European. There is no social system in place to care for the unemployed and aged. No assistance available for the handicapped. No provision for those who are declared 'unfit' by a doctor to work. No government subsidies for education. Yet people here worry a lot less than the average European or North American. I realize that part of this 'smiling' may be culture and lifestyle. But a lot is related to a preoccupation with style and not content.

So many magazines in the West are devoted to clothes, health, fitness, sexual performance, homes, gardens and other aspects of lifestyle such as insurance, security for old age and what is called 'the rainy day'. I have visited leprosy colonies in India and refugee camps in Ambon, where people live in misery, lacking nearly all the basic needs for living and yet they smile!

The Bible deals with this question of worry and stress and how to start to enjoy living in Matthew 6:25-34:

*"Therefore I will tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?"*

*And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

### **What is worry?**

**Worry is a lack of trust.** The Lord Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God and believe also in me”.

**Worry is a lack of hope.** Isaiah 40:31, “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint”.

**Worry is also caused by a lack of confidence in self.** We constantly need to remember that we are sons and daughters of the Lord almighty. We, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have been saved, redeemed, forgiven and made righteous in Christ. Christ is living in us and He is all-powerful. With Him nothing is impossible.

**Worry is fear.** “Perfect love drives out fear”. 1 John 4:18. God is love.

The main worry Jesus is referring to in this passage is material worry. Finances is a big concern for most people. But the teaching of Jesus on worry has wider application. ‘Do not worry about your life’, He says. People worry about exams, jobs, money, houses and the stress of difficult or broken relationships. But people also worry about their health, old age, death, crime, violence, immorality, politics, immigration, terrorism and the unpredictability of society in which we live. The solution of Jesus to these worries is quite radical. Jesus gives us seven reasons why we should not worry.

**First, to worry is to miss the point of life.** Jesus says, ‘do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body what you wear. Is not life more important than food and the body more important than clothes?’ (verse 25). What people truly need is love, joy, satisfaction and peace of mind and these we cannot buy at the supermarket! Elton John, the most successful solo artist since Elvis Presley, has sold more than 200 million records and his earnings back in 1994 were more than \$30 million. Yet his drug-taking and eating disorders have brought him misery. He tried to commit suicide back in 1975. He sings on his recent album; ‘I had forty years of pain and nothing to cling to.’ ‘My career was a success,’ he wrote, ‘but my life was pretty miserable.’ Jesus tells us that if we seek external things of life we are missing the whole point of life. The truly satisfying aspect of life is to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

**Secondly, worry is illogical.** Jesus says, ‘Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?’ (Verse 26). Worry is actually a slander on God’s character and could even be offensive to God.

Jesus encourages us to look at the birds and think about how they manage life. They do have to spend a lot of time hunting and searching for the food, but it is there to be found. I have never seen a lazy bird. God provides for us but we have our part to play.

**How does our heavenly Father feed the birds?**

**One way is through migration. They do not stay when the winter season is near. They move back and forth according to the season.**

**The Artic Tern flies each year from Artic to Antartic and back.**

**The Wablers fly from the coast of New England to South America – nonstop flights over long stretches of open ocean.**

God feeds the birds by giving them intelligence and energy to search for food. He does not spoon feed any bird directly from heaven.

In the same way God has given you and I intelligence and energy to work for our needs and not depend on being spoonfed by others.

**Thirdly, worry is a complete waste of time.** Jesus says, ‘Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?’ (Verse 27). Worry is futile, unproductive and a complete waste of time. Actually worry will only subtract instead of add to our lives, causing things like headaches, ulcers, coronary thrombosis and other psychological problems. The only people who gain are the doctors, psychiatrist and psychologists!

**Fourthly, worry is incompatible with faith.** Jesus says, Look at the lilies and grass how God clothes these, ‘will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?’ (Verse 30). Faith and worry are like fire and water. Faith involves confidence in God’s care and provision. To be a Christian is to walk in a trusting relationship with God, but sin interferes with that relationship and often leads to worry.

**Fifthly, worry is un-Christian.** Jesus says, “For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them’ (verse 32). Unbelievers are worried about all these material needs. Christians are called to be different. Our trust is in God.

He is all-powerful and very capable to supply all our needs.

**Sixthly, worry is unnecessary.** ‘But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.’ (Verse 33). God promises to provide if we get our priorities right. The Bible is full of such promises. For example in Psalm 84:11

‘No good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless’. Sometimes our situation may be difficult or painful as the Apostle Paul also experienced. The believers in Ambon and Poso and also in China and Vietnam are experiencing great difficulties and persecutions. Yet God will work through adversity to better us in some way. The result may be an increased intimacy with God, greater spiritual insight or far deeper faith with which to encourage and affirm others. Vivid examples of this are Watchman Nee and Richard Wurmbrand. Both suffered years in communist prisons and yet were victorious gaining great insight in the things of the Lord.

**Seventhly, worry is incompatible with common sense.** Jesus says, ‘Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own’ (verse 34). God has given us our lives in units of 24 hours and we should accept life a day at a time. Life with God is a day at a time. Tomorrow belongs to God. Even in the Lord’s Prayer Jesus taught us to pray ‘Give us this day our daily bread’. Each day we echo the words of David: “This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it’ (Psalms 118:24).

Jesus says we need to change our priorities and our ambitions. The answer to worry is to see first His kingdom and His righteousness.’ (verse 33). We are to seek His rule and reign in our lives, in our marriages, our home, family and lifestyle. His rule means His will and not our will. Further we are to see God’s righteousness in our lives and society. We must seek to see His standards accepted in our lives and in our nation.

The story is told about a certain Baron Fitzgerald. He had only one son and heir, who died after leaving home. This was a tragedy from which the father never recovered. The Baron continued to invest in paintings by great masters. When he died his will was found to call for his paintings to be sold. Messages were sent to museums and collectors advertising the sale. The day of auction came and a large crowd had assembled. The lawyer read from the Baron’s will. It instructed that the first painting to be sold was that of ‘my beloved son’. The portrait was by an unknown artist and it was of poor quality. The only bidder was the old servant who had known and loved the boy. For a small sum of money he bought it for its sentimental value and the memories it held for him. The attorney read again from the will, ‘whoever buys my son gets all. The auction is over’.

Jesus said, ‘Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, all those things will be given to you as well’. (Verse 33) That is how to stop worrying and start living!

Having Jesus Christ living in our hearts give us joy and peace and puts a smile on our face.

## **How to deal with worry?**

Again we go to God for the answers. So many people go to psychologists and psychiatrists for help and pay heavy fees. There are some who get attached to these counselors.

**But all the answers are in God’s Word and it’s free of charge.**

### **1. Get rid of it. Don’t keep it. Give it to the Lord.**

1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”

#### **How do we do that?**

Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”.

### **2. Receive consolation and encouragement from God’s Word.**

Psalms 94:19 “When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.”

### **3. Associate with people who are kind to you and be kind to others.**

Proverbs 12:25 An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.”

### **4. Allow the Lord to live, speak and function through you. He is never worried.**

Mark 13:11 “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Christianity is not a set of rules, or a list of beliefs but Christianity is Christ. “Christ in you the hope of glory” Colossians 1:27, Not stress, frustration, worry and fear but Hope of Glory, Victory and More than Conquerors.

**A beautiful description of a person who is filled with the Spirit of the Lord.** Isaiah 11:2-3 “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears.”

**People who worry judge by what they see and decide by what they hear. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and delight. A new life, an exchanged life, a fantastic life, an exciting life, a peaceful life, a worry free life.**