

peacefulness and harmony through prayer and meditation practices that focus on the glory of Christ. But we don't offer that, we offer worry. And so people go elsewhere to meditate, be mindful, and have peace in their lives.

It's time to choose and work purposefully in one direction or another: will you embrace the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the sovereignty of God so that you are seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness or will you embrace your worry?

Friday

In preparation for Sunday worship, please read and reflect upon Matthew 7:1-6.

Devotional

Worrying

February 26, 2023

Note: we will be in Matthew 6:25-34 all week. Please read it as often as the Spirit moves you to read it.

Monday

A process for when you find yourself worrying, in sum:

1. Recognize that you are worrying
2. Identify what your worrying about as specifically as possible
3. Choose to stop. Your worry is not helping anything. Give your worry to God.
4. If you can do something about what you were worrying about, do it. If not:
5. Replace the thought. Focus on Christ or someone or something else that brings you joy.

I've flown enough that it doesn't always go as I would like. A couple years ago about this time, I was in Spokane visiting my mother. It snowed in Seattle, which is always bonkers. My flight from Spokane to Seattle was significantly delayed, but at least my flight was leaving and the other one to Seattle was not. As my plane sat on the tarmac, I realized I would not make my connecting flight to Dulles. I worked hard not to worry, because that wouldn't change anything. I worked on my options instead. By the time we finally took off, I had already rebooked my flight and snagged a hotel room near the Seattle airport.

Then I made a plan how I would complete our video worship without my computer, etc. (we were video-only at the time). Fortunately, there was someone here who knew the program I used to edit the worship video and could put the final touches on it for distribution. If you have a great memory, you might remember that one of my sermon a couple of years ago was from a hotel

room in Seattle. The next day, I flew not to Dulles but to National. And not on time, but very late. Too late to make it to Dulles to get my car and drive home. Another hotel. Then a Lyft to the Dulles area in the morning.

When you can make a plan, make a plan. When you have made a plan or can't make a plan, don't worry and give it to God. I couldn't enact my plan right away and the plan had some variables, but I identified what I could and couldn't do in the moment and let it go. It's taken some practice to be able to do this and I don't bat 1.000%, but it is possible for you to be in charge of your worry!

Tuesday

Worrying offers the illusion of control – “If I'm worrying about it, I'm doing something.” This is true: by worrying you are ruining your life and wrecking your faith.

Here is what you are telling God with your worry: that you don't have faith in him to provide.

Simple, clear, and harsh. But true. This is why in v. 30 Jesus calls worriers people of little faith. Our survival depends on divine sovereignty, not human anxiety: ²⁷ And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his span of life?

Why do you worry about food, drink, or clothes, Jesus asks. Why do you worry about your children or the economy or whatever it is you occupy yourself with worry over? Jesus wants us to probe the underlying cause of our anxiety but then also gives us the answer: The cause of our worry is not the circumstances of our lives but a warped view of God. We don't think God can provide so we provide anxiety as if it was contributing something.

God feeds the birds – are you not more important than a bird?

God clothes the grasses and flowers that are pretty one day and burned for fuel the next – are you not more important to God than the grass?

Wednesday

Jesus offers us the path forward especially in v. 33: seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Seeking the KoG and righteousness means submitting to God's authority out of reverence and love for the person and work of Jesus Christ. If you want the glories of the KoG, you will need to put yourself more and more under the banner of Jesus Christ as Lord (Master). If you persist in worry, worry is actually your master. The Ten Commandments begin with God declaring that we shall have no other gods. The ancient rabbis give us a good reason why this commandment comes before all the others:

The matter may be compared to a human king who entered a province. His servants said to him, “Impose decrees upon the people.” He answered, “No, when they accept my sovereignty, I shall impose decrees upon them. For if they do not accept my sovereignty, they will not accept my decrees, either.”

Do you accept God's sovereignty over you and this world? If you do and have a deep understanding and love of God's sovereignty, you will see that there is no reason to worry.

Thursday

Your worry is not only wrecking you, it is wrecking the witness of the Church Universal. American Christians in 2023 are anxiety monsters. Instead of having a peace that passes all understanding that could be a major blessing to our family, friends, and neighbors, we spew our worries and anxieties all over them and our society. And we wonder why more people don't flock to the faith? So if you think you are fine with your worry, think about what it is doing to everyone around you. Christianity has a rich tradition of cultivating