TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor Opening Prayer by: David Smith
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#742 When Upon Life's Billows
#753 Farther Along

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#381 Years I Spent in Vanity

Communion Devotional by: Gus Tristan
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#712 Jesus Is Coming Soon
Sermon: "Faith Rejoices"
James 1:1-11

#911 Bring Christ Your Broken Life
#470 Victory in Jesus
Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet tonight. Bobby Rader's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m. If you have signed up and not been contacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Feb. 12, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Don't Be Anxious

As we will see in our sermon this morning, one of the great themes of the letter from **James** is dealing with trials we encounter in our lives as Christians. He will discuss that at length in various ways. But it seemed good to me, then, to think about trials from the slightly different perspective of our everyday problems as a sort of companion to the study here in this space. So let's begin by thinking about something we all are familiar with: worry.

Worry is ubiquitous even in the best of times in our world. We worry about getting a job; we worry about losing it. We worry about not having any money; we worry about where it all goes. We worry if we are sick; we worry about getting sick. We worry about things that have already happened, even though it is futile. We worry about things that will inevitably happen, as if we could somehow hold back time through our anxiety. But most of the things we worry about never happen: one study found that fully 85% of the things we stress over never come to pass. Of those things that did, 79% of people found they could handle it or it even taught them a lesson. That means that 97% of what we worry about is fruitless! And yet nearly all of us continue to worry, less content than God intends us to be. How can Jesus bring peace to us?

Let's consider what he has to say in **Luke 12**, beginning with what not to do:

And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." **(Lk 12:16-21)**

This rich farmer was worried about the future, so he sought security by amassing an abundance of possessions, convinced that he could then laugh at the time to come. And there are literally millions of people around the world still trying this method! There is a deceptive feeling of security that comes with controlling significant amounts of the world's goods. Of course, this doesn't work because, for one thing, we cannot live forever; the rich grow old and die just like the poor. But there is another, more insidious problem: sometimes you don't possess things so much as things possess you. They often add to worry rather than removing it! Many people successful in acquiring this world's goods end up longing for a simpler, less stressed life.

Right after that parable, Jesus says to the disciples, *Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on* **(v. 22).** To be clear, life cannot be lived free of all concern. And that is a good thing! It is concern that helps us to be safe on the highway,

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Jo Ella McKewen is in the hospital in Pasadena.

Kellie Bagwell Chavanne, Joe Edd & Cathy Stifflemire's niece, will be having 2 procedures done next week.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, Feb. 13th at 530 p.m..

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Feb. 16th at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be having a Valentines party on Tuesday, Feb 14 at 6:00. Bring your husbands favorite dish or your favorite dish and come for a sweet party and games. Sign up please on sheet on the bulletin board

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

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to save for emergencies and retirement, to look both ways before crossing the street. Jesus is not teaching against concern, but worry; we cannot let our concerns become cares.

Ultimately, we must have our priorities right and learn to trust God. *For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.* **(v. 23)** The point here is not that there is more to life than food and clothing (although that's true); it is that if God can create life—an extraordinary act—surely he can care for it. And he presses that point further: *Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds…Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* **(v. 24, 27).** God provides for the birds and the flowers—surely he will do the same for humanity!

His next argument is that anxiety is futile. *And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?* **(v. 25-26).** Some translations have "measure" or "stature" instead of "span of life" because the Greek word can be translated multiple ways, but in either case, the point is the same: worry cannot make you an inch taller or add a single hour to your life.

And so, Jesus reaches the climax of his argument: *And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.* **(v. 29-30)** Christians do not need to worry, because they have a Father in heaven who will provide. In fact, worry is inherent to the nations—that is, the Gentiles, the sinners, the lost! It should not describe God's people.

But how do we live that out? Well, for one thing, let's live life one day at a time. In the parallel in **Matt 6:34**, Jesus says, *Do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient to the day is its own trouble.* We already mentioned that, statistically, most worries never even happen. Another part of living one day at a time is doing our best in the moment, and do what God has called us to do for the day.

Secondly, we can adjust our attitude toward our circumstances. In the midst of anxiety, Jesus talks about blessings from God! We need to look at our blessings instead of our misfortunes. That was something suggested in our small group by a member a couple of weeks ago when looking at living simply: every morning, think about 2-3 things you are thankful for. We need to train ourselves to see good in the world, not evil.

Finally, above all else, we need to trust God. *Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you* **(v. 31).** Jesus says here is how not to worry: make God's kingdom first in your life. As long as our main concern is material—our bodies, food, clothing, houses, possessions—we are in an inherently precarious position. There is no other way than anxiety and worry in our impermanent world! But when we make God and his kingdom central in life, worry and anxiety begin to fade away. May God help us all to do that.

Bryant Perkins