

OpenTheo

Worry (Part 2)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discourse, Steve Gregg emphasizes the futility and harm of worrying. He draws from passages in the Bible and argues that worrying is adopting heathen behavior and an inappropriate response for those who trust in God. Moreover, he suggests that seeking God's will and kingdom should be the focus of one's mind, and not worrying about tomorrow, which belongs to God. Gregg highlights that worrying ruins the quality of life and that casting care on God is the way to true faith.

Transcript

And if you're of more value than they, that is, you're more valuable to God than they are, well then, if God provides for them, don't you think he'll provide for you, dummy? That's what Jesus is saying. He has a similar argument there in verses 28 through 30 where he says, so why worry about clothing? Now, you know, in verse 25 he said, don't worry about food or clothing. And he gives two illustrations concerning food, the birds.

The birds eat. They don't do what do to provide for our future eating. They don't store in barns against the future, but God takes care of them anyway, so don't worry about food.

God feeds the birds, he'll feed you. Likewise, clothing is the other example. What about clothing? Why do you worry about clothing? He says, consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They certainly grow without worrying. They neither toil nor spin, the things we usually do to provide clothing. Spinning yarn or cloth so that we can have clothing, the lilies aren't able to do such a thing as that.

Yet, he says, I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed or clothed like one of these. He's showing Jesus' preference over God's artistry than man's, I guess. Jesus felt like the flowers out in the fields are incomparably superior in beauty to the finest clothing that the highest, wealthiest king on earth could ever buy.

But the point he's making is, you who are worried about clothing, would you be satisfied if you knew that you could be clothed like Solomon every day of your life? If you knew for

certain that you could be clothed like Solomon was clothed every day of your life, you wouldn't be inclined to worry about clothing. Yet, the lilies that never spend an ounce of energy worrying, they're clothed better than that because that pleases God. They do what God made them to do.

He made them to be beautiful and therefore he clothed them beautifully. Now you might say, but what if God didn't make me to be beautiful? Maybe he won't clothe me beautifully. Maybe not.

But if he didn't make you to be beautiful, what do you want to be beautiful for? If he wants you to wear rags, what is that to you? Why would you want to wear Calvin Klein? Again, resignation to the will of God is the, I might say again, I don't know if I've made this point quite this distinctly before, but this is the fundamental thing. Resignation to God's will is what makes faith possible. If I'm not resigned to God's will, then I can't really stop worrying, even if I trust God.

Because I can trust God to do what he wants, I can't always trust him to do what I want. He will do what he wants. As long as I'm resigned to his will, because I believe that whatever he wants is really what's best for me, then I don't have to worry.

But if I'm not so sure that what God wants is what's really best for me, then I can't trust that he'll give me what's best for me or what I really want, and therefore I have to worry. I mean there's no grounds not to worry. The only reason you cannot worry is if you are fully resigned to God, and you would be fully resigned to God only if you're fully confident in God.

That is faith. If you have total faith that God is on your side and that whatever he wants you to have is good for you and he will give you. The lilies of the field, he wants them to be beautiful, he makes them beautiful.

If he wants you to be beautifully clad, he'll clothe you beautifully also. Jesus says in verse 30, now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, which only suggests that it doesn't last long, it's not of lasting value like you are, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Here Jesus really hits at the crux of things. The reason worry is bad is because it is little faith, or it's little positive faith, it's some negative faith, and that's bad.

Faith and worry are not compatible with each other. Now what is the argument from verse 26 and then these other verses 28 through 30? The argument is this, this is what I call his second argument. You may have gotten more than two already, but this is what I identify as his second argument in the passage.

God takes care of the lesser creation, therefore you can count on him taking care of the greater creation, humans, you. This again is an argument like the previous one, from

greater to lesser, but a little different. The first argument was, if God has given you already what is greater, will he not give you also what is lesser? The second argument is, if God takes care of the lesser, will he not also take care of the greater, you? I guess it's sort of the opposite, it's the argument from lesser to greater in the second case and from greater to lesser in the first, but the argument has some points of similarity, although it is a different point.

In other words, there's two ways you can encourage yourself not to worry when you're prone to worry. One is, has not God already given me far more than I'm hoping he'll give me in the future? That is, of the thing that I know I'm going to need in the future, hasn't God given me as much so far as in the past, and much more yet in giving me a life and a body, or even more than that, in giving me eternal life? Because Paul says, if you look at Romans chapter 8, sorry we're digressing back to the first point again on this point, maybe it's not Romans 8, oh yes it is, Romans 8, 32. Paul says, he who did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? This is the same argument Jesus is making, from the greater to the lesser.

If he's given us the greatest, how can he not give us the lesser too? And this goes beyond giving us a body and life, it gives us his son too. And if you have any temptation to worry about God giving you enough to pay your bills or to feed your stomach, first thing to ask is, if God gave his son and God gave me life and a body, and has given me all things necessary for life and godliness up to this point, can I really believe for a moment that it's going to be, he's going to be so stingy as to withhold from me the things I need to live in the future? I can think of one thing that would seem to drain this argument of force, and that is if you got yourself in debt, and you don't have a clean conscience about the way you acquired the debt. If you feel like you've lived luxuriously, you've lived beyond your standard of living, you've kind of gone beyond what God wanted you to do, and now you're faced with a big debt, and you're going to be paying it off for years, and you wonder, you know, how's this going to get paid off, you know, and you don't have a clear conscience, it's hard to trust God to help you out of a bad situation if you don't have a good conscience about how you got into it.

But consider this, God's still on your side even when you've done wrong. He may in fact allow you to live with the financial burden that you brought on yourself, but that is not because he's abandoned you, that's because he wants to teach you not to do it again. That's the chastening of the Lord.

And you should embrace the chastening of the Lord as much as any other thing from his hand, because that too is for your good. And so there's again no need to worry. You might say, but what if I, what if I get sued? What if my house is taken from me because of non-payment of the bills? What if I have to file bankruptcy? Say, even if you brought it on yourself, the consequences are in God's hands.

If you're trusting God now, it doesn't matter what you did before, God will, consequences are in his hands. If in fact you are run bankrupt, if you are sued, if you go to jail or whatever, accept it. God has a purpose in it.

If you can't believe that, you're going to have trouble being a Christian according to the Sermon on the Mount teaching. You're going to have trouble living without worry. So, first argument is God has given you what is so immeasurably greater than the things you need now or in the future that you can certainly count on him to give you the lesser.

Secondly, he provides all things necessary for the lesser creation. Certainly he'll provide it for you, dummy. You're of greater value than they are.

You of little faith. His third argument is in verse 27, which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? Now, cubit to stature literally means you know, a measurement of distance to your physical height. A cubit was 18 inches, stature refers to how tall you are.

There are many who believe that Jesus' statement is not to be understood quite in that way. But should be understood more like, which of you by worrying can add any time to his life span? In favor of that argument or that reading, we could say, first of all, the lifespan of time of one's life is sometimes in the Bible figuratively spoken of as if it were a measurement of distance. Somewhere in the Psalms, the psalmist says, I think it's in Psalm 90, if I'm not mistaken.

He says something like, all of our days are like a handbreadth. I think that's in Psalm 90 or something like that, or like the span of the hand. The idea being that the length of our life is comparable to a short distance, like the length of the span of a hand, which is a measurement of length.

And so very possibly, Jesus may be speaking figuratively, not so much of measure of height as a measure of length of days. In favor of this, very few people worry about their height. There may be a few people in this room who do from time to time, but not very many.

It's not a typical thing people worry about. And if they do worry about their height, most of them are not looking for 18 more inches. Some would be satisfied with six more, but a cubit is a bit large, you know.

And what Jesus seems to be saying, maybe a few could use a cubit, but what Jesus seems to be saying is, he's trying to argue for a small thing. You know, by worrying, you're not even going to be able to affect a small change. And yet, if he's literally saying, which of you by worrying could add 18 inches to his height, that'd be an incredibly large change for almost anybody.

Even a very short person would be a tall person if you add 18 inches, and a person of

average height would be a giant with 18 more inches added. And therefore, what Jesus is saying, he has argued, is probably more something along the lines of, which of you by worrying can add even a short measurement to the days of your life? Well, it hardly matters which way you take it. The point he's making is, which of you by worrying can make a difference? You're not going to lengthen your life, or lengthen the measurement of your body, or you're not going to change anything by worrying.

Now, it is true that an intelligent caution and foresight about future dangers can motivate you to do something constructive to avoid a danger. That's what the Bible means, I think, when it says, the wise man foresees the evil and hides himself, but the foolish pass on or punish. There is a sense in which a realistic apprehension of real danger or probable danger can move us to take measures to avoid danger.

I mean, obviously, Jesus is not saying that you should be so unthinking about future possible dangers that you should throw caution to the wind and walk blindfolded across the freeway. Foreseeing the dangers in that course of life would incline you not to do it. And, you know, an appreciation for real risks can be the source of a caution that is simply birthed out of wisdom.

Worry is another matter. Worry is a fretting sort of a thing. It just eats at your spirit.

Most people who are worried are worried because they are not doing anything about it, or because they can't do anything about it. We worry usually about things that we can't change, that nothing we do will change it, or the thing that would change it we're not willing to do. I don't want to go out and hold three jobs to get out of debt.

I could, but I don't want to. You know, I've got, you know, I want more leisure than that. Well, then I'm going to worry about it, because I don't want to do the thing necessary to get out of debt.

Or, in a situation, and there are many as such, there are situations that even if I was willing to, there's nothing I could do to get out of it. People worry about things like whether they're going to get cancer, or AIDS, whether they're going to, you know, whether there's going to be a war with Russia someday, or with Saddam Hussein, or now it's North Korea that's got the atomic bomb, you know. People worry about those kinds of things.

People live in dread of those kinds of things. Are they going to lose one of their children? Are they going to be widowed? Are they going to lose their job? Well, you know what? All of those things are just the kinds of things that you can't do much about. With the possible exception that certain lifestyle changes may lower your risk of getting cancer or AIDS, yet some people get cancer or AIDS without doing any of those things that are the lifestyle risks that are associated with those diseases.

In other words, much of what people worry about are things that they can't change. And Jesus is saying, does worrying about it change it? Does worrying about it improve the situation? It's quite obvious there are things in life that you can't change. You can't change the length of your life that God has ordained for you, except, of course, by living sensibly, you can avoid a premature death.

But whatever the maximum length of years God has appointed for you, you're not going to lengthen it by worrying about it, nor your height, or any other unchangeable thing. What Jesus is saying is worrying is fruitless. It's a waste of energy.

In fact, it's worse than fruitless. It's productive of negative fruit. It, for one thing, can shorten your life, as we now know.

Medical people know now that worry, like anger and a number of other negative emotions, can actually shorten your life. It can put stress and strain on your body. All kinds of physical ailments are now associated with stress these days.

And what is stress? What is it? It's the product of worry. What people call stress today is what used to just be referred to as pressure, the pressures of life. I've got too many responsibilities.

I've got too many things pressing in. Too many people asking me to do too many things at once. I'm all stressed out.

Too many bills to pay. What is that but just saying, I'm under pressure? I'm under a lot of pressure. But pressure isn't always bad.

In fact, the word pressure, or the word tribulation in the Greek word, tribulation means pressure. The Bible says, count it all joy when you fall into tribulation, pressure. We call it stress when a person isn't coping well with the pressure.

There are pressures in life, there are tribulations in life, and there's no avoiding that. Some can be avoided just by not doing dumb things. But even when you do wise things, there are pressures that are unavoidable.

There is tribulation that you've been appointed to, and you're not going to change it by worrying about it. What you are going to change is you're going to transform pressure into stress. Instead of saying about these pressures, hey, I'm really burdened.

I guess I need a lot of supernatural help from God now. If God has allowed all these pressures in my life, I can expect that he's going to give me some really supernatural aid in this situation, because that's the only way that it's going to really work out for me, and I know he wants it to. But when I add worry to my pressure, then I have what you call stress.

And we know that stress can kill a person. Stress can cause all kinds of problems. I mean, some obvious ones, like ulcers, has been known for a long time, but there's all kinds of strange things.

Hives and boils and skin conditions and all kinds of weird stuff is now associated with stress. In other words, although Jesus doesn't take it this far, we can. Jesus says, by worrying, you're not going to change the thing you're worried about.

Worrying is not going to prevent the unavoidable from taking place. Worrying might, in fact, increase the risks of the unavoidable happening sooner. Worrying can even bring on you problems that you didn't think to worry about.

Worrying is just bad stuff. It's morally bad. It's physically bad.

And the worst of it is, it's no good. It's not as if it's got some risks, but it could possibly do some good. It just has risks.

It has no benefits. In fact, here's the most galling thing of it all. The thing you worry about is either going to happen or not happen.

Let's take, let's say, the danger of a nuclear war with North Korea and allies, or the danger of getting AIDS from a blood transfusion, or getting cancer from pollution in the environment, or something like that. That could happen to you, and maybe it won't. God knows whether it will or not.

You don't. But you know what? If you worry about it, it won't change it. If you worry about it, if it's going to happen, it's still going to happen, even though you worry.

In which case, it didn't help to worry. And if it's not going to happen and you worry about it, then you're worrying for nothing. Now, here's the thing that such, the irony and the ultimate, you know, sting in this deal, of worry.

If it's not going to happen and you worry about it, you worried for nothing. You ruined your quality of life beforehand, because you worried needlessly. And worry is one of the things that really ruins your quality of life, not only your health, but your enjoyment of life.

You can't be happy. You can't be enjoying life in the way God wants you to. You can't be trusting God and enjoying God at the time that you're worrying and fretting about things.

And therefore, you have ruined your quality of life needlessly. You've allowed worry to be a part of your consciousness, even though the thing you worried about never happened. Therefore, it was entirely needless.

But the other possibility, of course, is that the thing you worry about does happen. But by worrying about it, you didn't prevent it. And worst of all, you've suffered twice the

same thing.

Because if you're going to die of cancer, or if you're going to be mugged or raped, or if the things you worry about are going to happen, you will suffer when they happen. But if you're going to worry about it, you're going to suffer about it before they happen too. You're going to suffer twice, or as many times as you worry about it.

There is suffering in your future. I don't know what kind, and you don't know what kind. God does.

There is no suffering in your future that God doesn't intend to help you through, and cause you to be more than a conqueror in the midst of it. But for one thing, He doesn't give you the grace for it now. He'll give you the grace for it then.

Therefore, what's the good of borrowing tomorrow's troubles, which you don't have the grace for, when in fact, if they don't happen, you've wasted your worried energy, and ruined your life, at least partially. Or if they are going to happen, you've only borrowed the pain early, and endured the suffering when you didn't have the grace for it, and you've suffered twice. Why not just suffer once? If you've got to suffer, why not just suffer as little as possible? By worrying, you increase your suffering.

In fact, you invite suffering, because you may suffer for it, and it never happens. So you've suffered needlessly. That is the nature of worry, and that's what Jesus is getting at in verse 27.

Namely, that worrying doesn't improve the chances of avoiding problems. Worrying doesn't change the circumstance. What is going to inevitably happen to you, is not going to be by worrying about it.

Therefore, why bother with worry? Okay, his fourth argument is found in verse 31. Therefore, and 32, do not worry, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For after these things, the Gentiles seek. Now, by saying, after these things, the Gentiles seek, he's saying, they have to worry about this kind of stuff.

Do you know why? Because they don't know God. They worship idols. Their idols can't help them.

It is right for them to worry, and they've got a lot to worry about. In fact, they've got more to worry about than they know. Because to the extent that they put any trust in their idols, they're going to be disappointed.

They may alleviate a certain amount of their worries by trusting in their idol to help them. But that is a false hope, a false confidence, and they've got much to worry about, and especially they've got hell to worry about in the future. You don't have anything to worry about.

It is appropriate for the heathen, but it's not appropriate for you. What he's saying is that when you worry, you are mimicking the heathen. It's right for them to worry.

It's not right for you to worry. You're adopting a heathen behavior, and it is a behavior that is appropriate for people who don't know or believe in God, or have God on their side. But it's not appropriate for those in the opposite condition, those who know, trust in God, and know that he's on their side.

It simply isn't appropriate. It's appropriate for the unbeliever. It's not appropriate for the believer.

That's his fourth argument. His fifth argument is also in verse 32. He says, For your father knows that you have need of all these things.

That line alone should abandon all worry. When we are worried, even though we are not atheists, we are momentarily usually forgetting that God is in touch with us. God knows what's going on.

He knows intimately what's going on. Jesus said elsewhere in Matthew chapter 10 that the hairs of your head are numbered. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground, but God pays attention to that.

He knows it. Now, if you're worth more than sparrows, you're not going to fall to the ground without God noticing it. In fact, not only are not you going to fall to the ground, not even one of your hairs is going to fall to the ground, and you lose several of those a day in all likelihood.

And therefore, if your hairs are numbered, God not only knows how many he gave you in the first place, he's keeping a running inventory. He's aware of your present circumstances. And even the circumstances that we would have to argue are not very important circumstances.

The number of hairs on your head are not very important. That's one of the least important things in your life. Your debts, the threats on your life, your needs for survival and for your children and so forth, these are far greater concerns than things like the hairs on your head.

And if Jesus said that God is aware even of the number of hairs on your head, he certainly is aware of how much money you owe, what days your bills come due, and so forth. Your Father knows you have needed these things. I think I told you back when we were talking about relationships, that back when I was raising a daughter without a wife, when I was a single dad, I was painfully aware that my daughter was lacking something in her upbringing.

She didn't have a female role model, and I felt like it was to the disadvantage of a little

girl to grow up without a mother. Besides which, I felt a need for a wife too. It was hard for me raising a child and in full-time ministry and so forth, and I felt the need for a helper, as even Adam needed.

I felt like most men do need. The Bible does say God has not given all men this need, but most do have such a need. And it was in my mind a need, but it was a need that God had not yet provided.

And I was complaining to God about this on one occasion, and this verse came to mind, this line. I would have to say, I feel that the Holy Spirit spoke it to me. He said, Your Father knows that you have these things.

And it took no more than that to banish all concern and anxiety about this subject, unless I have the wrong view of the Father. If I feel like the Father is one who takes delight in seeing me languish with unfulfilled needs, then of course it's no comfort to me to know that He's aware. Maybe He's a masochistic sort of a Father.

But if I know Him to be the Father that Jesus describes, and by the way I do, then only to be reminded that my situation has not gone unnoticed. And the one who has taken close notice and paid close attention to every detail of my concerns is God, my Father. And He knows.

Therefore what am I worried about? Nothing. And I do not worry when I remember such things. In other words, this is the fifth argument.

God knows your needs, enough said. Okay? But even though that's enough said, there's more that He says. In verse 33, He said, But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Now, all these things, of course, refers to the things He's been talking about. Food, clothing, necessary things. The things people worry about.

He said they will be added to you in the process, in the course of your seeking the kingdom of God. In other words, He didn't say, Seek first the kingdom of God and then seek these other things. The seeking of them separately will be unnecessary.

You just seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness and the others will come in trail, in the train of those things. Now, this agrees, of course, with the earlier segment we studied yesterday, where He said just lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven. Certainly seeking first the kingdom of God is part of what it means to lay up treasures in heaven.

Don't lay up your treasures on earth. Lay up your treasures in heaven. He said in verses 19 and 20.

Similarly, Jesus says, Just seek to have the kingdom as your treasures. Seek to have treasures in heaven. Righteousness, God's kingdom, these are the only things you should be pursuing.

You pursue those and the other things will be added to you without your bothering to pursue them separately. Now, you might say, Well, does that mean I should just stay home and pray and read my Bible and expect checks to come in the mail? No, because seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness doesn't just mean praying and reading your Bible. Seeking the kingdom of God means seeking to be submitted to Him as your King.

That means doing whatever He calls you to do. If He calls you to work at McDonald's, then for you to seek the kingdom of God is to obey that call, to seek to be in His will, to seek to do whatever the King says for you to do and to be righteous in His sight by your performing of His calling in your life. If working at McDonald's is what your calling is, know what you'll find out? A paycheck will be added to you.

But you're not working at McDonald's to seek a paycheck. You're working at McDonald's to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. If you work as a mechanic or a plumber or an engineer or a computer programmer in some employment, you will receive a paycheck.

But you won't receive a paycheck because you're seeking a paycheck. Well, let me put it this way. It shouldn't be that way.

You shouldn't even be there unless that's what you think God has called you to do. And if you think God has called you to be there, then you're there because of that. You're there in obedience to God's call.

You're seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And you get a paycheck in the process. Now, if seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness means going to, you know, some country as a then you'll find these things are added to you in other ways.

God will add those things to you as necessary. Not through a paycheck, since you're not receiving a paycheck, but through other means. But for God, it's no different to be able to provide through a paycheck or through some other means.

It may seem that some are called to trust God and others are called to trust their employer, but that's not true. Even those who get their paycheck regularly and predictably from an employer still are doing so, not because they're seeking a paycheck, but they're seeking the king of God. Two men working on the same assembly line, one a Christian and one a non-Christian, both get the same paycheck, but they're not there for the same reason.

The non-Christian is there just to get a paycheck. The Christian would be there even if

there was no paycheck, if that's what God told him to do. If that's where God wants him to be, he'd work there for free.

And he would not work there even for a paycheck if he knew God didn't want him there. He is there as an ambassador of the kingdom of God. He's not there just as a guy trying to eke out a living.

You do what God wants you to do, and whether that's in profitable employment or in full-time ministry where no obvious visible means of support is present, you do what God wants you to do, everything necessary will be added to you in the process, either as a natural result of the way you spend your time serving God at employment or as a less obvious natural result, getting checks in the mail or whatever it is. Now the point here, of course, this is his sixth argument against worry, that worrying is superfluous if you are seeking the right thing. There is no virtue simply in not worrying if you're not also seeking the kingdom of God.

That is, if you've got other goals and other priorities in your life than the kingdom of God, if you've got the same worldly priorities other people do, but you just don't have to be the worrying kind, let's just say you're a positive thinker, you're just an eternal optimist, and even though you don't know God and don't care about God or don't pursue the things of God, you still don't worry just because you're smart enough to know that doesn't help anything, and there are some people who just don't worry. My father-in-law has never been a worrier even though he wasn't a Christian most of his life. He is a Christian now and he doesn't worry, but he didn't worry when he wasn't a Christian either.

He just never saw any sense in it. He was one of those guys who just had faith in optimism, you know, he just thought, have faith in faith. Just be a person of faith, even if it's not God you have your faith in, just be happy, just be optimistic, and while I don't see any value in that, except that you avoid ulcers, you know, but it's not a virtue to be unworried if you are not also seeking the kingdom of God.

The reason that you don't worry as a Christian is because you don't need to, because you're seeking the kingdom of God and there is a guarantee from God that if you just pursue his will in your life, whether it appears to have obvious profit in it in the future or none, there will be such profit in it as God desires for you to possess. Once again, being resigned to the will of God is the key here. Are you content to be a pauper if God so wills it? Are you content to be comfortable if God so wills it? Are you content to stay in this country and work, you know, in a job? Or are you content if you go on a mission field and have no job? Are you just content to know that the will of God is what you're doing? If that is your state of mind, you can be without worry because you know that as you seek God's will in his kingdom, nothing else is necessary to be sought.

His, the doing of his will will produce the things that you are inclined to worry about, and

therefore you don't need to worry about them. Then there's one other argument Jesus gives against worry in verse 34. He says, therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

Sufficient for the day is the trouble of itself or of its own trouble. What he's saying here is there is a certain allotment of trouble, and that's what we usually worry about is future trouble. There is a certain allotment of trouble that will happen every day.

It is in the sovereignty of God to bring it into your life. Some troubles are unnecessary, of course, because you bring them on by stupid or sinful behavior. You can avoid those, but even if you're doing the will of God every moment of every day, there will be some troubles.

It's in the will of God for you. It's part of your growth. It's part of your training.

It's part of your testing of your faith, and therefore you will have trouble today of some sort. You will have some trouble tomorrow and the next day and every day. Now there may be some days that are relatively trouble-free, and Jesus isn't denying that, but he's saying that there is a given allotment of trouble for the present.

There is another given allotment of trouble for the future. The amount you have right now is enough for you to concern yourself with at the moment. The trouble of the future, for one thing, it's not appropriate for you to take it on yourself now.

I said earlier you don't have the grace for it. God gives you the grace for today's troubles, but he doesn't give you the grace for tomorrow's troubles until tomorrow, then he gives you the grace for those troubles. But he never gives you the grace for future troubles, because he doesn't want you to borrow them in the future.

You're getting greedy when you start borrowing tomorrow's troubles to worry about too. Jesus is indicating that all your energies should be expended toward the current responsibilities that you have. There will be new responsibilities, perhaps even more challenging ones in the future, or maybe less challenging, only God knows.

But when those come will be the time for you to exert your energies in concern about them. Not today. Tomorrow is God.

It says in Deuteronomy 29.29, the secret things are the Lord's, but the things he has revealed are for us and for our children. Deuteronomy 29.29, the secret things are the Lord's. The things that God has revealed are for us, but the things he hasn't revealed are for him.

The future is what he hasn't revealed. How much trouble will I have tomorrow? I can anticipate some, but it may not turn out the way I think. I might have worse than I anticipate.

I might have less than I anticipate. Only God really knows what my troubles will be tomorrow. Therefore, tomorrow's troubles are in the category of the secret things.

Secret to me. God hasn't revealed to me what it is. Therefore, it's not in the category of things that are mine.

It's in the category of things that are God's. Tomorrow is his, not mine. For me to borrow the secret things, or steal them, because he hasn't offered them to me, he doesn't say here I'll lend them to you.

He says don't take them. They're mine. For me to worry about tomorrow's problems is to steal from God what is his alone to be concerned about.

Let him worry. There's a couple other passages I'd like to close with on this, and they're from other parts of the Bible where obviously other biblical writers are expanding on what Jesus said on this subject. One of them is in Philippians, where Paul is obviously the writer.

In Philippians chapter 4, verse 6 and 7. Philippians 4, verses 6 and 7. It says be anxious for nothing. Now anxious is actually worried. Actually, you know what? This Greek word in this verse, be anxious for nothing, the word anxious is the same Greek word that's found in Matthew 6 where he said don't worry.

The word worry in Matthew 6 is the same Greek word as anxious here. So obviously it's the same subject. So I guess we could read it, be worried about nothing.

Don't worry about a thing. But what do you do instead of worrying? It's not just you sit there not worrying. You're supposed to do something positively instead of worrying.

What do you do instead of worrying? In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. In other words, instead of worrying, pray. We often worry because we haven't prayed.

Shame on us. If there's some burden or concern, we should pray first. If you worry after you've prayed, shame on you.

Why did you pray in the first place if you're going to still worry about it? You're supposed to be unloading this on God. That's what prayer is. You're burdened by something.

The burden is to press you down to your knees until you pray it, gone. In everything, by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known to God. What will be the result? Well, for one thing, you won't worry, but the result is stated in more positive terms than that in verse 7. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Sounds good to me. The peace of God, tranquility, calm, confidence in God. This is the

opposite of worry and fretting and stress and nervousness.

You will have the peace of God. It's a guarantee of God. Your heart, your mind will remain untroubled if you do what he says, namely, don't worry, just pray.

But of course, it's understood if you pray, you're supposed to pray in faith. Prayers without faith are useless. Therefore, it goes without saying that it is faith in God, giving God the burden, praying about it, unloading it on him, and believing that he's taken it, you'll walk away with peace, not with worry.

Let me read one other passage. This is in 1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 7. Casting all your care, once again, this is the Greek word for worry, your worries, casting all your care upon him for he cares for you. This could be rendered, casting all your worries on him because he worries for you.

If he's worrying for you, you don't have to worry. Kenneth Hagin, a man whose theology I don't agree with in most areas, nonetheless, sometimes has some very positive and good things to say about faith. While I disagree with his word of faith position, I have to say that in my youth, I read his books quite a bit and was very much encouraged in faith.

And I don't want to say the man has nothing to contribute, I just think he's a heretic. But I do believe that I must credit him, reading many of his things did in my early life teach me lessons of faith. The trouble is he doesn't teach all, not everything he teaches about faith is true.

But one true thing he did illustrate, he told a story and he tells it frequently in his books, of during World War II, when the Nazis were bombing England and London, there was this Christian lady whose town was evacuated because of the bombings and everyone went to the to the bomb shelters for safety. And when they were in the bomb shelters, some of her neighbors said, well, where is this lady? I forget her name. Where is she? I wonder if she was killed.

She's not here among us. I hope she's all right. She must have been hit.

And when the bombing was over, and they all came out of their shelters, went back to their home, there she was rocking on a rocking chair, alive and well on her front porch. And they said, well, where did you go during the bombing? She said, I stayed right here. They said, where did you sleep? She said, I slept in my house.

And they said, well, how could you sleep with all that bombing? Weren't you terrified? And she said, no. She said, I read in my Bible that he that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. And she said, I guess I figure there's no sense both of us losing sleep.

If God's going to stay awake and worry about it, why should I stay awake and worry about it? You can cast all your worries on him because he worries for you. I heard a story

from Jay Adams, probably not true. Not because he lies, but I think it was a joke.

But it's a good one. He said a guy named Jim was known to all his friends to be a worker. He always worried about everything, even if there was very little to worry about.

He was kind of paranoid about everything and worried all the time. And once one of his friends met him on the street and was startled to see that for the first time he'd ever seen him, the guy didn't have wrinkles in his forehead, didn't have a cloud over him. He didn't seem concerned.

In fact, there was a spring in his step, a sparkle in his eye, and a smile on his face, and a song in his tongue. And his friend said, Jim, what happened to you? I can't believe it. You look like a totally different person.

What happened? You don't look worried at all. And Jim said, oh, yeah, yeah, you're right. I did used to worry a lot.

Well, I don't do that anymore. The guy said, well, that's wonderful. What in the world have you done differently? And the guy said, well, it's great.

I just found this other guy. He worries for me. I hired him to worry for me.

Saw the ad in the newspaper and just called him up, and now he worries for me. Anything I have a problem about, bills, you know, threats, worries, contingencies, I just turn them over to him. He does all the worrying for me, and I don't have to worry anymore.

And his friend said, boy, that's a tremendous service. Never heard of that before. Must be real expensive.

What does the guy charge? He said, oh, about \$5,000 a week. And his friend said, well, how in the world are you going to pay that? Jim said, that's his worry. You didn't laugh because you heard it before.

But I always think of that story when I think of this verse. Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you. He does the worrying for you.

What are you worried about? How do you cast your cares on him? By, in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. And then trust God. If you fail in this, then you certainly have a defect in your faith.

And while I don't say that to condemn, neither did Jesus even say it to condemn, but to instruct. There's no sense in you having no faith because you've got a faith in God. And therefore, worry is inappropriate because it demonstrates no faith in God.

In fact, if anything, it demonstrates a negative faith. Almost an assurance that God isn't

going to be there for you. And this is sin.

And therefore, Jesus says, don't do it. All right, well, we're done with that point. And we'll stop there.