

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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TOMORROW

There is a song written by Ira Stanphill in many of the hymnals that we use that speaks about tomorrow. The first verse begins like this: “I don't know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day. I don't borrow from its sunshine, for its skies may turn to gray. I don't worry o'er the future, For I know what Jesus said, and today I'll walk beside Him, For He knows what is ahead.”

How much time do you spend thinking about tomorrow? Planning is not a bad thing; in fact, I believe that planning is important. That is another topic for another day though. The

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problem is not planning; it is spending so much time worrying about things that might or might not happen--worrying about what lies ahead during the week. In the closing part of the sixth chapter of Matthew, Jesus speaks to us about this very thing.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Mat. 6:25-34)

Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow shall take care of itself. What powerful words. In a previous article I mentioned that we spend 98 percent of our time away from church services. I would venture to guess that some of that time is spent worrying about various things, mostly related to things to come, not present things. Paul in his letter to the Philippians describes how God helps us cope with being anxious.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Php. 4:6-7)

The peace of God helps us to deal with worry. We know that God will take care of us if we let him. We should go to him with our problems and should allow him to take our burdens.

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Pet. 5:7)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Mat. 11:28-30)

What problems can worry or anxiety cause? It can raise blood pressure or stress levels causing health issues. It can cause strife between people, especially if you are worrying about something that is not really a problem. It can be a deterrent to you being able to be successful if you are so worried about the negative consequences that you ignore the positive ones. The biggest thing is spending so much time worrying about tomorrow that you forget to serve God today. Saying things such as “I just don’t have time to read my Bible today, I’ll do it tomorrow” is a dangerous way to live. We are not promised tomorrow, so it is important that we do all that we can today to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass,

which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Luke 12:25-31)

When worrying about how you should speak or act in certain important situations that are forthcoming, do you include God? Do you ask for the peace of God or for God to guide you? An example that Jesus gave of this in Luke is helpful to think of:

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. (Luke 12:11-12)

We continuously should be striving to live in a Godly manner, as a light to those around us. It is impossible to do this if we spend so much time worrying about tomorrow that we cannot act in a way that shows our light.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Mat. 5:14-16)

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We must live in a way that our light shines for the world to see. We must be happy and joyous so that our light can shine through the darkness. We must live with a positive attitude, even when things seem bad, and times are tough. By keeping a good attitude, we are allowing our light to shine. No one likes being around people who are always negative, and if you go into your day with that kind of attitude it will be difficult to live in a Godly way. If you go into your day worrying about what is coming tomorrow, your light will not shine through.

Worrying about tomorrow causes us to lose sight of the big picture. It causes us to not live in a way that God would have us to live. He sent Jesus to die on the cross so that we would have hope of a life beyond this one. A hope of a life where there is no pain or heartache and where there is nothing to worry about. We should use that hope to also help us with our lives here, knowing that God is in control, so we don't have to worry about tomorrow. We might not know what is coming tomorrow, but we know that it will be okay because we have God on our side.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other crea-

ture, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:31-39)

The refrain in the song by Stanphill gives us something to think about; “Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand.”

A. D.

LIBERTY

Throughout history, people have suffered under the rule of oppressive powers or governments. Some people have suffered as slaves to harsh owners. The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt and were harshly treated so much that they cried out to God for deliverance (Exo. 2:23). Even in more modern times, people have been oppressed by unjust powers. Before the American Revolution, people felt the oppression under the British rule. Patrick Henry made his famous speech in which he said, “Give me liberty or give me death.” His speech reflects the feelings of many who are oppressed; they strongly desire to be free from their oppression. When people have rebelled against oppressive powers, wars have been fought as they sought liberty. Today we have many freedoms, so we may not appreciate the liberty that we currently have.

And yet, each one of us, as sinners, was a slave to sin. The Apostle Paul described it in Romans 6:16,

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

As sinners, we were slaves to sin. We suffered the consequences of our sins. Sin can be a downward spiral in that one sin leads to another and one act of lawlessness leads to more lawlessness (Rom. 6:19); it eventually leads to death (Rom. 6:21). Before we were Christians, I believe that we all desired

liberty – freedom from the power of sin and freedom from the consequences of our sin.

Through Christ Jesus, we have liberty. Jesus read the following scripture about Himself in Luke 4:18-19,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

We are set free from sin when we obey the gospel.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (Rom. 6:17-18)

Yes, Christians are now slaves to righteousness, but righteousness is not the oppressive master that sin was.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 6:20-23)

Being a slave of God and of righteousness is far superior to being a slave of sin. Now we have a loving master who works for our good and gives us eternal life.

Since Christ has given us liberty, we should feel free and rejoice in our freedom. When a captive bird is set free, it stretches its wings and flies away. When a prisoner is set free, he now can go anywhere he pleases. We live in a free country. That means that we are free to go where we desire and do what we want. But even though we have freedom, there are

still laws and ordinances that we must obey. We cannot destroy someone else's property. We cannot willfully harm another person. We cannot steal from our neighbor. We are free, but even in our freedom there are restrictions. As redeemed disciples of Jesus, when we are set free from sin's control, we should also feel our freedom. But that freedom does not include freedom to sin again. "*As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God*" (1 Pet. 2:16). Our liberty is not to be a covering for evilness. "*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another*" (Gal. 5:13). Our liberty is not an opportunity to fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh. Once we are freed from sin, we cannot again be entangled in the evilness of the world.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. (2 Pet. 2:19-21)

After we have been set free from sin, if we go back under sin, our situation is worse than before. Therefore, our liberty in Christ is not a liberty to sin.

Rejoice in the freedom wherein Christ has set you free. You are now free from sin and its consequences. Instead, you are a slave of righteousness and holiness. Your desire should be to your Father in Heaven who blesses you and gives you eternal life.

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Editor's Note: Search the Scriptures will return next month, Lord willing.