

## Talk on Matthew 6 vs 25-34

### DON'T WORRY: BE HAPPY

#### Introduction

I don't know about you but I love to listen to music as it really lifts my spirit. Do you remember the old song "Don't worry, be happy" by Bobbie McFerrin? He is a musician and songwriter and is famous for this song produced in 1988.

Another happy song I like is the Pharrell Williams song "Happy" from the Despicable Me movie. You may have a favourite hymn that really lifts your spirit too.

Wouldn't it be great if all we needed to do was sing a song and we would be happy? I'm afraid it's not like that as it's a short lived feeling. We know as Christians that our long term happiness comes from a close and personal relationship with God. Therefore, when we are feeling down we should be seeking out God first.

It's so easy to fall into the trap of worrying about everything and trying to resolve any issues we have in our own strength.

#### Context

This morning's message read by Roberta is from Matthew 6 vs 25-34 entitled 'Do not worry'.

I'm going to read the scripture again using the Contemporary English version. I like reading different translations of the Bible as it can help you understand what God is saying.

#### Re –Read Matthew 6 vs 19-34

Matthew, as you know, was a Tax collector before following Jesus. This book was written between AD 50-60 and the main audience would have been Greek speaking Jewish Christians.

This scripture is part of the 'Sermon on the Mount' and Matthew presents Jesus as the Jewish Messiah sent by God to fulfil the Old Testament Prophecy.

In verse 25 Jesus said: I **tell** you not to worry about your life. Note the word tell, it's an instruction from Jesus and yet you and I may at times find it difficult to follow that instruction.

In her book '**Battlefield of the Mind**' **Joyce Meyer** states" *We know that worry and anxiety are not characteristics of a godly Christian. Yet still, many Christians worry. You can choose to worry, or you can reject worry and choose to live with joy and peace. Most people don't want to hear that message, and they seem to find an odd comfort in thinking that worrying is beyond their control. It is not. Worry is a sin against God*".

I never thought that my worrying was a sin against God and by handing over the issue to God we will receive that peace and joy that only He can provide. He will help us overcome all our anxieties and worry, all we have to do is trust Him to provide for our every need.

## **Personal experience**

As a young child I was extremely anxious. I experienced the loss of my younger sister and brother all before the age of 8. At this young age I was putting up all sorts of barriers to protect myself and negativity was one such barrier.

This continued until well into my 20s until a Christian boss gave me a book called "The Power of Positive Thinking" by Rev Dr Norman Vincent Peale. It's a very old book but is still in print today and it tells stories of people whose lives had been transformed by giving their life to Jesus and what pieces of scripture had been a blessing to them. This book had a significant impact on me and made me realise that I could have a better life by changing from being a negative and anxious person to one who, on most occasions, is positive and less anxious. It also made me try to live by the scripture I'm talking about today.

I also started to get more involved with the Church. Yes, I attended church regularly since I was a child but never really got involved or developed in my faith. Through reading the Bible and spending time with Christians I began to develop my faith. I also recognised and firmly believed that God had a plan for me as stated in **(Jeremiah 29 vs 11)** *I will bless you with a future filled with hope – a future of success, not of suffering.*

Isn't it amazing how God just brings people into your life at just the right time when you need it? I don't think my boss ever knew just what an impact her gift of a book was to me, as I left the organisation shortly after that. You may be thinking, as I'm speaking, of people who have impacted your walk in faith and we thank God for those people.

I changed career direction and achieved things that I never in a million years thought possible for that anxious child of 8. All things are possible with God; you just need to trust him. Another piece of scripture I kept repeating was **Philippians 4 vs 13** *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (NIV) or Christ gives me the strength to face anything (Contemporary English Version)*

I take no credit for my achievements, they are all God given and I'm truly grateful for what he has done in my life.

Do I still worry? Yes of course I do, however I quickly hand it back over to God as Jesus' words "I **tell** you not to worry about your life" comes to the front of my mind!

There was a recent Young Persons' survey which appeared in the Guardian and the UK had the lowest happiness levels in Europe with young people saying that they had no sense of purpose in life. That's really sad, however perhaps the past 6

months of Covid 19 has contributed somewhat to the way they were feeling. As Christians we all should have a sense of purpose in life and hopefully this is visible to all who know us.

Throughout the Bible we find that many people in the past have worried about the situation they found themselves in.

In **Matthew 14 vs 22-32** after Jesus feeds the 5,000 the disciples get into a boat and he tells them to go on ahead of him to the other side. He went away to pray and much later Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. The disciples are convinced they are seeing a ghost. Jesus said to them "*Take courage!*" "It is I." "*Don't be afraid.*" Peter wants to walk towards him and Jesus tells him to do so. He was doing alright until he saw the wind and he became afraid and begins to sink into the water. Peter shouts "*Lord, save me!*" Jesus caught Peter and said "*You of little faith*". "*Why did you doubt?*"

So even though the disciples were with Jesus they still worried but in scripture we can see that Jesus lived it out. He spent time alone and in prayer when things laid heavily on His mind.

You and I may have many things to worry about regarding our health, employment, children, parents etc. but what Jesus is telling us is not to. If these things are concerning you then turn to the one who can help you: God. Spend time sharing your concerns with Him.

Going back to today's scripture in **vs 25** it goes on to say "Don't worry about having something to eat, drink or wear", **vs 26** "Look at the birds in the sky" here's a short clip of birds enjoying a bath in my garden. (show clip) This has been a source of joy to me and the friends who have visited me during lockdown. When you spend time outdoors you start to see the pure beauty and joy of nature.

**In vs 27** Jesus asks the question – "*Can worry make you live longer?*" Some medical experts have said that worrying can indeed cause you both physical and mental health problems.

So the more you practice not worrying and turning it over to God it should help keep you healthy both in mind and body.

**In vs 30** It says that God takes care of the birds, flowers, fields etc. then it says God will surely do even more for you! We can be confident about that promise. He then asks "*Why do you have such little faith?*" Do we lack the confidence, like Peter on the water, to trust and obey God?

**In vs 32** it says "*only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things*" I have read and quoted this scripture for many years now and when reading the Contemporary English version this verse really stood out to me. I do know God and yet I can still worry! I've had to ask myself if this is lack of trust or disobedience to God?

The rest of the verse says *“Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these. It then goes on to say “But more than anything else, put God’s work first and do what he wants. Then other things will be yours as well”.*

How often do we say we don’t have time to spend with God or do His work? I know I can sometimes do that, however, what I have found is if I do dedicate time to sit quietly with God, praying, listening and reading my bible in the morning, my day seems to go so much better. Another piece of scripture that helps me is **Philippians 4 vs 13** *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”*. I have to keep repeating this to myself when asked to do something that takes me out of my comfort zone. Remember God will equip you at the right time for the right thing!

Jesus took time away from the busyness of his life to spend time with his Father and we should endeavour to follow his example.

Our goal should be to refuse to worry about anything and to draw near to God by spending time each day with Him. In **Philippians 4 vs 6-7** it says *“Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Jesus Christ, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel”*.

*Amen*

## **Prayer**

We thank you Lord that we can come to you freely and willingly. We thank you that we can cast all our anxieties and worry onto you. This is what you tell us to do so help us to be obedient and to trust you with all our needs. Help us to serve you with a willing heart. In return you will give us the peace and joy we all desire.

Amen.