

August 11, 2013

DON'T WORRY – YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD

by Pastor Clarissa Martinelli
(portions adapted)

Luke 12: 32 *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

For several years a woman had been having trouble getting to sleep at night because she feared burglars. One night her husband heard a noise in the house, so he went downstairs to investigate. When he got there, he did find a burglar. "Good evening," said the man of the house. "I am pleased to see you. Come upstairs and meet my wife. She has been waiting 10 years to meet you."

Many of us act as this woman did. We spend so much time being anxious that we seem almost eager for bad things to happen. But when we worry, our faith is diminished. Solomon must have been speaking of the uselessness of worry when he wrote, *Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved. (Psalm 127:1-2).*

People tend to worry! When something occurs in our lives that we cannot control, we worry. When something appears on the horizon of our lives that looks bad, even though it may or may not happen, we worry. We worry about big things, and we worry about little things. The point is, we worry!

There was a man who raised chickens and among them was a rooster that occasionally crowed and greatly annoyed the next-door neighbor. Early one morning, disturbed and angry, the neighbor called the owner of the flock and made this complaint, "That miserable bird of yours keeps me up all night!" "I don't understand," was the reply of the owner. "He hardly ever crows; but if he does, it's never more than two or three times in a whole day." The man quickly retorted, "That isn't my problem. It's not how OFTEN he does it that irritated me! It's not knowing when he MIGHT that keeps me awake!"

Luke 12:31 says, *“Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”* In this verse Jesus tells us that we do not need to be eaten up with worries and fears. We are children of God, and God will see to the needs that arise

in our lives. Jesus pointed out God's gracious provision for the birds of the air, and reminds us that we are of more value than the birds. Then, He says, can *any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?* We are more precious than the flowers that neither toils nor spins but are clothed by God. Church of a Living God, the secret to having all our needs met is to live for the Lord! If we will only love God, we can rest free from the worries of life. God will see to the need of His children!

Jesus concludes His words of encouragement with **verse 32**. *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

In this little verse, Jesus speaks some much-needed words of peace to a people who are prone to worry. He opens this verse with a command. Notice that He tells us to "fear not". This is a command for us not to live in a state of continual worry. It is the same word from which we get our word "phobia". We should not allow ourselves to live in a worried state concerning the affairs of life.

In verse 32, Jesus gives us words of encouragement as we face the trials that will come in life.

I. HE SPEAKS TO US AS HIS FLOCK

A. By using this term, Jesus pictures the people of God as sheep and Himself as our Shepherd.

B. Like sheep, the people of God sometimes do not possess a good sense of direction, and we are defenseless against the enemies of blood and flesh, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Like sheep, we must have a Shepherd to provide for us and to lead us along. Jesus asks to be our Shepherd and in him God himself has come to shepherd his people.

C. One of the most precious passages in the Bible is the **23rd Psalm**. In that great passage, we are told about how Jesus, the Good Shepherd, cares for His flock. Let's rekindle the fire of our hearts, mind and soul with these blessed truths.

1. V. 1 We see that the Lord is the Shepherd.

2. V. 1 He takes care of every need!

3. V. 2 He allows His sheep to find rest and contentment.

4. V. 2 He allows His sheep to be refreshed.

5. V. 3 By the things Jesus provides the precious sheep are restored and are healthy. He sees that they have all they need in their lives. They are cared for completely!

6. V. 3 He gives His sheep perfect leadership.

7. V. 4 His sheep have no fear, for their Shepherd is ever with them as they journey.

8. V. 4 With His rod and staff He fights off our enemies, and He helps us when we

stray.

9. V. 5 Again, we are reminded that our Shepherd provides all His sheep need!

10. V. 5 Our Shepherd binds up His wounded and cares for them graciously.

11. V. 5 He gives His sheep more than they could ever wish for.

12. V. 6 His sheep can rest in the knowledge that as long as they journey, the blessings of their Shepherd will follow close behind them!

13. V. 6 His sheep are not just sheep for the pasture of this world. But, like precious pet lambs, they have access to His House at the end of the day!

D. We are His flock! Therefore, we need not fear anything life brings our way. He will care for us when we experience pain and suffering!

II. HE SPEAKS TO US AS HIS FAMILY

A. The use of the word "Father" tells us that we are more than His sheep, we are also His children!

B. It is interesting to note that as God's children we have dozens of names for God. What we need at any given time usually dictated the name that we use to call on God. For instance:

1. If we have a need in our life, we would call on "Jehovah-jireh", **Gen. 22:14**, which means, "The Lord will provide."

2. If we are anxious, we would call God "Jehovah-shalom", **Judges 6:24**, which means "The Lord our peace."

3. If we ever get lonely or afraid, we can call on "Jehovah-shammah", **Eze. 48:35**, which means "The Lord is there."

4. If leadership is needed, "Jehovah-rohi", **Psalms 23:1**, which means "The Lord our Shepherd."

5. When we are sick, call on "Jehovah-rapha", **Exodus 15:26**, which means "The Lord our healer."

There are literally dozens more. When God's children needed to get a hold of God, they referred to Him by these various names. However, for those who are in Jesus, there is a different name that we can use to speak to God. This name was revealed to the Disciples in **Luke 11:1-4** in what is known as "The Lord's Prayer", but is more correctly "The Disciple's Prayer." Here, the disciples, who have witnessed the amazing prayer life of Jesus and who want the same access to God what to know how to pray. I can imagine them waiting to hear which name He would give them to use in their prayers. Imagine their surprise when Jesus spoke the word "Father," which, in this passage, is the Aramaic word "abba", which translates to the English word "daddy."

Jesus is telling yesterday Disciples and 21st Century Disciples that when we pray,

we are to call on God as Father! He is not some far away God Who is removed from our difficulties, but He is an adoring Father Who is more concerned about what His children are facing and the trial and struggles in their lives!

As parents we work and strive to provide for our children's needs. Therefore if we, as human parents, can love our children to the point that we will give them anything, within reason, why should we believe that God would do any less for His children? **Matthew 7:7-11** emphasizes God's promises to us:

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

III. HE SPEAKS TO US AS HIS FAVORITES

A. The last part of **verse 32** tells us that God delights in giving His children the kingdom.

B. However, **verse 31** says - *Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.* That is, when we place the Lord and His concerns ahead of our own, He will see to it that our needs are taken care of. In the simplest of terms, this means that if I want God to meet my needs, then I need to put Him first in my life and attend to the business He has called me to. I am to place His work and will ahead of my work and will. He must come first. When this happens, we have the promise and the assurance that God will meet the needs that arise in each of our lives. Now, here is the blessed truth of **verse 32**. We may wonder how we can seek His kingdom. We may feel that it is a hard thing that the Lord requires.

However, **verse 32** promises us just the opposite! This verse teaches us *“It is our Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”* That is, God places His kingdom within our reach! He doesn't make it a hard thing, but He hands us the kingdom and gives us the opportunity to join Him in His work here below. When we join Him in what He is doing, we are on God's payroll, so we do not have to worry, for our Father will meet every need!

C. God, being a loving Father, places everything we need right at our feet. He makes it easy for His children to serve Him and, as a result, to get their needs met. When this really dawns on us, we will finally realize that we do not have any needs as long as we are where the Father wants us to be. It may appear that needs exist,

but they are mere opportunities for the Father to manifest His love and grace toward His children! It is a medical fact that over 51 diseases can be traced directly to worry! Don't let worry eat you alive! Instead of worry, learn to look around and see what opportunities God is giving you to serve Him. Seek His kingdom, and He will see to your needs.

Hear these words of wisdom from John Milton “Mickey” Rivers, former New York Yankees outfielder, “I don't get upset over things I can control, because if I can control them there's no sense in getting upset. And I don't get upset over things I can't control, because if I can't control them there's no sense in getting upset.”

That's great advice! I would challenge you to remember this morning that you are a child of a loving and merciful God – so don't worry be happy!!!