

Feb 13, 2016

**Matthew 6:25-34**

*Meeting Jesus in Matthew: Courage, Dear Heart*

Jonathan M. Romig

CornerstoneWestford.com

Introduction: **(Slide #1)**

1. When Monica and I were getting married we went through pre-marital counseling.
2. Our Pastor asked us to pick a verse for each other, so I gave her one about loving God more.
3. She shared with me two passages...
  - 1) "Do not worry about your life..." (Matt 6:25)
  - 2) "Do not judge, or you too will be judged..." (Matt 7:1)
4. Monica knew I had a problem with worry and with taking out that worry on her.
5. I still haven't figured it out, so I come as one trying to learn what it means to not be anxious.
6. In our passage today, Jesus commands us "do not worry" or "do not be anxious"!
7. Worry is not only the nervousness or unease we experience thinking about an uncertain future.
8. Worry is the tensing of our shoulders, the fog in our mind, the gnaw in our stomachs, it's crippling.
9. A "fight or flight" response to trouble is natural but longterm anxiety is not only unhealthy, but sin.
10. This is the hardest commandment and one we all want to obey, but may not know how.

(Jesus cares about our anxiety, stress, and worry.)

(He has a plan for dealing with it and it's not very complicated.) **(Slide #2)**

I. Jesus tells us to let it go. (v. 25-30)

A. Jesus tells us to not worry or stress—to let it go. **(Read v. 25)**

- a. Before Jesus tells us not to worry, he says, "therefore"—what's it there for?
- b. We just talked about money last week, which is a huge source of anxiety.
- c. We can trust Jesus with eternity, why not trust him with today? (money, food, clothing)
- d. Some of you may remember the 2013 quiet Indie hit movie, *Frozen*.
- e. The story is based on the Snow Queen and is about two sisters finding themselves.
- f. The princess Elsa has "cryokinetic" powers—she can "manipulate, ice, frost, and snow at will."
- g. She accidentally hurts her sister so her parents hide her until she is exposed at her coronation.
- h. She unleashes her powers and sings the song, "Let it go"—the most famous lyrics say:

Let it go, let it go

Can't hold it back anymore

Let it go, let it go

Turn away and slam the door!

I don't care

What they're going to say

Let the storm rage on,

The cold never bothered me anyway!

- i. This song won Academy and Grammy Awards and the movie made \$1.276 billion.
- j. Elsa's words resonate with so many because we all need to "let it go".
- k. Long before Elsa, Jesus told his followers to let it go.

(In our passage, Jesus explains **three types of anxieties** we need to release:)

(1) First, we let **personal** anxieties go. **(Read v. 26) (Slide #3)**

- a. If God takes care of the birds he'll take care of us, because we're more valuable than them.
- b. We are of a different quality or value than animals because God made us like him. (Slide #4)

Genesis 1:26 (NIV) Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

- c. Like God rules over creation, he created us to rule over creation too, but in a lesser way.
- d. At the core of personal anxiety is this question—I am valuable?... Yes!
- e. God cares if you work, eat, sleep, and are healthy because he values you.
- f. Birds are unemployed, homeless, artists, but God loves them—how much more you?
- g. God might not always give us what we want, but he will take care of our needs. (Earthly benefit)

(We let personal anxieties go.) (Slide #5)

(2) Second, we let **future** anxieties go. (Read v. 27)

- a. If you're worried about how long you'll live, will that make you live longer? No!
- b. It may have the opposite effect as [heart.org](http://heart.org) says: "When stress is excessive, it can contribute to everything from high blood pressure, also called hypertension, to asthma to ulcers..."
- c. The NKJV version says, "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"
- d. Maybe another way of saying this is, "Will I be able to control my future?"
- e. Will I be strong enough to get the education I want, the family I want, the success I want?
- f. Jesus doesn't tell us what will happen tomorrow, but he does tell us that he is strong enough.
- a. Fear is just False, Expectations, Appearing, Real (F.E.A.R).
- b. Christ calls us to stop believing in our false expectations.

(We let personal and future anxieties go.) (Slide #6)

(3) Third, we let **relational** anxieties go. (Read v. 28-30)

- a. As Jesus teaches on the mountain, he could have pointed at birds and wildflowers.
- b. The "[anemone](#)" wildflower grows in Jewish Palestine, near Megiddo Israel. (Slide #7 - picture)
- c. King Solomon, who probably wore the royal color purple, doesn't compare to these flowers.
- d. The wealthier or higher status you were, the finer, more ornamental, more colorful your clothes.
- e. The same is true today; is your suit fitted, or regular? Was your top on sale? How many shoes?
- f. Clothing is a need but fashion is at its heart a relational issue, even a pride issue.
- g. When we put our faith in the little of opinions of others, we have "little faith" (v. 30).
- h. We want others to think well of us—but what matters is that God sees us as a beautiful flower.

(We let personal, future, and relational anxieties go.)

(It's not enough to just let our problems go...) (Slide #8)

II. Let it go so you can cling to Christ. (v. 31-34)

A. The world substitutes anxiety with emptiness. (Read v. 31-32a)

- a. The world's solution is to either consume more or empty itself, neither of which are right.
- b. Modern philosophies contain truths, like focusing on the present instead of the future.

- c. Our peace is not a blind peace that ignores reality or creates a false sense of self-esteem.
- d. Our peace comes from a deep knowledge of God's love for us and trust in him.
- e. The world substitutes anxiety with emptiness.

B. We substitute worry with courage in Christ.

(We let it go so we can cling to Christ.)

(How do we cling to Christ? How can experience courage? Peace? Joy?)

(Just like there are three anxieties, there are three solutions:) **(Slide #9)**

- 1) "A." We let relational anxieties go by **building a relationship with God. (Read v. 32)**
  - i. Over and over again Jesus has taught us to relate to God as our "heavenly Father".
  - ii. When we're stressed, we remember the relationship we have with the Father through Jesus.
  - iii. We have a God that loves and adores us as his adopted child.
  - iv. When you're hurt by family, let it go and cling to your heavenly Father.
  - v. When you're bothered by coworkers, let it go and cling to your Father who understands.
  - vi. When you're by frustrated circumstances, let it go and cling to your all powerful Daddy.
  
- 2) "B." We let future anxieties go by **recognizing our own limitations (Read v. 34) (Slide #10)**
  - i. The last verse sounds a lot like a proverb because it contains practical wisdom.
  - ii. We are finite creatures created within time who can only exist one day at a time.
  - iii. Although I skipped vs. 34, notice how we can trust the king with our future.
  - iv. We believe in a God who created time, he created the future (recognize he is over all).
  - v. The world says, don't worry about tomorrow because it's not healthy.
  - vi. God says, don't worry about tomorrow because I have tomorrow under control.
  
- 3) "C." We let personal anxieties go by **finding our all in Christ (Read v. 33) (Slide #11)**
  - i. First, we find our purpose for life.
    1. Jesus gives us a mission for every day, seeking "his kingdom and his righteousness".
    2. We seek his kingdom by obeying Jesus' commands as his loyal subjects.
    3. We seek his righteousness by receiving his right standing before God as a gift every day.
    4. When we focus all our passion on Jesus, he say's he'll give us joy we never knew.
    5. Transitioning from single to married changed my purpose in life from me to us.
    6. The freedom I gave up is far exceeded by the joy of my new purpose, loving Monica.
    7. We forget our personal troubles as we love Jesus obediently and passionately.
  - ii. Second, we find our value.
    1. "All these things will be given to you as well" show us how valuable we are.
    2. Jesus is saying "One day I'll give you the greatest gift. I'll give you, me."
    3. At its core anxiety comes from forgetting what Jesus did for us.
    4. He lived a perfect life and died an innocent death so we can live.
    5. Jesus wipes away our tears with his blood (fears, years of anxiety).
    6. The gospel is the good news that you are as valuable to God as his Son Jesus.
    7. When we see the depth of God's love, it gives us courage to face anything.
    8. Paul tells us in Romans why we don't need to be afraid: **(Slide #12)**

Romans 8:38–39 (NIV) 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(We substitute worry with courage in Christ.)

(Let it go so you can cling to Christ.) (Slide #13)

Conclusion:

1. Some of you have read or watched the movies *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis.
2. In the book *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace are taken to Narnia.
3. Lucy is a young girl who believes with all of heart in the Christ figure, a lion named Aslan.
4. The three of them go on a voyage and come to the island Where Dreams Come True.
5. The island is hidden in a darkness nightmares and terrors come to life.
6. The whole crew is overcome by fear and begin to wildly row in the darkness.
7. Each hears a different noise: huge scissoring, enemies crawling up the side, and gongs, so Lucy prays:

*“Aslan, Aslan, if ever you loved us at all, send us help now.” The darkness did not grow any less, but she began to feel a little—a very, very little—better. “After all, nothing has really happened to us yet,” she thought.*

8. A ray of light, a spotlight, falls on the ship and Lucy sees something in it like a cross, an albatross.
9. The albatross circles them three times, lands for a moment, and then leads them out of the darkness.

*But no one except Lucy knew that as it circled the mast it had whispered to her, “Courage, dear heart,” and the voice, she felt sure, was Aslan’s...*

10. When you're caught in the darkness, pray like Lucy for Jesus to send you help now.
11. When you're afraid, take courage, dear heart, Jesus Christ has overcome.
12. Let it go so you can cling to Christ.

Benediction: "Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord." Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB)