

The Way Out of Worry

10 - The Art of Rest

Church on the Park | Sunday, 12 October 2014

Text: Matthew 5:5 & 11:29

Theme: God's word shows the way out of worry.

Intro: Last week we talked about fear. Today, we will look at her fraternal twin—worry. The two are very similar, and even follow each other around, but there is slight distinction between them.

Worry saps the strength from our life. It keeps us from entering God's rest. Jesus taught us that worry chokes us, keeping us from a fruitful life (parable of the sower). Proverbs warns us that "Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up" (Prov. 12:25).

1) You're at the top of the Father's list (Matt. 6:25-34)

- The **Father** is the **Sovereign King** who **cares** for all of his creation and you are at the top of his list.
 - This is what Jesus is telling us to keep us from worry. And remember, Jesus is saying this after stepping out of **heaven** to earth. He has been with the Father from eternity and he knows what he is like.
- You are **more valuable** than the birds and the fields. All of the rest of creation is a message to you and serves you in some way.
 - The Ibises and birds after church. The ants in my home. Mosquitos? (I still haven't figured out their purpose :-).
- The Father is **more concerned** about your life, your children and your finances than you are.
 - I remember when I was concerned about my son Gideon regarding something (that I now forget). God said to me, "I am more concerned about him than you. I know you care for him, but I care for him more. I am his Father above you."
- The Father **knows** you even **before** you were **born**. You were part of his **dream** and **vision** for this world and the world to come.
 - Psalm 139:13-18
 - Jeremiah 1:4-8
- Read Matthew 6:25-34 in the **Message** version

2) Meekness is your response to the Father's care. It keeps you from a life of worry. (Matt. 5:5 & 11:29)

- Meekness means **gentleness, mildness** and **submission** to the Father's plan. The opposite of meekness is **forcefulness, aggression** and trying to **control** you life and the world.
- When you try to be in **control** it fills you with **worry** because you replace God with yourself. Also, you may be full of worry if you are letting other people control your life rather than the Father.
- **Jesus' life** gives us the best **definition** and **description** of meekness. Especially when he chooses to take up his cross.
 - Look at **Matthew 26:47-56**. Jesus has all authority and power. He could call down thousands upon thousands of angels, and yet he does not fight back.

- Why? He was totally **submitted** to the Father, he had complete **trust**.
- He knew the Father **cared** for him and that he could **trust** the Father with his life even in the **darkest valley**.
- Why did he say not a word when people were accusing him to Pilate and Herod? To fulfil the Scriptures that said, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did **not** open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is **silent**, so he did not open his **mouth**." (Isa. 53:7)
- A meek person is like **clay** in the Father's hands.
 - **Surrender** to the Sovereign Father's hands. **Submit** to his plan.
 - Surrender your **tomorrows** to God. Give him your **future** (Matt. 6:34).
- **Psalm 37** - A psalm all about meekness and what a meek spirit looks like

3) Lastly, Worry is a trigger to pray. And when you pray, God works. (Phil. 4:4-7)

- Notice how **gentleness/meekness** appears again in **Philippians 4:5**.
- **What** do you do when you feel worry and anxiety popping up in your heart?
 - Pray. But **do NOT wait** for a prayer time, a prayer meeting or church. **Pray immediately**.
 - The **example** of what we do in our family. We stop what we are doing and we pray a quick prayer together about the situation.
 - We also pray before we drive somewhere
 - We always try to bring every situation to God in prayer so that it becomes as **common** as conversations we have throughout the day.
- **Thankfulness** also guards you from worry.
 - Try this: the next time you're **upset** with someone, thank God for all the good things about that person.
- God promises to give you **peace** in your situation when you pray. He'll give you wisdom where you need wisdom. He'll give you comfort so that you know he is already at work.

Conclusion: God has made it clear to us through his Word that he does not want us to worry. Today, we looked at three things that will cause us to escape from worry: 1) Knowing your heavenly Father deeply cares for you 2) Meekness: responding to the Father's care in surrender and submission, and 3) Prayer: Use worry as a trigger to pray. Practice these and you will experience peace.

END NOTES

We will see that through meekness we can remove worry from our life. Meekness, at first glance, does not seem the way to get rid of worry. Assertiveness seems like a much better solution (strategy). Force, power and brut strength looks like the way to drive away our worries, but actually this approach leaves us with more worry.

4239. προῦς *praús*; fem. *praeía*, neut. *praú*, adj. Meek, mild, gentle (Matt. 5:5; 21:5; 1 Pet. 3:4; Sept.: Job 24:4; Ps. 37:11; Zech. 9:9). See *praútēs* (4240), meekness, and *praótēs* (4236), meekness, mildness, forbearance, for full discussion of the meaning.

Deriv.: *praútēs* (4240), meekness.

Syn.: *épios* (2261), gentle, of a soothing disposition; *epieikés* (1933), moderate, forbearing, fitting, lenient; *tapeinós* (5011), humble; *malakós* (3120), soft, tender.

Ant.: *orgílos* (3711), irascible, prone to anger; *anémeros* (434), savage, fierce; *chalepós* (5467), perilous, difficult, fierce.

C. New Testament.

In NT usage there is obviously a different distribution of the word in the different strata. Neither adjective nor noun occurs in Mark, Luke (Gospel and Acts), Hebrews or the Johannine writings, and the noun alone is found in Paul. This absence is connected especially with the particular Christology. Thus Mark and Luke emphasise more strongly the → υἱὸς θεοῦ or κύριος, John stresses the omnipotent → υἱός or υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, Paul speaks predominantly of the κύριος (→ III, 1088 ff.), and Hebrews presents the ἀρχιερέυς (→ III, 274 ff.) described in cultic categories.

1. Matthew. Of the Synoptists, then, only Mt. uses προῦς (3 times at 5:5; 11:29; 21:5). Special significance attaches to the self-predication of Jesus in the tradition at 11:25–30 which has not yet been explained in terms of comparative religion, → V, 992, 40 ff. Probably vv. 28–30 are modelled on the revelatory address in Prv. 8:4 ff.; Sir. 24:3–22; 51:23–30. The mission of Jesus takes place on earth in lowliness and weakness (== προῦς). His life is not a life at court; it characterises Him as the lowly in heart, i.e., the One who is fixed wholly on God (== ταπεινός). But for that very reason He can invite with full authority (note the two imperatives δεῦτε and ἄρατε) and fulfil the promise contained in the invitation. In Mt. 21:5, with the help of the fulfilled prophecy of Zech. 9:9 (→ 647, 32 ff.), the entry of Jesus is depicted as that of a non-violent, non-warlike king of salvation and peace. In this respect Jesus stands radically opposed to the Zealots (→ II, 884, 23 ff.) and to all the champions of a political Messianism. In the beatitude in Mt. 5:5 we read of the πραεῖς who on the basis of their oppressed situation

acknowledge not their own will but the great and gracious will of God. To them Jesus promises the inheritance (→ III, 783, 6 ff.) of the coming aeon, which includes (cf. Mt. 19:29) secure dwelling in their own land. In contrast to the first beatitude (Mt. 5:3), which mentions the related → πτωχοί, the emphasis in the third beatitude is on the future promise: Those who are now oppressed and bowed down will be rulers of the world in the eschaton.

2. Paul. In Paul's debate with the Corinthian pneumatics it is worth noting that the term *πραΰτης* occurs twice. Paul had full reason to inveigh against the Corinthians on account of their disputatiousness and arrogance, but they would not make it impossible for him to bring the gentleness of Christ to bear against them, 2 C. 10:1. This meekness has its basis in agape and it cannot therefore think in terms of harsh punishment even in relation to the disobedient, 1 C. 4:21. There can be no question of this course of action on the apostle's part being branded as softness or weakness, for it rests on the gentleness and love which Christ exemplified for the community during His life on earth. Hence it is also no virtue in the Greek Hellenistic sense, → 646, 14 ff. As Gl. 5:23 and 6:1 show, it is a gift of the Spirit. *πραΰτης* stands between *πίστις* and *ἐγκράτεια* (Gl. 5:23), and it enables the Christian to correct the erring brother without arrogance, impatience, or anger, Gl. 6:1. According to Col. 3:12 meekness is one of the gifts of election, and in Eph. 4:2 it is one of the gifts of calling.

3. Pastoral Epistles. There are some moral features in the usage of the Pastorals. The servant of Christ should exercise meekness especially in correction of the lawless, for in this way they will perhaps be snatched away from Satan, 2 Tm. 2:25. Meekness is commanded in relation to all in Tt. 3:2. When the authorities or others ask for an account of the Christian life of faith, it is to be given with meekness and kindness, even though injustice which has been suffered might cause indignation or defiance, 1 Pt. 3:16.

4. James. In Jm. 1:21 *πραΰτης* is contrasted with *ὀργή* (v. 20) and it refers to a meek and humble readiness to be taught by the Word of God without flaring up against the teacher. Gentleness is a mark of the true righteous who are inspired by divine wisdom (3:13: *ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας*; v. 17: *εἰρηνική, ἐπιεικής*). It is demonstrated in the whole walk of the righteous and stands in pleasing contrast to bitter zeal and contentiousness, 3:14; cf. Sir. 3:17; also 1 Pt. 3:4.

Meekness, to some, can look like fear and timidity. But actually it is much more powerful. Yet, meekness must be understood rightly if we are to find its blessing. We are never meant to be meek to the devil or sin. These things we fight against. But, we are to be meek, first to God and then to one another.

Notice in our above texts (Matt. 5:5 and 11:29) that meekness and rest are joined together. The meek inherit the earth, which is the ultimate rest. Now, why should any of us be worried if we are going to inherit the earth? Next, Jesus tells us that if we come to him and join ourselves to him we will find rest for our souls. Why? Because he is meek and humble. And by being with Jesus we become more like him, meek and humble.

Matthew 6:25-34

The Father is Sovereign; He is the king of every created thing. He is also caring and takes excellent care of his creation.

What Jesus reveals is that you are at the top of the Father's list. You are more valuable than the birds and fields. In the same way he cares for them, he will care for you and much more.

What are the things that worry us? Food, clothing, money, our children, our future, health, safety, global issues.

Surrender to the Sovereign Father's hands. Submit to his plan.

No matter what the devil throws at you, he cannot overcome the power that is in you. "Greater is he that is in you..."

Psalm 37