

The Outrageous Claims of Jesus Series

Do Not Worry About Your Life

Sara Carlisle

Matthew 6:35-34

Tonight we are continuing the series, “The Outrageous Claims of Jesus”. Jesus did say some pretty outrageous things and we are going to tackle just a few of them. Last week we heard from Tim and Ingrid about How we are called to go to Everyone, Everywhere and next week Insoo will be preaching about how Jesus said he did not come to condemn us. I chose the statement ‘Do not worry about your life’!

The Outrageous Claim: Do Not Worry About Your Life

Now, worrying is one of the most common experiences to humanity. All of us worry, even if you would not be classified as an anxious person, a worrier or a ‘worry wart’ as some call it. Worrying can be defined as mental activity that doesn’t produce anything worthwhile. It is often cyclical, as you find yourself thinking about the same thing over and over again—as if your thinking about it is going to do anything about it. It’s a thought or a situation that you just can’t seem to get out of your head. We can find anything to worry about. Like I have this strange fear that I’m going to knock my front teeth out. Another friend of mine has the same fear and we’ve even named it. I regularly will picture myself, as I’m walking out of a restaurant or into a building, I’ll have this quick fleeting thought of the door catching, slamming my face into the glass door...leaving me without a smile in the world. It’s the stupidest thing. It’s pretty subconscious. Most of the things we worry about are related to real things in our lives, though some of us do deal with very real fears and phobias. But the kind of worry we are going to talk about tonight is the kind that we all deal with as people. It’s the kind of worry that we have when we’re unsure of a certain outcome or we’re concerned for someone we love or we worry about what people will think.

Now, I don’t typically think of myself as a worrier, but the older I get, the more I realize there is to worry about. Right?! Like right now, I’m trying to buy a house. I’m at the very end of the process, about to step over the line and enslave myself to a mortgage for the next however many years. I’ve never even thought about tuckpointing on a chimney before, and now I’m having to worry about getting chimneys fixed and dehumidifiers for basements and new carpet. So much to worry about!!!

If any of you are parents, you are familiar with worry. All of a sudden, this tiny little human is dependent on you...you know they are physically dependent on you to feed them, to clothe them, but you also realize that things you do and say to them, the ways you love them are going to greatly affect them. I can remember different things that my parents have worried about over the years. My mom’s side of the family tend to be quite the worriers. This is something that has clashed with

my adventuresome spirit over the years—I often have to reassure my mom, even to this day, that I will be okay taking a walk by myself or traveling or taking a trip to Africa or whatever. My dad worries about us sometimes as well. Over the years, my siblings and I have begun to recollect the different ‘Bill Carlisle isms’—that’s my dad, William Carlisle Jr. My dad is always being a dad and trying to look out for us and he is always making these distinct statements, often as I am getting ready to leave my parents house. He’ll say things like ‘Do you have enough air in your tires?’ or ‘When was the last time you got your oil changed?’ or something like ‘Watch your back Sara. Never let yourself be a victim!’ Another popular one is “Drive Defensively. It’s not you I’m worried about, It’s the other guy!” I just kind of smile as I realize he’s just trying to look out for me because he worries about me.

Or what about those of you that are single and long to be married? You worry about being alone, about being cared for. Maybe you just graduated from College and you’re thinking, ‘Am I going to be okay?’ ‘Am I going to make it?’ You’ve never known what it’s like NOT to be in school, and you wonder what it’s going to be like. It’s just a mysterious void of a future? Will I get a job? Will I be able to pay my loans back? Will I be able to maintain relationships? Especially for guys, I’m told that’s a hard one when they start a new job... It feels all-consuming—it seems to be all we can think about. It drains your emotional energy.

And then we hear the voice of Jesus ringing in our ears saying, ‘Do not worry about your life’. Do you hear him saying that to you tonight. ‘Do not worry about your life. You don’t have to.’ If you keep staring at all of the mess and all of the unknowns and all of the things you could possibly worry about, instead of looking into the face of Jesus, you will not understand him when he says ‘Do not worry about your life’. Let him speak that to you heart today. Three times in the text that we are going to look at tonight, Jesus says ‘Do not worry.’

Mt 6:25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.

Mt 6:31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

Mt 6:34 **Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.**

Each day has enough trouble of its own.

How can he say this? Surely Jesus doesn't understand our world of finances and health problems and relationships?! Is this your view of Jesus. Out of touch Jesus. I would invite you to look a little bit closer. We do not love and serve a Jesus who is unfamiliar with life as we know it—that's the amazing thing about Christ. He came to us, fully human. He knew what it was like to have aches in his body. He knows what it's like to have friends leave you or even betray you. He knows what it feels like to struggle financially. He knows what it feels like to feel misunderstood by your family. He was ridiculed and mocked and people wanted to kill him, long before He was crucified. Jesus had plenty of things he could have worried about. The Jesus we love and serve, The Jesus of History, the Jesus of Scripture, is not out of touch with those things that can cause us worry. And still He says to his followers, 'Do Not Worry!'

But Jesus didn't waste anytime either. He lived very intentionally. Throughout his life on earth, Jesus was always saying that he was about His Father's business. He was always preoccupied with the Kingdom of God. He didn't have time to waste his affections. He didn't have time to waste. He had bigger things on his mind. He had bigger dreams to live. He knew he was a part of a bigger story, God's story—God's story of bringing people back to himself...God's story of healing to all the parts of our lives that our broken. What if we lived our lives like that? We can worry and concern ourselves with so many things, or we can concern ourselves with Jesus and the things on his heart. You can waste your time on worry, or you can exercise trust in Jesus and replace your worries, with things worth your time and energy. So tonight we're going to try to do that...we're going to try to re-orient our minds and our lives towards the things that concern Jesus.

(PRAY)

The Reality: You Can Always Find Something To Worry About, But Worrying Is Optional.

So, we've come to the understanding that there are always things to worry about, and that Jesus himself had plenty to worry about, but Jesus still says 'Do Not Worry'. So it must be true that worry is not based upon the things that we experience, or the negative things we encounter. He is saying worry does not just come from outside of you...he is saying worry is not just for those that go through really hard things. No. Worry comes from within us. It is something we choose to lay hold of. It is a choice. Worrying is optional. There is always something that you can worry about, but worrying is optional. And if we are going to ever cure our worry, that is a good starting place. Start with the realization that you have the

choice...what are you going to look at? What are you going to concern yourself with?

Give some context: SOTM

Read Text

Matthew 6.25-34

Mt 6:25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”

Mt 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Mt 6:27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ⁵

Mt 6:28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

Mt 6:29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

Mt 6:30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Mt 6:31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

Mt 6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Mt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Mt 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

So right away, Jesus tells us not to worry. And then he goes on to paint the picture for the hearers. He says, Look...See (SLIDE)

Mt 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

I mean if God even cares for these insignificant birds, how much more will he look out for you.

Mt 6:28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

Mt 6:29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

Mt 6:30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Jesus says, ‘look’, ‘see’ ... ‘If you’ll just look, I’ll show you!’

He is essentially saying, Look around you. Choose to see the evidence of God around you. Look at what’s staring you in the face. Look at the birds even. Look at the flowers. I take care of them! I feed them! Have I ever failed you? Have I ever overlooked your needs?

I love how Jesus is drawing from things that are familiar to the hearers—things like birds and flowers. He would dial up images that were familiar to describe what he was saying. He uses the birds and the flowers to describe how much God cares for our needs. He is saying, just as you could look at so many things and come up with the worst case scenario, you can also look around you through a lens of faith...you can look around and see the activity and evidence of God around you.

This is what I love about the church. We are one community, and in some mysterious way we are what the Bible calls ‘the Body of Christ.’ In some mysterious way we are an extension of Jesus, to each other and to the world around us. There are parts of God that we experience because of each other. And we can draw strength from each other. God is always saying ‘SEE!’ ‘LOOK!’ to me through the people in my small group, he helps me

(SLIDE)

It reminds me of II Corinthians 3:2-3 where Paul is talking about the stories that the Spirit of God writes through the people that he is working with.

2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

And you know, Jesus always provides stories around us that he can hold up in our plain sight, to reveal his care for us. He loves to show us things, that prove his love to us. In fact, I believe that some of the greatest apologetics, the greatest defenses of the Christian Faith, are revealed and seen through the responses of Christians throughout history. Like the Christians that committed to stay behind during the Black Plagues of the 14th c in Europe to care for the sick and the dying, instead of looking out for number one and fleeing like everyone else. They could have been worried about their own health, their own lives, but Jesus led them to do something else. Or the stories of countless martyrs and saints, people like Dr Martin Luther King Jr who could have worried about the countless threats against him as he sought for equal rights for all Americans. Or like Corrie Ten Boom, who forgave the Nazi Soldier that murdered her sister in front of her. Jesus says, 'Look', 'See'—'only I could do that!' Only Jesus could do that. Jesus loves when we open our hearts and our eyes to 'Look' and 'See' what He is up to.

***I have a friend named Molly that I'm going to ask to come up. Molly is a leader in Joshua House, who has been around for years along with her husband Jared. Molly is someone that God has used to show me so much about him recently...how much He cares for us. I'm going to have Molly share a little bit about her life—starting this last December, Molly received some life-altering news and was faced with many things that would allow for worry.

Molly, tell us what happened this past December?

How do you deal with these worries on a daily basis?

What has this time shown you about Jesus?

What would you say to someone who is struggling with worry?

The Response: How You Deal With Worry Reflects the Kind of Faith You Have.

So Molly talked about ways of dealing with worry and how God helped her deal with her worry, but how do you find yourself dealing with worry. What is your response going to be? Molly had to exercise faith. She had to choose to look at her situation as a Christian, as a follower of Jesus.

Let's pick up in verse 30 (SLIDE)

Mt 6:30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Mt 6:31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

Mt 6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Mt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Mt 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

In verse 30, Jesus uses this statement, 'you of little faith'. He is saying that this is essentially an issue of faith. What are you going to put your faith in? Are you going to put your faith in your understanding? Are you going to put your faith in your ability to control the situation? Or are you going to put your faith in me. It's an issue of faith.

(SLIDE) merimnao=worry; double-minded

The greek word for worry is merimnao, which means to be double-minded. That is a wonderful way to describe what it means to have little faith. When we are exercising little faith, it is because our attention is divided. Our hearts are divided. We are pulled in two different directions. We put a little faith in Jesus and a keep stressing out. We put a little bit of faith in Jesus, but we still hold on and try to devise our back-up plan. And we don't let him fully in. We don't allow ourselves to fix our eyes on Jesus. We are double-minded.

Have you ever tried to have a conversation with someone whose attention is divided. Have you ever tried to have a conversation with someone, or even just ask them a question during their favorite TV show or when their favorite team is playing? Their attention is divided. This is what is going on when we show 'little faith'. We may have faith in Jesus, but we are so busy staring at something else that it is impossible to get a clear glimpse of Jesus.

We can't grab on to the peace and the hope and the care that he offers if we won't let go of the situation that's heavy on our hearts. We have to learn to give things over to Jesus. Sometimes that's just as easy as stopping and saying, 'Okay Lord. This is no easy thing, but I keep getting bombarded with all of these fears and questions and accusations, and I am getting nowhere. Would you take them Jesus. Would you give me strength beyond my strength.' We have to put our faith in the right place. We have to resist the temptation to act as if God is not apart of the equation. I know for me, I've had to do this as I've been going through this process to buy this house. I've been saying things like 'Okay God, I'm your daughter. And I don't know anything about this stuff. And you know everything. You know what is going on with this house. You know my future. And so I'm relying on you to shut this down if this isn't you.' (give a prayer exercise: rummaging thru your day?)

Jesus says in this text, if you don't have Jesus, if you think it's all up to you, it makes sense that you would worry. If you think that this suffering is all for nothing, if you don't see a God of justice who is restoring all of creation to himself, of course you will worry!...if you don't realize there's more going on than meets the eye, then of course you would be left to worry. If you don't know this God, then of course you should worry.

V 31-32

Mt 6:31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

Mt 6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

We have to resist our wrong methods of dealing with worry. Here Jesus mentions the Pagans and how they function. Pagans try to manipulate and control the gods they worship. Their god is not trustworthy and so they don't trust god. They feel that it is up to them, so they are left to worry....to try and control...to try and manipulate.

We, as followers of Jesus, have a God who is trustworthy—a God who knows what's best for us. We have a God that we cannot manipulate and control. So we have to quit acting like we don't have God. If you call yourself a follower of Jesus, then the way you handle worry should look different...because you are not the hinge point! You are not in control! You do not know what's best in a given situation. You do not always know what God is up to!

Maybe God is actually protecting you and that is the reason that relationship is not working out! Maybe another job is coming that is perfect for you and what you feel called to and that's why you didn't get that position. Maybe God is up to something! Maybe God is doing something deeper in you—maybe he's trying to protect you or maybe he's trying to refine your character.

We have to resist our wrong responses, our wrong methods of dealing with worry—our attempts to manipulate like pagans...How about trying that one on ladies? How many times do you find yourself obsessing over the way you look? Maybe if I just look like this he'll like me? So we use our bodies to manipulate men. Or we just go along with whatever they want to do so they'll like us.

Or maybe you deal with pressure and stress by escaping into fantasy. You lie to yourself and say, 'it's not real. I'm not really going to do anything like this' ...but meanwhile, the pornography you look at or the images in your head change the way you look at the opposite sex. Suddenly, you can't help but look at them as an object of your lust.

Or you escape into things that numb the pain: you work harder and longer hours, you have another drink, you tell another lie. Or you just don't care anymore. You just let things go.

You act as though Jesus is not involved. You act as though Jesus is not involved in the process of finding someone to marry. You act as though Jesus doesn't care about the fact that you can't get pregnant. We act as though God doesn't care about our friends and family that need Jesus.

We can put our faith in ourselves, in our control, our abilities—and that may last for a little while. Or we can choose to put our faith in the right place. We can put our trust in the Father who loves us...who cares for us...who knows what we need before we even ask.

All through this text (SLIDE) we see glimpses of a Father who we are valuable to. We see a Father that takes good care of us and clothes us. We see a Father who knows what we need...

Mt 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Mt 6:30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Mt 6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Mt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

This is the only cure for worry. To put your faith in a Father who cares for you. To put your faith in the One who has your life figured out. The cure for worry is to concern yourself with the things that concern Jesus. Jesus was concerned about the Kingdom—he talked about it more than anything else.

(SLIDE)

The Remedy: Concerning Yourself With What Concerns Jesus Will Cure Worry

And we'll close with v 33-34

Mt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Mt 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

There's a lot we don't know as we look at the future. We don't know if the economy is going to turn around soon. We don't know if you'll meet the man of your dreams. We won't know if you will get pregnant. But we know that we have Jesus. What if we concerned ourselves with Jesus. We know that Jesus is establishing His Kingdom. God wants to invade earth with heaven! God wants us to be the ones that tell people they belong in heaven. This is what's on his heart. This is what he wants us to do today!

Jesus tells us here that if we seek his kingdom first, then everything else will be taken care of. So it's a big deal to understand exactly what His Kingdom is.

KOG:Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God, also called the Kingdom of Heaven constantly. And he didn't just talk about heaven as this distant, far off place. There will be a future day, where God fully establishes his Kingdom, but meanwhile his Kingdom is breaking into the scene today! The Kingdom is the reign of God, the rule of God. When the kingdom breaks in, the reign and rule of God is released.

The Kingdom is what all of our hearts long for. poor are on the heart of Jesus. The lonely are on the heart of Jesus. The annoying co-worker that you've written off is on the heart of Jesus. The environment is on the heart of Jesus.

He says 'seek this first', pursue this. He says pour your whole heart into this. Let this be your primary concern. Spend your life on the things I'm concerned about. And I will take care of the rest. Quit obsessing about your clothes. Quit dating one loser after another!

Let this be your greatest ambition—not the picture perfect life, or the sweetest car or the next adventure you can go on. But Jesus, His Kingdom. Don't just give God your leftovers...there won't be much left. I can't tell you how many times I hear people talking about leading or serving and they talk about 'how much work they have to do, they just can't lead anymore.' They talk about leading as if it's so burdensome. We lose sight of the Kingdom. The rest of life starts to creep in when we don't put Jesus first. It does just feel like 'one more thing' when He isn't our first love. But when it comes out of our love for God. When we realize it's a privilege to get to lead people. I get to partner with God to bring healing to people's lives. I get to be a change agent for people's futures.

What if we sought Jesus' Kingdom first...instead of half-heartedly. What if we didn't waste our affections or energy or time or resources on lesser loves.

CS Lewis explains it like this (SLIDE):

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

We are far too easily pleased. What if we decided as Joshua House that we're not going to be too easily pleased. We are not going to settle. I wonder Joshua House, what it would like, if we really did seek the Kingdom first. I mean, what if we weren't primarily concerned with how so-and-so broke your heart, but you were concerned with the things that break the heart of Jesus.

What if we weren't just concerned about doing whatever we feel like, but we love the people around us the way we wish to be loved.

What if instead of wallowing in our own misery and aloneness, we became people who reached out to the lonely. What if we said, 'yep, I'm feeling lonely and I want to be a parent, I want to have a family, and I hope that happens, but if not, God, I'm going to seek your Kingdom first. I'm going to reach out to other friends that I know are lonely. I have a relative that lives in a nursing home and noone goes to see her.'

What if we sought after His Righteousness? This word for righteousness is similar to holiness—being set apart for God, made right, made whole, made pure. What if we pursued Holiness? What if we didn't try to just blend in?

What if we actually let God set us apart as much as he wants? What if we guarded our life with God (as if it were a matter of life and death). **What if we realized that losing Jesus is the worst thing that could happen...bc w/Jesus goes the one that will never leave me. The One I can always find refuge in. The One who gives me peace. The one who gives me power beyond my power. The one who gives me a reason to live.** No matter what it costs—if it costs me passing up a promotion at work or going against what my family who are against me following Jesus. What if we let God set us apart as much as he wants instead of just following the crowd—spending money the way everyone else does, gossiping and slandering people. What if I took bitterness and anger seriously because I know it affects me and my life with God!

These are the things that concern Jesus. These are the things worth worrying about. Jesus cares about the sin in our lives, because it separates us from him. Jesus knows what our sin can do to us if we don't come to him. He doesn't mince words. He doesn't pretend nothing's wrong. He knows the things that you are ashamed of. He knows the sin you're guilty of, whether you feel guilty or not...And Jesus wants you to seek His Kingdom by laying down your sin.

When you admit your sin and bring it to Jesus, you are saying, 'Jesus, I am not King anymore. I'm not living to build my Kingdom anymore. I'm living for your Kingdom now.' I'm not going to do whatever I feel like anymore. I'm not going to call the shots any longer. I've gotten myself in a heap of worry...or worse. I realize how limited I am God. I need you. I'm sorry that I've thought I could be the ruler/god of my life.

When you come to Jesus, you're saying. Jesus, I need your peace. I've been worried about my life because I've been in control of it. I realize now, I don't have to be in control of my life. I want my life to be in your hands. Not just for heaven in the future, but for now.

Ministry time:

After service mentions:

1. Sarah Kelly (i think there will be stuff in the lobby to buy? may want to verify with Chris night of)
2. Welcome Dinner
3. Breathe registration & coffee donation (people who want to give their markouts)

