



Bible Study, February 15, 2023

Series: The Discipleship Training of Jesus Christ | A Study of Matthew 5-7

Lesson 6: Don't Worry, Be Happy!

Pastor Reginald Rogers, Facilitator

Introduction

Back in the 1980s, there was a song written by Bobby McFerrin called "Don't Worry Be Happy." It was a musical blockbuster on the Billboard Top 100 Chart that became a number-one hit in 1988. Do you recall how it began with a whistling beat and then proceeded into the lyrics? It made you rock as you listen to it. As Jesus continued His teaching and training of the disciples, He addressed the concern about worry. He probably discerned the shift in the spiritual atmosphere among the disciples and the multitude. What I mean is He noticed a change in them after sharing the last example about not storing up earthly treasures. These disciples with Him were fishermen and made their livelihood in that industry. They were accustomed to working all night to make their living (CF: *Luke 5:5*) so they probably worried about what was said by the Lord. Let us see how Jesus calmed them down.

The Scripture Reading | Matthew 6:25-34

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 than food, and the body more than clothes?"

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?

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

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

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

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?

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

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

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

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

Examining the Text

As we look at this teaching moment, we will see that our general theme of righteousness surpassing self-righteousness is still the heart of Jesus' training. Let us see what we can learn.

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Focus on the Eternal Rather than the Temporary

I mentioned previously the disciples' disposition after Jesus finished His teaching. What about the multitude and the many different groups of people among them that heard the Lord's teaching? Numbered among them were the Pharisees and Teachers who reacted to this teaching because they loved money and as a result, they sneered or turned their noses up at Him (CF: *Luke 16:14*). In this example, Jesus is commanding and comforting His disciples. He is commanding them not to worry and comforting them about their needs. The disciples were probably thinking about being the providers of their homes. Now, Jesus is telling them not to worry about their lives. He even simplified what He was saying to them by telling them not to worry about what they eat, drink, or wear. These are the necessities for living and they were commanded not to worry about these things. Why? Because the LORD GOD is the provider of all these essential and necessary living needs. Let us look at the following verses about this: *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.* [*Psalm 107:8-9*] GOD is the One who opens His hand and satisfies every living thing (CF: *Psalm 145:16*).

These necessities are all temporary. Jesus is telling the disciples to focus on GOD who is eternal and provides for all creatures. Nothing that He created is overlooked. This is why Jesus referred to the birds and how they do not plant, gather, or store the food they need away in barns. Yet, GOD provides for the birds and Jesus said that He would do the same thing for them. Why? Because human creatures are more valuable to GOD than the lower creatures. None of the lower creatures that GOD created are made in His image. The Scriptures tell us that only mankind is made in the image of GOD (CF: *Genesis 1:26-27*) Also, these lower creatures are not heirs of GOD and co-heirs with Christ. Only saved believers can share in His suffering to obtain sharing in His glory. (*Romans 8:17*)

1. What are some things that you often worry about?

²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 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?



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Focus on GOD'S Divine Providence

What do I mean by divine providence? Divine providence is GOD'S administration of all things in the universe. He does this through His wisdom, love, care, and provision. GOD is the sovereign or supreme ruler of the world, nations, noble creatures, and lower creatures who are dependent upon Him. There is nothing done by chance in the sight of GOD. Jesus shared with His disciples three illustrations that show GOD'S love, care, and provision toward humanity. He asks could one of them add an hour to his life by worrying. Of course, the answer is no. This is proof that GOD alone extends the life of His living creatures (CF: *Psalm 39:5*). As Jesus continued His teaching with the disciples, He asked why do you worry about clothes? Again, GOD is the supplier of our needs according to His riches in glory (*Philippians 4:19*). So, He told them about the flowers and how they do not labor or spin to make their clothes. Yet, the flower garden (*my emphasis*) has more color and splendor than King Solomon who did not dress as finely as the flowers (CF: *1 Kings 10:7*).

Jesus told them if GOD clothes the grass of the field which is here today and gone tomorrow because it was thrown in the fire, how much more will He not clothe them? Then, He challenged their faith. What is Jesus saying to them? When you think about each of these examples that Jesus shared, you see how GOD interacts and intervenes in the natural course of life. You see that everything is dependent upon Him from the simplest form of life to the complex form of life which is mankind (*Acts 17:24-25*). It is by GOD'S magnificent grace that we have a heartbeat, we have breath, we can reason, we can move, etc. The birds may gather their food, but GOD leads them to it. This should remind us that GOD helps us too.

Examine closely these words in the following verses: *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.* [*Deuteronomy 8:17-18*] These words were a reminder to Israel through Moses that it is GOD who sustains them based on the covenant that He made with their ancestral fathers. But these words are also universal for all mankind to know and understand that GOD and GOD alone is the One who makes provisions for us. This requires having faith in GOD to meet needs and provide for them daily. When Jesus said to them "You of little faith" this was an indication that they did not believe GOD could give them provisions daily.

- 2. According to Deuteronomy 8:17-18, how do you see GOD working in your life to develop your talents and abilities so that you could live and provide for your needs?**



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³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Focus on GOD'S Promises and The Sufficiency of His Grace

Have you ever made a promise to somebody, and it did not end well? How did you feel? Were you able to make it good? I want you to think about the human promises we make and the outcome of those promises. Now, think about the promises of GOD and the fulfillment of His promises. The Book of Numbers tells of the following: *God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?* [Numbers 23:19] Do you see the difference between GOD and man when comes to making a promise? GOD does not lie because He is not a human. I know that I have made promises that I could not keep. It is embarrassing and troubling when a promise that was made is an empty one. In this teaching moment, Jesus continues to encourage His disciples and tells them not to worry. Once more, He is focused on the necessities in life: food, drink, and clothing. He tells His disciples not to think about these things for this is no different from unbelievers which is a reference to the Gentiles. I remind you that this was not a condemning statement from Jesus Christ.

Jesus expressed to them that the Father knows that they need these necessities. I see two things developing in the Lord's teaching. First, He wants them to know and understand that the heavenly Father is an all-knowing GOD. He knows what they need well before they ask Him (CF: *Matthew 6:8*). Secondly, He wants them to trust the heavenly Father like He does and believe that He will not deprive them of anything that they need (CF: *Proverbs 3:5-6*). These same points apply to us today. GOD expects His church to acknowledge that He is the All-powerful, All-knowing, All-wise, and Ever-present Living GOD. At the same time, GOD expects His church to put her total trust in Him.

Next, we see Jesus taking the disciples back to the beginning of this teaching when He told them to seek first the kingdom of heaven and righteousness (CF: *Matthew 5:3; 5:6*). Why? Because the necessities that they worried about will be given to them. This is a sure promise made by the Lord to His disciples and church. Jesus knew that when the Father gives His word as a guarantee, it will be done according to His word.



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There are thousands of promises in the Scriptures stating that something will or will not be done. GOD'S promises are not casual like when I make them. But as I stated before, GOD'S promises are sure when He makes them. They inspire us to seek the kingdom and the rulership of GOD in our lives. They cause us to live and do right in GOD'S sight.

Lastly, Jesus told His disciples not to worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. What did He mean by this? He wanted them to look at the current day and not yesterday or tomorrow. He wanted them to consider all the hardship, trouble, suffering, sin, hurts, problems, needs, and the like that they would encounter during that day. Jesus was preparing them for ministry though they did not know at that time. He was letting them and the church know that no two days of ministry are alike. Also, ministry requires grace and humility to prevent boasting about achievements. Paul said it best when he wrote the following: *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* [2 Corinthians 12:9] Do not worry about tomorrow, but be happy about today because GOD knows our future.

3. List about five promises written in the Scriptures that you cherish. Why are they special to you?

Endnotes

1. Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture is taken from *The Holy Bible, New International Version®*, NIV®, Copyright©1973, 1978, 1984. 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Biblica, Inc.® All rights reserved worldwide.