

"HOW NOT TO WORRY"

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was continually confronted with the problem of fear in the lives of those with whom he associated and to whom he spoke. The words - "fear", "anxious", "troubled", "afraid", "worried" were often on his lips. "Fear not." "Do not be anxious about tomorrow..." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". Often he spoke in this fashion: often he met fear and worry in the lives of those he loved.

DEVELOPMENT

On one occasion when Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, a severe storm suddenly arose. The disciples were frightened...terrified. But Jesus wasn't. They certainly had every reason to be worried for the winds and the waves were rapidly filling their small boat with water. When Jesus asked them why they were fearful, their patience must have been seriously taxed. And when he went on and asked them how it was that they had no faith, they must have felt like asking him how it was that he had any faith at all in the face of the facts. For worry and fear, as you know, are always based on an admitted fact - an ache, a pain, bankrupt business, an empty refrigerator. And worry is always conquered, not by a denial of the facts, but by a faith that out-runs the facts.

WORRY IS DANGEROUS

The disciples were extremely worried. Jesus wasn't. Jesus didn't worry because he knew more than the disciples knew. He knew, for instance, that worry never accomplishes anything. No matter how dangerous the storm might be....no matter how little likelihood there was for a safe landing, the anticipation of the disaster would neither stop the storm nor make possible a happy landing. He knew that a person cannot prolong life one second by worrying about it. He knew that worrying is a dangerous tendency for people to slip into. The fishermen in that boat needed all of their strength and their physical energy to fight the storm. Worry simply deflected some of that strength and vitality into fruitless ways. The sick man who worries about his health stands less chance of getting well than the man who leaves all the mechanism of his mind and emotions to work for health. The man who has lost his job will not get another one by worrying about it. By worrying about it, he will wear out his nerves, distort his faith, lower his reserve and mind and skill and stand little chance of finding the job he wants. Jesus knew that worry is not only futile, but it is also dangerous.

SET YOUR AIM FURTHER AWAY

As you examine this incident, you come to see that there is a second reason involved as to why Jesus wasn't worried. You might approach it this way: Jesus wanted more than his disciples wanted. They wanted to get safely over to the other side of the lake. He wanted the Kingdom of God. It suggests to us that the further a man sets his goal away from himself, the more power he has to overcome serious obstacles. The immediate welfare of the disciples was threatened...therefore they were worried. On the other hand, Jesus wasn't particularly interested in their immediate welfare or his own, and therefore this storm didn't seem to upset him. When we begin to worry about our health, we can be sure of this that our goal is too close to ourselves. If our aim is simply to be happy, healthy individuals, then every ache or pain is going to set

us worrying. If, however, our aim is to be an effective agent of God's will in the world in which we live, then the storms that we occasional encounter will be incidental to our major undertakings. The further a man sets his goal away from himself, the more power he has to overcome serious obstacles.

SEE ALL OF THE FACTS

And then too, Jesus saw more than the disciples. This leads us to a third observation I should like to put before you. The disciples saw the winds and the waves filling up their small boat with water. They saw themselves in danger of drowning. On the other hand, while Jesus saw the storm, he also saw the wind carrying the storm away as quickly as it had brought it. He saw the care of the great spirit which was like the care of a good father for his children. He saw, too, that while we are not spared every hardship, we are promised the necessary strength to meet it. He saw that there are resources beyond our own from which we can derive strength - strength sufficient for the demands life places upon us. This somehow was in the original contract. God did it for the birds and the flowers... would he do less for a man? He saw a divine pledge implicit in all life and trusting that he did not worry. He saw the storms, but he saw something above the storms....something that enabled him to ride above them time and again.

This too should be seen

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION

Dr. Stanley Durkee tells a story of a ship caught in a storm at sea. It was one of those raging storms which occasionally sweep the North Atlantic in winter months. The great ship labored heavily...her engines holding her in the teeth of a howling gale that played with the ship as though she were a floating toy. The storm had lasted for some time; the nerves of the passengers were beginning to give way.....huddled together in the lounge, unable to sleep, some wept and some prayed...unnerved people fearing that the ship would crack under the pounding of the waves. Then suddenly the captain of the ship stood in the doorway, called there to prevent what might easily have become a panic. A strong, confident, weathered seaman with a kindly face, he walked to the center of the room and talked quietly with the people. He told them of the storms through which he and the ship had already passed. He told them that the engines were working perfectly, and that there was no evidence of strain in the ship. Calmly and masterfully, in a voice made vibrant with emotion, he said, "We will trust in God and in our good ship, and He will bring us through". The people grew quiet, almost brave again. They had looked into the face of the captain - a captain who honored the Master of the Sea and their fears were gone.

This, perhaps, is what those of you who are worried and anxious about the events taking place in your life need to do.....to take a look into the face of the captain of our faith - a good long look. And to remember that he is still the master of life's turbulent sea.

LET US PRAY:

God, our Father, may that spirit that was in thy Son now be in our hearts so that we may go on from here trusting in Thee...

Make us conscious now of thy nearness. Touch our eyes that we may see Thee. Open our ears that we may hear thy voice. Enter our hearts that we may know thy love. Overshadow our souls with thy presence, that we may partake of thy strength, thy love, and thy healing life.

May these moments spent at thy table this hour nourish our spirits. And may we depart with the assurance that this is thy world and that we can never drift beyond of thy love and concern.

This we ask in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is the custom of this church to observe the Sacrament of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. Participation in the Lord's Supper in this church is not limited in any way. It is our conviction that the Table of our Lord is open to all who are sincerely trying to grow in their understanding of the will of God and the ways of the Christian life. We invite all of you to receive the Sacrament here this hour and trust that the occasion for you may be a time of spiritual dedication and re-consecration.

I would remind you that coffee will be served in Fellowship Hall following the service, and all of you are invited to share in the warm fellowship of these moments. We take this opportunity to welcome the visitors to our church this morning, and we would invite you to introduce yourself to us either at the door or at the coffee hour. We hope you will come and worship with us on future occasions.

The announcements are listed in the bulletin. The third and final session of our Festival of Missions will be held this evening. An interesting program has been arranged....the details of which are mentioned in your bulletin. The focal points of study this evening will be Hong Kong and Taiwan. We look forward to another fine evening together.

Jesus said: It is more blessed to give than it is to receive. In this spirit, let us worship God with our morning offering.

HOW NOT TO WORRY

INTRODUCTION

On one occasion when Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, a severe storm suddenly arose. The disciples were worried. Jesus wasn't. They certainly had every reason to be worried for the winds and the waves were rapidly filling their small boat with water. When Jesus asked them why they were fearful, their patience must have been seriously taxed. And when he went on and asked them how it was that they had no faith, they must have felt like asking him how it was that he had any faith at all in the face of the facts. Worry, as you know, is always based on an admitted fact - an ache, a pain, a bankrupt business, or an empty ice box. And worry is always conquered, not by a denial of the facts, but by a faith that out-runs the facts.

WORRY IS DANGEROUS

The disciples of our Lord were extremely worried. Jesus wasn't. Jesus didn't worry because he knew more than the disciples knew. He knew, for instance, that worry never accomplished anything. No matter how dangerous the storm might be, and no matter how little likelihood there was for a safe landing, the ANTICIPATION of the disaster would neither stop the storm nor make possible a happy landing. He knew that a person cannot prolong life one second by worrying about it; he also knew that worry is dangerous. The fisherman needed all of their strength and their physical energy to fight the storm. Worry deflected some of that strength and vitality into fruitless ways. The sick man who worries about his health stands less chance of getting well than the man who leaves all the mechanism of mind and body to work for health. The man who has lost his job will not get another one by worrying about it. By worrying about it, he will wear out his nevers, distort his faith, lower his reserve of mind and skill and stand little chance of re-employment. Worry, Jesus knew, is not only futile; it is dangerous. This is the first thought suggested by this incident in the life of our Lord.

SET YOUR AIM FURTHER AWAY

In the second place, Jesus wanted more than his disciples wanted. They wanted to get to the other side of the lake. He wanted the Kingdom of God. This suggests to us that the further a man sets his goal away from himself, the more power he has to overcome serious obstacles. The disciples immediate well fare was threatened, therefore they were worried. Jesus, on the other hand, wasn't particularly interested in their immediate well fare, and therefore the storm didn't upset him. When we begin to worry about our health, we can be sure of that fact that our goal is too close to ourselves. If our aim is to be happy, healthy individual, then every ache and every pain will set us worrying. But if, however, our aim is to be effective agents of God in this world, then the storms that we may have to pass through will be incidental to our major undertakings.

SEE ALL THE FACTS

And finally, Jesus saw more than the disciples saw. They saw the waves and the wind filling up their small boat with water. They saw themselves drowning in the middle of the lake. But on the other hand, while Jesus saw the storm, he also saw the wind carrying the storm away as quickly as

it had brought it. He saw the care of the great spirit which was like the care of a good father for his children. He saw too that while we are not spared every hardship, we are promised the necessary strength to meet it. That somehow was in the original contract. God did it for the flowers and birds, would he do less for man? Jesus, you see, saw a divine pledge implicit in all life, a pledge of sufficient strength for every situation. Trusting that he did not worry. He saw the storms, but he rode above them.

CONCLUSION This is the first Sunday of the New Year. There will be times during this coming year when the waves and the winds and the storms of life toss you about. It's so hard not to worry, but the next time you do begin to worry, do these three things:

First: Think how futile and how dangerous worry really is.

Second: Set your aim further away from you.

Third: Try to see all of the facts. See not only the dangers involved in the storm, but see also God's pledge that the winds will blow the storms away from you, or raise you above them.

PRAYER

We are thankful, Our Father, for all of the blessings thou hast given us. Especially this morning we thank thee for this divine pledge that is implicit in all life, a pledge of sufficient strength for every situation.

As we begin another year, help us to make some resolutions here today that will in time change our lives.

May we resolve in these moments of quietness...

- (1) To worry less, and to trust thee more.
- (2) To give thee a greater portion of our time and ourselves this year than we did last year.
- (3) To be gentle in all of our dealings with others, bringing thy love into the various walks of life..

As we come to thy table this day, may we come humbly, quietly, at peace with ourselves and with one another. May we depart, strengthened in our convictions, and reassured that this is thy world, and that thou art close to each one of us. In thy name we pray. Amen