

“I’ll Meet You There”: Battling Worry

Exodus 16. Starting a new series called Broken. And we’re going to be examining the complex emotional life of the believer. Today we’re talking about worry. Britain Survey: surveyed 2000 people and 86% described themselves as worriers. 84% losing sleep. 1. Work 2. Financial worries 3. Being late 4. A relative or friend's bad health 5. Bad health 6. Relationships 7. Missing a plane/train/bus 8. Not waking up for alarm 9. Appearance 10. Family safety. Too many people in a constant posture of worry. This is a familiar emotion for most of us. And the bible has a lot to say about it. So I want to get behind our worries and see what’s really going on. Not talking about anxiety attack. Not addressing every situation. A framework for thinking about worry that you’ll have to apply in a thousand different ways. **Three Truths:**

- Worries speak .

They communicate. Worries reveal the things that we care about. Tell me the things you worry about and I’ll tell you the things that you value. If I’m really worried about the stock market, it reveals that I value my financial portfolio. If I’m really worried about getting sick, it reveals that I value my health.

- Worry happens when feel like we’re not in **control** of the things that we value.

It happens when we want something, value something, and are faced with the reality that we may or may not get it—because it’s out of our direct control. If you look to people’s praise and approval for self-esteem then you’ll be constantly worried about what others thinking about you. Why? Because in some ways that’s out of your control. If you could control what everyone thought about you, you’d never worry about it. It is your desire to be approved of by everyone and your inability to control that that makes you worry about it. But for now, worries speak. They tell about what we value and worry happens when we sense that whatever we value isn’t under our control. And thus, it’s threatened.

We’re going to be talking about different kinds of suffering in this series, but worry is the only one that is fundamentally future oriented. In other words, shame may be something I struggle with because of something in the past, depression may something that happening now, but worry is unique bc it has to do with something that hasn’t happened yet. It is anticipatory in nature. And it’s our inability to control the future that creates feelings of worry in the present...which leads us to a crucial insight

- Worriers live in the future .

To be in a state of worry is to say “I feel unrest today because I’m not sure if I’ll get the result I want tomorrow.” And if this is you, your contentment in the present is only as good as what’s guaranteed in the future. And we do this all the time. You go up to folks, “Hey how you doing today?” And their answer is “We’ll see.” Kids finances jobs marriage health we’ll see how it all plays out. How am I today—bracing for what may or may not happen this week. And this is so many of us. Living in a constant posture of worry because our joy in the present is only as good as what’s guaranteed in the future. And because the future is up in the air, so is our joy. [Gesture of uncertainty—this is us]. But friends there is a better way. And I want to spend some time how God’s word, speaks to this and how the Gospel transforms our worry.

Pray.

Exodus 16. It's 45 days after the Exodus and the people are complaining—**read vs 2**. we want to go back we're hungry and God hears their grumbling and tells Moses to that he is going to provide quail each evening and bread each morning. And in verse 13, just as he said, there was quail in the evening and there was a fine flaky food on the ground and vs 31 tells us that **they called it manna, It was like coriander seed, white and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.** So they're getting bread from heaven's bakery that they're supposed to gather and eat but in vs16 we see some parameters on gathering...**16** **16** This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer,^[b] according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.'" **17** And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. **18** But when they measured it with an omer (2 quarts!), whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. **19** And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." **20** But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. **21** Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. "Don't leave any over till the morning." People did it anyways.

Except for the Sabbath, specifically designed for the bread to rot if it wasn't eaten the day it was gathered. Why? Because he's teaching them how to trust. God did not allow the people to store up today's food as a backup plan for tomorrow's meal. He's saying I'll give only enough for today, so that you have to trust me anew for fresh grace tomorrow. This isn't a monthly bread or yearly bread—thanks God see you next year really appreciate it—this is daily bread and I'm doing it this way so that you will learn to place active trust in me every morning and every evening—or die. If God gave them a year supply at a time, they might have a general posture of gratitude. God's forcing them to rely on Him each morning and each night so that they'll have a desperate posture of faith. And as they grow in hunger they have to trust God that when dinner time comes.

Imagine it's about 9pm all the quail have been picked up and I'm starting to get a little hungry—so I go outside to see if there's anything on the ground to eat and there's nothing. I look and see a barren dry wilderness with nothing on the ground but dirt. And I begin to worry. And in his book *Running Scared* Ed Welch uses this as a paradigm for worry and he says something very interesting, he ways says that when we worry, we're actually false prophets. When we worry we are prophesying tomorrow's circumstances apart from tomorrow's grace. Because we're forecasting tomorrow's desert apart from the manna that God has promised to provide. We're looking dry barren difficult situation tomorrow and ignoring God's promise that he'll meet us there—when the time comes—but not before.

So it's crucial for us to realize. You and I are placed in hundreds of circumstances where we worry and we're unsure of how things are going to turn out. And it's right for us to pray, "God help me I need a unique measure of empowering grace." And expect that we will get it—the moment we need it and not before. Ed Welch has acute fear of suffocation and says, **"It doesn't say that I will be spared suffocation. What it says is that, if I am called to death by asphyxiation, I will have grace when that times comes. What does that mean? I don't know. I can't image such grace. I can't imagine anything that would make drowning tolerable. And that is exactly what we should expect: At this moment I don't have grace to down because I am not drowning! Of course I will worry if I try to envision a drowning scenario. I will project the grace I received for today onto tomorrow, not comprehending that I will receive the grace as needed tomorrow.**

Over and over again, this is how God gives grace in adversity. Dan 3 Dan. 3 Shadrack Meshack and Abednego won't bow down to Nebuchadrezzar statue. I'll throw you into the fiery furnace. God can save us and he will save us but even if he doesn't we won't worship your God. And so King ordered fire be made 7 times hotter vs 23 says they feel bound into the fiery furnace and as soon as they do they realize that there is a fourth man in the fire. And bc of this they're not consumed and they don't even smell like smoke. But don't miss God didn't tell them everything would be ok. God's love wasn't seen in preventing them from being thrown into the furnace but by showing up when they were. He saw that they had an appointment with adversity and he met them there. Not the night before—right when they needed it.

Daniel 6—thrown in lion's den because he wouldn't worship. King Darius, vs.22 angel shut the mouth of the lions. God didn't prevent Daniel from getting thrown into the Lion's den. He met him there. King Darius "I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

This is why God works this way—this is why he shows up in the final hour—to get glory for himself. God hasn't equipped Daniel with unique strength so he could fight lions one day. Daniel is completely defenseless until at the last second God closes the mouths of the lions that the world would know not that Daniel is an invincible man but that he serves as invincible God.

You see this "just in time" grace even more clearly in Lk. 12:11-12 "And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, ¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Don't worry about this defense—I'll meet you there. And we have to remember this. We can't be false prophets who see tomorrow's circumstance apart from tomorrow grace. Going to hear about the brain scan—I'll meet you there, going to have a difficult conversation with a loved one—meet you there. Afraid of not getting the promotion—I'll meet you there. I will never ask you to walk through something alone or in your own power—ever. The antidote God gives us to fight worry isn't delivery from the circumstance it's his presence in it.

And that's why over and over and over again God tells his people "Do not be afraid". Doesn't say it 365 times—that's a myth. But it does say it a lot and when it does it never says don't fear because you are strong, capable, excellent. No do not fear because "I". I will be with you I will go before you. I have redeemed you. I will be with you. And it's crucial that we get this. Some of us say "that's just my personality. I'm a worrier." No living in posture of worry indicates that we're constantly doubting whether God's presence and power will really be enough when God meets us there. It's an affront to the sufficiency of God's grace.

That's why we need to realize that when God says do not be afraid, it's not just encouragement it's a command. Do not fear isn't in the category of self-help it's in the category of obedience. This is not a therapeutic option for peaceful living it is a divine imperative that demonstrates that our hope is not in the kind of place we're going but in the kind of God who's taking us there.

Now God knows that despite His promises we will worry and so the question for us is, what do we do with our worry. I'm worried that I'm not going to get a good report from the Dr. next week.

(1) God to God "Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." (1 Pet 5:7)

- (2) Confess: “I’m sorry that I’ve only seen the wilderness but not the manna....”
- (3) Remind myself of what’s true. My joy doesn’t lie in my circumstances. It lies in you. No other people’s praise but yours. You are enough—even if I sacrifice my reputation, comfort—you will be enough.
- (4) Trust a specific promise. “For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. ⁷ He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.” Ps. 112:6-7 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” (Ps. 56:3)

I don’t put my trust in anything else in you because you’ll will meet me there and when you do you’ll be enough. You’ll never turn your back on me—and there was a day when you turned your back on your son. You read Lk 22 the night before Jesus was crucified. He was worried, anxious, so much so that he was sweating blood—because he was about to go to the cross and God was not going to meet him there. The only thing Jesus would be met with was the wrath of God due our sin. And cried out my god my god why have you forsaken me and there was no answer from the Father.

He was cast out from God’s presence so that you and I could come in. And Christ was forsaken that you and I would never have to be alone. He takes sins penalty so that we never have to be without God’s power and presence. And we’re able to enjoy them because Christ paid for our sin and then caused us to be born again through repentance and faith. I would hate for anyone to think that these privileges are somehow automatically yours. This is not the default for humanity. We’ve sinned and are separated from God and we need rescue. That’s why Jesus came. Jesus didn’t come to show folks how to be a good people. He came because no one could ever be good enough.

I can’t think of a better way to end than tell the story of Alan Gardner. Alan Gardner a captain in the royal navy and a believer passionate about spreading the Gospel and in 1850 set out with a handful of others to bring the Gospel to the Yahgan people who lived on the southern tip of South America. But fierce weather left them shipwrecked on Picton Island right off the coast of Southern America—and some poor planning and logistics meant a supply ship would not be coming until it was way too late. There food began running out. One by one they began to starve to death. How would you feel? Captain Gardner kept a journal documenting everything that happened, and because god’s grace met them there, here’s how they felt”

“In noting down our wants and difficulties, I would not conclude without expressing my thanks to the God of all mercies for the grace He has bestowed on each of my suffering companions, who, with the utmost cheerfulness, endure all without a murmur, patiently awaiting the Lord’s time to deliver them, and ready, should it be His will, to languish and die here, knowing that whatever He shall appoint shall be well. My prayer is that the Lord may be glorified in me, whatever it may be, by life or death, and that He will, should we fall, send forth other labourers into this harvest, that His name may be magnified, and His kingdom enlarged, in the salvation of multitudes from among the inhabitants of this pagan land . . .”

“My care is all cast upon God, and I am only waiting His time and His good pleasure to dispose of me as He shall see fit. Whether I live or die, may it be in Him. I commend my body and soul into His care and keeping . . .”

Allen Gardner outlived all of his shipmates but eventually died of starvation, “When his body was found on the beach, and his diary lay nearby. It bore the record of hunger, thirst, wounds, and loneliness. The last entry in his little book showed the struggle of his shaking hand as he tried to write legibly. It read, “I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God.”