

When Things Seem Hopeless

“And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”

I Samuel 30:6

Additional Reading: Psalm 27, 34, 37, 55, 56, 57, 42, 43, and 71.

Introduction:

1. This sermon is against that horrible enemy of every child of God – **worry!** Let us put this enemy to death!
2. Consider David, when things were hopeless at the city of Ziklag (I Sam 30:1-6). What did he do to succeed?
 - a. David was king of Israel, but he lived with Philistines for fear of Saul. Are you disillusioned about life?
 - b. With Philistine armies engaged in war with his people, David was back at home. Do you feel worthless?
 - c. David had been away from home three days journey, which brought him there tired. Are you also tired?
 - d. As if things were not bad enough, Amalekites had burned Ziklag in his absence. Do you blame yourself?
 - e. His immediate family, his only comfort in this foreign place, was gone. Does your family often fail you?
 - f. There were no bodies, for Amalek had taken the wives and children ... for what? Do you fear the worst?
 - g. The scene at Ziklag was total devastation and total loss of both assets and family. Do you face total loss?
 - h. David and men wept uncontrollably until they were emotionally wasted. Do you feel emotionally spent?
 - i. The faithful and loyal men of David spake of stoning him for this horrible grief. Do friends betray you?
 - j. Should David have felt totally hapless, helpless, and hopeless? Where was God, his loving shepherd?
 - k. David lived much of his life in similar circumstances. No wonder he spoke of many afflictions (Ps 34:19).
3. The worst thing you can do to any man is take away his hope, which Satan knows for certainty.
 - a. The world is sick, because much of its music, art, novels, and movies are incredibly hopeless.
 - b. But a Christian should have more hope in all circumstances than any other men on the earth.
 - c. In spite of what happens in this life, there is infinite and eternal happiness waiting in the next.
 - d. And the peace and joy (and often carnal blessings) in this life are superior for the child of God.
4. By nature and temperamental predisposition, I have as much or more temptation to worry than most.
5. If you feel life is exceptionally difficult and you are in a rare situation, you are wrong (I Cor 10:13).
6. If you feel your life is on cruise control and you are experiencing smooth sailing, trouble is coming!

What Is Worry?

- A. **Worry.** A troubled state of mind arising from the frets and cares of life; harassing anxiety. A state of mental distress, affliction of mental trouble or agitation, anxiety or being ill at ease.
- B. Worry is a negative outlook about the future or the unknown that causes anxiety, distress, and fear.
- C. Worry is agitated thinking that things are not going to work out for your pleasure, profit, or success.
- D. Worry is anxiety created by not knowing what else to do to save some situation you value highly.
- E. Worry is distressed thinking that your life will turn to be a failure in the eyes and minds of others.
- F. The word “worry” does not occur in our Bibles, but the Holy Spirit used other words in place of it.
 1. Peter told us to cast all our care (worries) on God, for He cares (worries) for us (I Peter 5:7).
 2. It is cares (worries) that steal our effectiveness and fruitfulness as Christians (Luke 8:14; 21:34).
 3. Martha was too careful (worried) and troubled (distressed) about many things (Luke 10:42).
 4. Paul taught us to be without carefulness (worries), and to pray for God’s help with thanksgiving, which would lead to unexplainable peace replacing our anxiety and fear (Phil 4:6-7).
 5. Paul recommended a simple life to avoid carefulness (worries) that distracts us (I Cor 7:32-35).
 6. David mocked the world and their willingness to be disquieted (worried) about money (Ps 39:6).
 7. David was distressed (very worried and anxious) about his family and situation (I Samuel 30:6).
 8. Paul’s circumstances were bad, but he was not in despair, distressed, or destroyed (I Cor 4:8-9).
 9. Luke wrote that Jesus forbid a doubtful mind (worrying) about material things (Luke 12:29).
 10. Hannah fretted (worried) about the fact she was barren and Peninnah was not (I Samuel 1:6).

11. David warned against eating bread of sorrows (worrying) by holding your burdens (Ps 127:2).
12. Jesus repeatedly warned about taking thought (anxious concern) for things (Matthew 6:25-34).
- G. Financial worry can be how you are going to pay your bills, have an income, survive, or stay solvent.
- H. Employment worry can be how you are going to get a job due to personal or economic factors.
- I. Business worry can be fear and doubt about customers, competition, staffing, takeovers, etc., etc.
- J. Family worry can be anxiety and distress about raising your children to be model Christian citizens.
- K. Worry does not believe the promises of God, because He has promised to never leave nor forsake us.
- L. Worry is putting more confidence and trust in yourself than in His ability to change your situation.
- M. Worry fears circumstances and forecasts more than believing God that can change circumstances.

Why Do We Worry?

- A. Because by nature we are not believers: our sinful hearts doubt and reject God's love and promises.
- B. Because by nature we believe we have accomplished what we are and the future depends upon us.
- C. Because we know we are hypocrites and sinners in the sight of God and deserve to suffer great loss.
- D. Because we forget the works of God by neglecting His word and replacing it with carnal ambitions.
- E. Because worry is very destructive, so Satan brings fiery darts of doubt to waylay us in our religion.
- F. Because the world around us, Gentiles noted by Jesus, always worry about things (Matt 6:25-32).
- G. Some people worry what others think about them, which is entirely stupid and dangerous (Pr 29:25).
- H. To their shame, men often worry when they enviously think that others might get advantage of them.

When Do We Worry?

- A. We worry when circumstances out of our control seem certain to destroy the work of our hands.
- B. We worry when more than one bad thing happens at once, so consider Satan's device (Job 1:13-19).
- C. We worry when things seem very against us, and our goals and others' expectations will not be met.
- D. We worry when we get more concerned about circumstances than our souls, earth more than heaven.

What Does It Do?

- A. It is a foolish waste of energy and time, because it accomplishes absolutely nothing (Psalm 127:2).
- B. It is a destructive mindset, because it distorts your perception and handicaps wise decision-making.
- C. It is a soul-drying, strength-sapping, spirit-crushing choice to allow dysfunctional fear to rule you.
- D. It causes us to alter our priorities by getting one or more parts of our life all too important to us.
 1. A man preoccupied with his job or business will neglect training his children or serving brethren.
 2. A woman preoccupied with her health will become less cheerful about regular lovemaking, etc.
- E. It defeats our confidence in God by putting the burden for the future on ourselves, and not on Him.
- F. It takes away our contentment, joy, and peace in the Lord, for we fret instead about our situation.
- G. It defeats our witness to others, because they see our carnal thinking and lack of true faith in God.

What Is Its Cure?

- A. Pray for deliverance, by turning all your worries over to the only One Who can and will help you.
 1. It has been said, "Why worry, when you can pray?" And this should be our immediate response.
 2. You must humble yourself and submit to God's sovereignty over you (Job 36:15-18; Jas 5:11).
 3. You are to cast all your cares upon Him: He does care for you (I Pet 5:7; Ps 55:22). Believe it!
 4. You are to stop worrying about anything and instead pray with thanksgiving (Phil 4:6-7).
 5. You are to pray only for daily bread and not worry about distant future bread (Matthew 6:11).
- B. Believe in deliverance, by trusting that He knows, He hears, and He cares about your situation.
 1. Take no more worrisome thought about the future than do plants or birds (Matthew 6:25-34).
 2. Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust in Him; and He will bring it to pass (Psalm 37:5).
 3. Quench fiery darts by holding up the shield of faith and rejecting doubting thoughts (Eph 6:16).

4. Believe He will deliver you, and wait for the deliverance with mustered courage (Ps 27:13-14).
5. Commit your works to Him in faith, and He will establish your thoughts (Pr 16:3; II Sam 10:12).
- C. Work as if delivered, by trusting the Lord will surely do His part, and you should be doing your part.
 1. There is definite reason to worry, if you are not doing your reasonable best to secure your future.
 2. The LORD builds the city, business, family, or job; but He definitely uses laborers (Ps 127:1).
 3. But He rejects any more than your reasonable best as arrogant presumption of ability (Ps 127:2).
 4. If you do not know what to do in your worry, consult some wise counselors (Prov 11:14; 15:22).
 5. Copy the carefree birds, creatures, and plants that continue doing their daily thing (Matt 6:26).
 6. He has given you the ability and the counselors to plan, subject to His will (Pr 16:9; Jas 4:13-15).
- D. Encourage yourself in the Lord like David, by pulling together your confidence in Him to save you.
 1. Remember the Lord's great deliverances of men in Scripture or in your own church (Ps 77:1-20).
 2. Remember God's deliverances of you in the past from afflictions equally as bad (Ps 34:6; 116:1).
 3. Remember those in worse circumstances than yours, rather than those in better ones (Ps 118:18).
 4. Remember God does not forget your frame and weakness in facing difficulties (Ps 103:13-18).
 5. Remember Scripture is for the very reason it was given to you – your hope (Rom 15:4; Jas 5:11).
 6. Remember the promises of God that He will take care of your needs (I Sam 12:22; Ps 27:10; 37:25,28; 55:22; 94:14; Pr 16:3; Jer 17:7-8; Matt 6:32; 10:28-31; Heb 12:5-6; 13:5-6; etc.; etc.).
- E. Encourage yourself by the four reasons bad things happen to Christians and respond accordingly.
 1. **For God's glory**, we should (1) give Him the glory joyfully at all times, (2) acknowledge His right to our lives, while (3) using all reasonable means and prayer to remove the adversity.
 2. **For trials of faith**, we should (1) understand their value, (2) rejoice in their purpose, (3) be thankful for their product, (4) learn the lesson quickly, and (5) cheerfully endure their pain.
 3. **For chastening of sins**, we should (1) pray for God to reveal our faults, (2) examine ourselves carefully, (3) confess as soon as we have any conviction, (4) submit to reproof from others, and (5) tell God we have learned the lesson as quickly as possible.
 4. **For consequences of folly**, we should (1) obey God's word as fully as possible, (2) be prudent in decisions, (3) beg God for mercy in failures, and (4) use means God has taught for our recovery.
- F. All four of the reasons for negative events in the life of a Christian are positive in their effects.
 1. You are told to rejoice and endure when you encounter negative events (Rom 5:3-5; Jas 1:2-4).
 2. Such events only bear fruit and shorten the lesson, if you humbly and patiently endure them.
 3. Job's trials were extended by his self-righteous justification and complaining (Job 36:15-18).
 4. Paul had more trouble than ten afflicted souls will experience, but he rejoiced (II Cor 12:9-10).
- G. Give yourself therapy by getting outside yourself and serving others in their problems (Acts 20:35).
- H. If the LORD alone is your entire Portion, what in the world can cause you to worry (Ps 73:25-26)?
- I. If you say, "You are trying to get me to walk on water"; I will say, "Then believe and start walking!"
 1. We have this great illustration about Peter to show how quickly faith can leave (Matt 14:28-31).
 2. It takes a basic combination of faith and courage to step over the gunwale and step on the water.
 3. Peter only began to sink when he looked at the waves, and Jesus saved him in spite of himself!
- J. Be wise! God may be preparing you for greater blessings, and He has to squash your present plans.
- K. Raise the shield of faith! Quench the fiery darts of doubt! Trust in the LORD! Believe His promises!

Conclusion:

1. David lived much of his life under horrible circumstances, so he spoke wisely of many afflictions (Ps 34:19).
2. Paul lived much of his life under horrible circumstances, so he spoke wisely of God's comfort (II Cor 1:3-5).
3. This is not a seeker sensitive sermon for the unregenerate – it is an order from heaven how to live (Rev 21:8).
4. Trials do not come on all at once, so the strong should help (Rom 12:15; I Cor 12:26; Gal 6:2; I Thes 5:14).

For further study:

1. Sermon, "Why Bad Things Happen to Christians," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf>
2. Sermon, "Anything Too Hard for the Lord?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/is-anything-too-hard-for-the-lord.pdf>
3. Sermon, "Hope or Hopelessness?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/hope.pdf>